

LAOIS COUNTY COUNCIL  
COMHAIRLE CHONTAE LAOISE



MONTHLY MANAGEMENT REPORT  
AUGUST/SEPTEMBER 2021  
TUARASCÁIL BHAINISTÍOCHTA  
LÚNASA/MEAN FOMHAIR 2021

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 August/September 2021 is as follows:-

### Finance, & Allocations Notified

Expenditure and income to the 31/08/2021 is summarised below:

Service Division	Budget Allocation	Expenditure to 31/08/2021
Housing and Building	15,772,000	9,308,056
Road Transportation and Safety	21,225,000	10,416,646
Water Services	3,421,000	2,041,191
Development Management	6,970,000	5,194,612
Environmental Services	7,500,000	4,183,946
Recreation and Amenity	3,926,000	2,203,819
Agriculture, Education, Health and Welfare	822,000	288,205
Miscellaneous Services	9,533,000	6,948,799
Central Management Charge	9,714,000	5,310,356
<b>Total</b>	<b>78,883,000</b>	<b>45,895,630</b>

Service Division	Budget Allocation	Income to 31/08/2021
Housing and Building	17,594,000	10,670,131
Road Transportation and Safety	16,749,000	5,349,524
Water Services	4,534,000	2,715,982
Development Management	4,423,000	4,552,451
Environmental Services	1,501,000	1,158,554
Recreation and Amenity	601,000	447,712
Agriculture, Education, Health and Welfare	330,000	172,163
Miscellaneous Services	8,126,000	5,217,949
Superannuation	700,000	443,222
Local Property Tax	9,063,079	6,042,052
Rates	14,495,092	8,006,978
Capital transfer	766,829	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>78,883,000</b>	<b>44,776,718</b>

### Allocations Notified

Supplementary Single Stage Approval for Refurbishment of Oak Park Halting Site, Portarlinton	€1,224,801
Fáilte Ireland Outdoor Dining Enhancement Scheme	€161,794
Clár Measure 1, 2 & 3a- Camross Community Garden, Tobar an Leinn NS, Ballyfin Playground & St. Aengus FC	€179,517.19
Recoupment of Well Grants	€53,923.00

Housing for All Construction Programme

Scheme	Units	Progress
Shannon St., Mountrath	6	Complete
Ballymorris, Portarlinton	22	Complete
Gleann naGlaise, Ballyroan	10	On-Site.
25-30 Moore St., Rathdowney	6	On-Site.
Pattison Estate, Mountmellick	10	On-Site.
Sean Doire, Durrow	22	On-Site.
Coolroe, Ballybrittas (Rural)	1	On-Site.
Harbour Court, Mountmellick	6	Stage 3 Approved May 20 <sup>th</sup> 2021. Tenders submitted on 17/8/21 and evaluation is on-going.
Mooreville, Rathdowney	7	Stage 3 documents submitted to Department on 25/8/21.
St. Kierans Park, Errill	14	Preferred contractor withdrew tenders. Tender to be re-advertised shortly.
Clonrooske, Knockmay	11	Revisions made following recent meeting with Portlaoise councillors. Stage 2 to be submitted in Q3
Iona, Abbeyleix Road	9	Draft layout being prepared for discussions with local councillors.
Oak Park Halting Site	4	Tenders returned in April and Site start expected in Q3.
Carraig Glas, Stradbally	26	Stage 2 granted. Part VIII to be brought to September Council meeting.
Doonane	6	Stage 1 submitted to Department on 23/8/21
Derry Rd. Durrow	18	Stage 1 submitted to Department on 31/8/21

Urban Regeneration Programme

Scheme	Units	Progress
Former C.B.S. Site	67	Part VIII granted. CLUID Housing Association has agreed terms with landowner for turnkey development of 67 units. CALF application supported by Laois Co Co submitted to DHLGH in early September. The project to be delivered in 3 phases; first stage due for delivery in Q4 of 2022.
Hepburn/Knockmay	54	CLUID Housing Association are progressing this development. Final site layout to be discussed with local councillors prior to submission of Part VIII.
O'Moore Place Regeneration	To be determined	Concept drawings on the proposed development are being prepared for discussion with local councillors.
Convent Site, Portlaoise	51	Stage 2 approved in February 2021. Sophia Housing Association progressing this development with input and under guidance from LCC.

		Site investigations complete. Enabling works including demolition of structures approved through the Part 8 process commenced in early September 2021. Work on the tender package for the Housing and Public Realm Contract is ongoing with the new units almost complete and the refurbishment units to be completed following the enabling works.
County Hotel, Portlaoise	10	Stage 1 approval for 11 units granted on 4/9/20. Redesign advised, reducing units to 10. A Part 8 submission on this project is now expected in the Autumn following recent engagements with the Department of Housing and the elected members for Portlaoise.
Vacant Homes Office		<p>A total of 278 properties have been investigated by the Vacant Homes Officer following reports of vacancy by Council Members and other Elected Representatives, members of the public or via <a href="http://www.vacanthomes.ie">www.vacanthomes.ie</a> and applications under the Repair &amp; Leasing Scheme. 12 vacant properties have been acquired by CPO and 8 properties are currently going through the CPO process.</p> <p>A total of 33 applications have been received to date under the Repair &amp; Leasing Scheme. 1 Lease has commenced under the Scheme. 3 applications have been approved to proceed which will yield a total of 7 units of accommodation. 2 applications are currently under consideration.</p> <p>52 vacant houses have been identified as suitable for social housing and further action may be taken in these cases. A number of properties have been identified as having potential as development sites for social housing and will be examined further.</p>

#### Turnkey Projects

Scheme	Units	Progress
<i>Expressions of interest</i>		<i>The Council has invited expressions of interest in respect of the supply of newly completed homes as turnkey projects.</i>
Main St., Borris-in-Ossory	11	Contractors on site. 6 units complete with Phase 2 (5 units) in Q4 2021.
Clonaslee	7	Complete
Church Avenue, Stradbally	31	Turnkey application approved by the Department 4 <sup>th</sup> March 2021. Expected delivery Q4 2022.
Bruach NaHbainn	4	Turnkey application approved by the Department 7 <sup>th</sup> September. Expected delivery Q3 2022.
The Orchard, Ballylynan	5	Turnkey application submitted to Department on 3/9/21
Market Square, Portarlinton	18	Turnkey application submitted to Department on 7/9/21

## Approved Housing Bodies Delivery

Scheme	Units	AHB	Progress
Bellingham, Portlaoise	30	Cluid	All 30 units now delivered – last phase on 28 <sup>th</sup> July 2021
Wilton Lawns, Portarlinton	2	Respond	Contractor is on site with delivery expected at the end of Q4 2021.
Holdbrook, Portlaoise	20	Cluid	Contractor is on site. Phase 1 (10 units) are complete. Conveyancing is due to be completed by end September 2021. Phase 2 (10 units) to be delivered in June 2022.
Clonrooske Abbey, Portlaoise	32	Cluid	Contractor is on site with the development to be delivered in phases this year and next.
Spa Street, Droughill, Portarlinton	26	Oaklee	Expected delivery in February 2022
The Meadows, Mountrath Road, Portlaoise	48	Cluid	CALF funding has been approved for delivery of these units. Delivery is expected in Q1 2023
Ballymorris Court, Portarlinton	46	Cluid	CALF funding has been approved for delivery of these units. Expected delivery in 2022 and 2023
Harpers Lane, Portlaoise	44	Respond	Contractor is on site. Expected delivery in Q4 2022.

## “Housing For All” – A New Housing Plan for Ireland

On foot of the publication by Government of the Housing For All Plan on 2<sup>nd</sup> September Laois County Council has, this week, been advised of its targets over the next five years for delivery of social housing as follows;

Year	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026	Total
Build	200	79	80	87	88	534

## Refugee Resettlement Programme

All 22 families arriving in Laois under our Refugee Resettlement Programme are now housed and the housing element of the programme is now complete.

## Rebuilding Ireland Home Loan

Since 1<sup>st</sup> February 2018, 118 Rebuilding Ireland Home Loans have been approved, 99 applications have been declined. Some of the reasons for negative outcomes include:

- Don't have the deposit required
- Repayment on the mortgage would exceed 30/35% of their income
- Already sufficiently committed (i.e. already are at capacity with other loans)
- Credit rating issues

## HAP

There are currently 954 active HAP tenancies, 315 of which have transferred from rent supplement.

### Private House Grants

To the 13<sup>th</sup> September, 2021 the following grants for privately owned houses were approved:

- 89 Housing Aid for Older People Grant Applications approved in the sum of €381,838
- 62 Mobility Aids Grants approved in the sum of €269,030
- 47 Housing Adaptation Grants approved in the sum of €405,440

### Private Rented Inspections

Due to Covid-19 restrictions in place since the start of the year, physical inspections were suspended until 14<sup>th</sup> July, 2021. At 15<sup>th</sup> September, a total of 108 inspections of Private Rented properties have been carried out since physical inspections resumed.

### Housing Maintenance

Month	Work Orders Raised	Work Orders Closed	Work Orders Open
January 21	234	234	0
February 21	216	216	0
March 21	252	246	6
April 21	368	359	9
May 21	329	312	17
June 21	301	271	30
July 21	290	230	60
August 21	325	176	149
<b>TOTAL (YTD)</b>	<b>2,315</b>	<b>2,044</b>	<b>271</b>

### Housing Re-Lets

Month	LA Keys Surrendered	Properties Acquired	Works Completed
January 21	10	1	7
February 21	3	1	7
March 21	6	3	10
April 21	11	1	5
May 21	9	2	7
June 21	7	1	7
July 21	9	0	5
August 21	10	0	5
<b>TOTAL (YTD)</b>	<b>65</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>53</b>

**NOTE:** There are currently 48 vacant units from our existing stock and a further 13 units that the Council acquired recently. Works are either ongoing on these properties or specifications are being prepared for works to be carried out.

The Council has been notified of an allocation towards our costs in refurbishing 50 units over the course of 2021.

### Midlands Housing Retrofit Programme:

Budget approval has been granted 160 homes as part of a pilot initiative under the above programme.

The scope of eligible works includes:

- a) Attic Insulation
- b) Flat Roof Insulation
- c) External Wall Insulation / Dry Lining / Pumped Cavities
- d) Windows & Doors
- e) Heat Pumps
- f) LED Lighting

Houses must achieve a minimum BER rating of "B2" (or Cost Optimal Equivalent).

Tenders for Phase 1 (62 units – Mountain View, Quigley Park and Radharc Alain) has been awarded and works are to commence in September. Phase 2 and Phase 3 (98 units – Hillview, Derrymore and Kirwan Park) tenders are currently being evaluated with works to commence in Q3 2021.

### Energy Efficiency/Retrofitting Programme:

Budget approval has been granted for the retrofitting of 31 homes in O'Moore Place, Portlaoise.

Planned Maintenance works are also part of the planned programme.

Tenders advertised in September.

### Homeless Presentations

Time Period	Homeless Presentations	Emergency Homeless
13 <sup>th</sup> July – 15 <sup>th</sup> September, 2021	45	17
Year to Date	152	72

Individuals Accessing	Emergency Accommodation as of 15 <sup>th</sup> September, 2021	Transition Accommodation as of 15 <sup>th</sup> September, 2021
Adults	21	1
Children	4	0

### Housing Allocations Year to 15<sup>th</sup> September, 2021.

Method of Housing Delivery	Numbers allocated
1 <sup>st</sup> allocation including new builds LCC	8
2 <sup>nd</sup> and subsequent allocations LCC including refurbished stock	52
Nominations to Approved Housing Bodies	126
<i>Total Allocations</i>	<i>186</i>

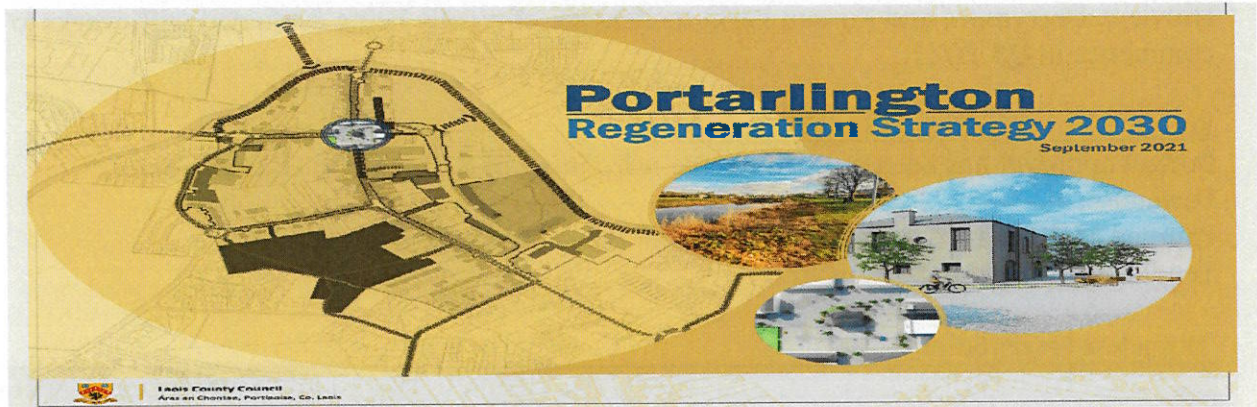
### Social Housing List at 15<sup>th</sup> September, 2021

Social Housing Applicants	911
Applicants in receipt of HAP	954
<i>Total</i>	<i>1,865</i>

**FORWARD PLANNING PROGRESS REPORT  
LAOIS DRAFT COUNTY DEVELOPMENT PLAN 2021-2027**

The CE report on the Submission to the Draft Plan was circulated to the Councillors on the 22<sup>nd</sup> June 2021 and considered by the full Council on the 1<sup>st</sup> September 2021. The proposed material amendments will be put on public display on the 23<sup>rd</sup> September 2021, for a period of four (4) weeks and made available for the Public to view and make further submissions on if required.

**PORTARLINGTON TOWN CENTRE REGENERATION STRATEGY 2030**



The CE report on the Submission to the Draft Strategy were considered and amendments to the Strategy endorsed by the Portarlington/Graiguecullen MD meeting of the 15<sup>th</sup> September 2021. This Strategy is available online to guide development and future public realm works to the betterment of Portarlington.

**STRADBALLY ROAD (TYRRELLS) MASTERPLAN – September 2021**



The Masterplan proposals for the Local Authority lands at Stradbally road (Formerly Tyrrells Lands) have been prepared by the Consultants commissioned on this project – LUC. The Proposals will go on public display for a 3 week period from 27<sup>th</sup> September 2021 – 18<sup>th</sup> October 2021 and an invitation to the public and interested bodies to engage in the process



on plan preparation. This plan is non statutory and will inform further Part VIII's in relation to development and funding applications on the site.

## DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT REPORT

### PLANNING APPLICATIONS COMPARATIVE FIGURES FROM 2020 TO 2021

Year	Valid applications from 01/01/2021 – 08/09/2021	Valid applications from 01/01/2020 – 08/09/2020
	506	352

Number of valid applications received:	506
Number of decisions made	482
Number of applications granted:	464 (Decisions to Grant)
Number of applications refused:	18 (Decisions to Refuse) 3.5% refusal rate
Invalid applications returned to applicant:	132 (2021 Invalid Applications)
No of requests to date	329
No of meetings held to date Up to and including the 8 <sup>th</sup> June 2021	314
Wait time	2.5 weeks

### ENFORCEMENT UPDATE

<u>2021</u>	<u>2021</u>		<u>2020</u>	
	Aug	Jan - Aug 2021	Aug	Jan - Aug 2020
<u>Service Review</u>				
Total number of new cases subject to complaints that were investigated	11	101	8	54
Number of Warning Letters served	5	165	25	196
Number of Enforcement Notices served	1	57	3	42
No Of cases referred for legal proceedings	0	6	2	3
Number of cases in Court(incl adjournments)	0	39	0	25
Number of cases Resolved in Court	0	3	0	1
Number of Files Closed	4	84	4	74
Number of cases on system	189	189	177	177

Enforcement Costs recouped	€ 600.86	€ 8,884.10	€ 250.00	€ 1,741.24
Number of Valid Retention Applications Received relating to Enforcement Action	4	33	3	23
Fees received through Valid Retention Applications Received relating to Enforcement Action	€4,143.72	€23,508.72	€1,080.00	€20,171.28
Legal fees paid	€0.00	€14,964.14	€499.80	€2,113.56

### Millbrook House, Abbeyleix, Protected Structure

A total of 30 expressions of interest were received by our agent Power Property Commercial Property Consultants in relation to Millbrook House. A shortlisting exercise was carried out on these submissions by the property consultant and planning staff. The shortlisted candidates will now be asked to prepare a further more detailed submission following a site inspection. Further assessment by an independent panel will then be held. The timeframe for the submissions and their determination has yet to be decided.

### Heritage Officer Update Report

September 2021

#### Just Transition Fund Project Conservation and Pollination

The design team for the Conservation and Pollination project has been appointed and initial site visits will be carried out September 23rd and 24th. In Laois the sites are Kilmanman (Mountmellick MD), Dysartgallen (Portlaoise MD) and Clopook (Portarlinton Graiguecullen MD). Conservation plans for all sites will be ready in draft form by year end

#### Portlaoise Plane

The Portlaoise Plane, built and flown by the Aldritt Brothers and John Conroy in 1912, was brought home to Portlaoise this week in a public event featuring the Music Generation Laois Trad Orchestra, the Irish Air corps and a flyover of Portlaoise by Lime Tree Airfield. The plane will now be returned to storage in the Granary on Tower Hill and plans will be made for its future display. A short video of the event is at <https://www.youtube.com/user/laoisheritage>

#### Know your Locality Laois

This online course on the heritage of Laois delivered by Irish Heritage School and funded through Creative Ireland starts on Tuesday 14<sup>th</sup> September and will run over 5 evenings online. As Covid restrictions have eased, the possibility of holding an in person field trip is being investigated. The course is booked out and it is planned to hold a second course in January 2022, also with Creative Ireland funding.

#### Conservation grants

All projects under the Built Heritage Investment Scheme, Historic Structures Fund and Community Monuments Fund are progressing well. Together the schemes will bring over €370,000 into Laois supporting jobs in traditional skills and the construction sector.

## Heritage and Biodiversity Strategy

The draft Heritage and Biodiversity Strategy will be presented to the SPC on 22nd September. It will then go out to public consultation, and a revised draft will be prepared to go to SPC and full Council in December.

## Community Monuments Fund

Projects at Old St Peters Graveyard and Killabban medieval church are now almost complete. Laois County Council is assisting Carlow Co Co in their project to move the Robert Hartpole Effigy from Portarlinton Town Park to Carlow County Museum.

## BROADBAND REPORT

### 1. National Broadband Ireland (NBI)

Section 254 Licences have been applied for in the Eastern Municipal Area to provide pole network for rollout. NBI are currently working on the Programme of works for rollout in the county. NBI are engaging with LCC in relation to above and in relation to hedge cutting.

### 2. WIFI 4 EU.

Contracts are to be signed with the successful tender company, "Network and Infrastructure Support Ltd" on 28<sup>th</sup> September 2021 – Portlaoise, Abbeyleix, Portarlinton, Mountmellick/Clonaslee

### 3. Broadband Connection Points (BCP's)

Broadband connection Points are available to the public as outdoor facilities currently due to public health guidelines at

- Vicarstown Community Centre
- Oisín House Rossmore Killeslin
- Emo "Old School" Community Centre
- Donaghmore Workhouse and Agriculture Museum.

Funding has been secured to develop these locations under the TVRS scheme for the provision of desks/ chairs, screens, IT equipment, Health and safety equipment for compliance with public health, etc. This will improve the offering at these locations to visitors and users of the facilities. This process will be conducted by LCC with the deadline of 31<sup>st</sup> December 2021.

## Local Enterprise & Economic Development

### Local Enterprise Office (LEO):

There continues to be a steady demand for LEO supports as follows:

- €262,926 approved in grant aid to 13 Laois businesses
- 843 owners/managers/employees participated on LEO training programmes
- 143 potential entrepreneurs have participated on Start Your Own Business Courses to-date
- 150 Laois businesses have availed of mentoring to-date in finance, marketing, exporting, HR & health & safety.
- 62 Trading Online Voucher approvals to the value of €131,424
- 12 Laois Companies currently taking part in a Green for Micro programme
- 27 Laois companies currently taking part in the Client Stimulus Programme

### Business Support Unit:

- Portlaoise Façade Enhancement Scheme: 13 applications received
- Portarlinton Façade Enhancement Scheme: 44 applications received
- Town & Village Streetscape Enhancement Scheme 2021: 64 applications received

### SMALL BUSINESS ASSISTANCE SCHEME COVID (SBASC)

A total of 63 payments have been made in respect of this Scheme to a value of €228,000

### RATE WAIVERS 2021

Rate waivers to the value of €3,397,360.43 have been applied to approximately 930 accounts for the period January to September 2021. Letters have issued to businesses advising them that the waivers have been applied to their accounts.

## Roads, Transportation & Smarter Travel

### Local Improvement Scheme 2021

At the start of 2021 there were a total of 84 applications on hand with some dating back to 2007. In 2021 Laois County Council received a total allocation of €554,259 which allowed for the completion of 13 Local Improvement Schemes Countywide broken down by Municipal District as follows. Schemes were completed on a county wide basis in date order in 2021.

Municipal District	No. of schemes completed
Borris in Ossory / Mountmellick	7
Portarlinton / Graiguecullen	6

The remaining 71 schemes date from 2018 to 2021 inclusive and are spread across the three Municipal Districts as follows;

Municipal District	No. of schemes completed
Portarlinton / Graiguecullen	29
Portlaoise	12
Borris in Ossory / Mountmellick	30

### Community Involvement Scheme

DTTaS has confirmed that the CIS scheme will be continued in 2022 and 2023. Applications for these years will be submitted before the end of September 2021.

### TII HD 28 – work sites

TII has identified 6 sites, located on the N77 (2 sites) and the N80 (4 sites) for works under the HD 28 funding programme. HD 28 works are necessary to improve skid resistance at the identified locations. The tender for the construction of these projects will issue before the end of September.

## Environment & Environmental Protection

### 1. Kyletelesha Landfill, Transfer Station and Civic Amenity Site, Portlaoise:

#### (a) Transfer Station & Civic Amenity Site

The management and operation of the facility is progressing satisfactorily.

(b) **Landfill Aftercare Monitoring**

All waste licence monitoring is on-going and up to date. Following local representations it is proposed to recommence the Landfill Monitoring Committee quarterly meetings. No date is set for the next meeting. All Covid-19 safety measures will be in place for all proposed meetings.

2. **Portarlinton Civic Amenity Site:**

This facility is operated and managed under contract with Bord Na Mona Recycling.

3. **Historic Unregulated Waste Disposal Sites:**

The contract for the Environmental Assessment of 3 unregulated waste disposal sites (Aghanure, Killabban & Rathdowney Road, Durrow) has been awarded to O'Callaghan Moran & Associates, Environmental Consultants.

The Site Environmental Assessment work is underway. The Department Grant must be drawn down by early December 2021.

4. **Bring Banks:**

There are 42 Bring Bank sites provided in the county A total of 1391.69 tonnes of recyclable material is recorded to 17<sup>th</sup> September 2021.

Laois County Council entered into a new contract (regional contract) on the 01<sup>st</sup> May 2021 with Glassco for the collection and treatment of glass and cans from our bring banks. This new contract sees a significant cost increase for the Council for the service.

The number of complaints received regarding the tidiness and maintenance of the bottle bank sites has decreased significantly (88 in 2020 & 9 in 2021) since a member of staff was assigned responsibility for the upkeep of the sites.

Littering and illegal dumping is still a problem at some of the busier sites. It is proposed to use the recently purchased audible message device (AMD) at these sites to try and reduce the littering incidences.

5. **Waste Enforcement & Litter Management:**

(a) **Waste Enforcement**

Table 1 below details the number and types of complaints received to date by the Environment Section.

Complaint Type	Litter	Abandoned Cars	Waste Enforcement incl. C&D	Management & Infrastructure (Bring Banks)	Air	Water	Noise	Vet	Total
Jan	10	2	53512	1	2	2	1	2	73
Feb	8	3	71	1	1	4	2	2	92
March	38	5	93	2	3	8	2	1	152
April	43	1	78	2	4	5	1	5	139
May	23	4	57	0	6	10	6	2	108
June	7	3	47	0	8	3	3	2	73
July	17	4	41	1	8	7	2	2	82
Aug	7	4	35	2	7	3	3	2	63
Up to 20 <sup>th</sup> Sept.	3	2	37	0	2	2	2	2	50
<b>Total</b>	<b>156</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>512</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>832</b>

## Table 1 - Environmental Complaint Register

- 2021 - 832 complaints logged for investigation to 20<sup>th</sup> Sept. 2021.
- 2021 – 66 fixed penalty notices issued to date, for breaches of Litter Pollution Act, 1997
- Notices – One Section 9 (Litter Pollution Act) and four Section 55 Notices under the Waste Management Act have issued to date in 2021 regarding unauthorised litter or waste activities. Waste Enforcement Officers are working to resolve issues where possible, but all cases will be pursued through Courts as necessary.



A Draft Litter Management Plan 2022-2024 was presented to the SPC in September 2021. A final draft of the Plan is being prepared prior to advertisement in local newspapers and radio for the public consultation process.

It is anticipated to have the new Litter Management Plan fully reviewed and adopted by the end of 2021.

### 6. Illegal Dumping:

Waste Enforcement continue to tackle illegal dumping in various problematic areas within the County in accordance with current legislation. Enforcement efforts are limited by virtue of the current prohibition on the use of CCTV etc.

Table 2 below shows quantities of illegally dumped waste collected between 01/01/2021 and the 31/08/2021.

Illegal Dumping Cleanups – 2021					
Tonnages					
Month	Contractor	Litter Wardens	Month	Contractor	Litter Wardens
January	31.92	6.5	May	29.14	13.62
February	12.60	22.49	June	14.50	6.6
March	65.58	13.48	July	10.00	9.6
April	25.02	11.8	August	12.35	5.26
Total Collected			290.46 Tonnes		

Table 2 – Quantities of Illegally Dumped Waste Collected

### 7. Anti-Dumping Initiatives 2021

All projects are currently underway;

#### a) Extended National Spring Clean/Autumn Blitz 2021

Environment Section in conjunction with Tidy Towns ran an Autumn Blitz from the 20<sup>th</sup> to 24<sup>th</sup> September 2021. This event was kindly sponsored by Bord Na Mona recycling. The Tidy towns coordinated the clean up groups in their area in line with covid 19 regulations and the environment staff organised the distribution of clean up materials and collection schedule.

#### b) UAV/Drone technology and Audio Device

The audio messaging device (AMD) is currently installed at Bruders Bridge, Portlaoise to tackle the high level of illegal dumping occurring in this area. There is a lot of positive feedback on the effectiveness of this device.

Two UAV's have been purchased and training to be scheduled in the near future. Drones to be used when the appropriate legislation is enacted.

c) **Bulky Waste Amnesty**

The aim is to target problem areas of frequent illegal dumping and capture bulky waste streams such as household furniture and mattresses in advance of Halloween bonfires. The designated problem areas were selected based on number of historic clean-ups and on the capability of households to transport bulky wastes.

Where funding is available this may be carried out in other areas of the county.

Two dates completed: O'Moore Place & Lakeglen – 9<sup>th</sup> September  
Knockmay, Oakleaf Place, Parnell Crescent, Clonrooske View, Cherrygrove & Hillview Drive – 15<sup>th</sup> September

Further Bulky Waste

- Kockmay, Oakleaf Place, Parnell Crescent, Clonrooske View, Cherrygrove & Hillview Drive - Wednesday 22<sup>nd</sup> September.

d) **Clean up of Bog Areas – Cloninagh/Errill/Clonreher Bogs**

Work has started on Cloninagh & Errill Bog.

8. **Anti-Dog Fouling Campaign**

- An active dog fouling awareness billboard campaign was run from the 6<sup>th</sup> to 19<sup>th</sup> September at 3 locations throughout the County.
- The Green Dog Walkers Forms were converted into an online version and in 2 weeks a further 74 dog walkers have signed up. A thank you letter was posted to each participate along with a goody pack and instructions on how to report dog fouling incidences.
- A colouring competition was launched to remind that children are back to school and a lot of them are walking so please be responsible and clean up after your dog.
- New dog fouling stencils are been sourced with the logo “bag it, bin it”, for use by the tidy towns with a more durable colour paint.
- Weekly Anti Dog Fouling posts are being posted on social media.



- In 2021 (to 15<sup>th</sup> September), Laois County Fire & Rescue Service attended 332 emergency incidents consisting of 163 fires, 112 special service incidents & 57 false alarms.

**Turnout by Station\*:**

Portlaoise – 117	Portarlinton - 72	Stradbally – 42	Mountmellick – 76
Abbeyleix - 35	Mountrath – 47	Durrow – 34	Rathdowney – 22

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

**Fire Services Capital Programme**

- Planning & design is continuing for the Mountmellick Fire Station upgrade, a, €150,000 project, which consists of a fire service drill tower & new concrete yard to the rear of the fire station. The tender process is now closed. 2 responses were received & are currently being assessed with a recommendation to appoint a consultant to follow in due course.
- In recent months Elected Members were advised of an allocation of €140,000 for the acquisition of a new Water Tanker to support Fire Services operations in County Laois. The tanker chassis has been delivered to HPMP Fire, who are now in the process of building the body. Delivery is expected in Quarter 3 of 2021

**Risk Based Management - Nearest Available Resource Project**

- In accordance with the recently issued Circular Fire 01/2021, Laois County Council has established the Senior Project Group which has endorsed this project. The Working Technical Group has substantially completed its work. New townland data sets have been completed & uploaded it to the STORM mobilising system in ERCC & is being tested operationally in advance of full sign off of the project.

WATER SERVICES AND RURAL WATER

**Public Water and Wastewater Capital**

The following capital works have been approved by Irish Water:

**Ballyroan WwTP** – This is now complete. Process testing results show compliance with the licence requirements . We will be encouraging IW to proceed with storm tank and waste sludge storage tank as soon as possible.

**Durrow** – bring an additional production borewell into service in Fermoy – M + E works substantially complete, David Ball completing testing - flow, level, quality - of the new production well. Provision of a storage/blend tank and booster pump set also being discussed with IW.

**Coolbanagher** – On the 9<sup>th</sup> June, 2021 Irish Water approved a budget of €200,000 to bring an additional borehole into production at Coolbanagher. Laois County Council organised and oversaw the delivery of the required works, PW09 is currently pumping to waste with a sample being taken for testing. The intention is to pump to production next and progressively raise from 25 to 75m<sup>3</sup>/hr. IW now progressing with developing well PW07 and PW08 and finish off this project.



**Disinfection/PH control programme;** The Strand WTP – boil water notice has now been lifted, installation is process proved and commissioned. Civil works have now commenced in Derryguile and Kyle WTP, MEICA works have also begun at Knocks WTP. MEICA works are due to start at Ballyroan WTP shortly with design works advancing for Five-Wells, Kilminchy, Lough and Derrymoyle WTPs.

**Castletown WwTP – Inlet Works Storm and Sludge Program,** new storm tank and sludge holding tank intended to be installed on site by the end of 2021. Replacement of fixed decanter with moving decanter is expected in the next two months. Order is placed and fabrication is underway. Planning permission has now been confirmed as granted for this upgrade. Once the relevant Work Order is issued by IW a kick-off meeting is to be arranged and all stakeholders invited.

**Containerised unit program –** UV containerised unit along with break tank have been installed on site, commissioning/testing now substantially complete – process proving period to start once on-site issue with existing valve/pipework resolved by LCC.

**Leakage Reduction Programme –**Mains Rehabilitation works now complete in Portlaoise (Colliers Lane), Stradbally (Church Avenue), Abbeyleix (Tonduff) and O'Daly Terrace, Rathdowney. Find & Fix leak detection being carried out at present in Mountmellick, Portlaoise and Graiguecullen. ANB submitted by LCC to Irish Water for replacement of 150mm dia. asbestos watermain 900m long in the Swan supply due to ongoing watermain bursts in the area.

#### Multi Annual Rural Water Programme 2019-2021

**Source Protection (Phase 2):** On the 27<sup>th</sup> August the Department advised of further funding being provided for a number of group water schemes. Ballacolla GWS has been chosen as one of 12 GWS's nationally that will be used as a pilot GWS for this work. The funding is at 100%.

#### **Measure 3 - Enhancement and Water Conservation**

**Ballypickas GWS:** proposal for funding for a network extension submitted to the Department. Proposal refused as the current multi-annual programme is fully committed.

The Heath GWS has been awarded Water Safety Planning & Quality Assurance in the first NFGWS Group Water Scheme Excellence Awards.

**Well Grants –** Applications continue to be processed. 25 no. applications have been received to date in 2021. All eligible claims to the Department for funding have been submitted and paid.

**Laboratory –** The Laboratory continues to be accredited to the international standard ISO 17025:2017. The sample throughput in 2021 is anticipated to be 4, 500. Staff continue working a shift pattern (09:00 – 16:00 & 16:00 – 23:00) to foster social distancing within the Laboratory. There has been significant capital investment in instrumentation to improve testing capabilities and a new more efficient and secure laboratory information management system was installed in January (LabWorks). The purchase of a Graphite Furnace Spectrometer is being processed.

### Corporate, Community, Climate Action, Arts, Culture, Libraries & Tourism

#### CORPORATE

Work is progressing on the preparation of the draft 2022/2023 Register of Electors which is due to be published on the 1<sup>st</sup> November 2021

## COMMUNITY

### Covid-19 Community Response

#### **Covid-19 Helpline**

To date (30.03.2020 – 17.09.2021) the helpline has received **814 calls**.

#### **Call Breakdown**

Calls Received 2020 – 732

Calls Received Jan 2021 – 24

Calls Received Feb 2021 – 13

Calls Received March 2021 – 13

Calls Received April 2021 – 10

Calls Received May 2021 - 0

Calls Received June 2021 – 3

Calls Received July 2021 – 4

Calls Received August 2021 – 7

Calls Received September 2021 - 8

Calls received in 2021 remain low, accounting for 82 of the 818 calls received to date. This ongoing reduction in calls received can be attributed to the easing of restrictions, the roll out of the COVID Vaccination programme and local groups taking a proactive lead in their communities assisting the most vulnerable.

### Pride of Place 2021

Abbeyleix Tidy Town have been entered into the Pride of Place 2021 competition by Laois County Council. The judging took place on Monday 20<sup>th</sup> September in Abbeyleix Library.

### **PPN organised Walks/Tours**

A guided walk of Heywood Gardens was led on 8<sup>th</sup> August by Amanda Pitcairns who is a descendant of Sir Edwin Lutyens. Heywood Gardens is part of the Laois Gardens Trail and Laois Heritage Trail.

A guided tour of Timahoe Road Tower lead by local guide Roghan Headen on 14<sup>th</sup> August followed by a talk by Sean Murray, Laois Archaeologist on the digital survey. This was a joint event for Heritage Week with the Heritage Office.

### **Local Authority Weatherproofing & Outdoor Dining Infrastructure Scheme**

Following project submission by Community Department, Laois County Council has been allocated €161,794 under Fáilte Ireland's Outdoor Dining Enhancement Scheme.

Hynd's Square in Portlaoise has been allocated €129,446 while Durrow will receive €32,348 in funding. The scheme provides grant funding to facilitate year-round weather-proofed outdoor dining infrastructure with the objective that these works will increase the outdoor dining capacity in the two communities

## **CLIMATE ACTION**

### **Midland Science Climate Action Workshops in Portlaoise Primary Schools**

Laois County Council Climate Action Section in association with Energia have arranged for Climate Action Courses for all 5<sup>th</sup> class pupils in all 6 primary schools in Portlaoise Town (15 classes) delivered by Midland Science.

These workshops have already commenced with 4 workshops over 8 weeks ending in October 2021 with each class presenting a project at the end of the course. All secondary schools will also receive one -off workshops from Midland Science.

### **Bike Week Event 15<sup>th</sup> September**

Bike Week Event – an event entitled “Rollercoaster through Portlaoise” – was held as a launch pad to create a foundation for roll out of cycle buses took place on the 15<sup>th</sup> of Sept.

Laois County Council Climate Action Section were assisted by An Taisce, An Garda Síochána and Laois Civil Defence. The aim was to bring a cycle bus from schools on Summerhill out Portlaoise Southern Circular Rd to JFL Ave and back in the Timahoe Rd onto Summerhill. Cyclists were 2 abreast with adult assistance by way of 2 bikes front, back and either side of the cycle bus. Camera footage and photographers were organised for the event for promotional purposes. The event was hugely successful with great feedback provided by participants.

- 3 schools participated
- 120 no. students participated.

### **SPORT & LEISURE UPDATE**

- **Bike Week 2021** Funding of €12,400 was received to deliver a full programme of events from 12<sup>th</sup> - 18<sup>th</sup> September and which overlapped with European Mobility Week 16<sup>th</sup> - 22<sup>nd</sup> September. In addition to Laois County Councils Flagship event outlined above re the Cycle Bus, Bike Week was very successful and included 20 events held in various locations county-wide in conjunction with SVT Hub, Rathdowney/Errill Activity Hub, Laois Sports Partnership and Mountmellick Youth and Family Resource Centre.
- **Clar Funding Announcements August/September 2021**  
Under Measure 3a, LCC was successful in securing funding of €50k for a Community garden in Camross.  
In relation to Measure 1 and 2 the following applications were successful:  
M 2 Ballyfin Community Development Association -Provision of a children’s playground. €49,499.87 M 2 St Aengus FC- Construction of two accessible toilets with associated septic tank and biodiversity planting. €30,517.32 M 1 Tobar an Leinn NS Provide safer access and a pedestrian crossing. €49,500.00

### **ARTS & CULTURE**

#### **In the Open | Faoin Spéir – Local title Re:CENTRING**

A programme has been set out to take place in seven towns over seven months. The first event happening in Stradbally on Sunday Sept 26<sup>th</sup> – large selection of events happening throughout the town including Concert with Jack L and community art exhibitions, demonstrations, Bandwagon and sculpture on the Green, children’s event and exhibition at Laois Arthouse.

#### **Culture Night**

A packed programme of 15 events online and offline took place on Friday 17<sup>th</sup> September. Live events included:

**PORTLAOISE** - Music from the Bandwagon – at Laois Music Centre and at the DAC the premiere screening of Portlaoise native Aishling Conroys award winning film and an amazing concert with Pádraig Rynne | Tara Breen | Jim Murray | Dónal Lunny - At Kavanaghs Upstairs – performance art.

**RATHDOWNEY** -the unveiling of a high quality mural was very well received. In **MOUNTMELICK** – audiences enjoyed the Anne Jellicoe Outdoor Projection at Mountmellick Community School and Mountmellick Comhaltas performed at St Vincent’s Hospital, Mountmellick.

STRADBALLY - Laois Arthouse Gallery hosted 'Moving On' – An Exhibition of Ceramics  
PORTARLINGTON -Art Workshops were held at Mount Henry Art Studios for children teenagers and adults.

Online events included the Weaving Textiles & Poetry –a film made in celebration of "Poetry Town", and Mountmellicks rich textile heritage. Platform 31 winner, artist Ella de Burca in Conversation with Kevin Kavanagh – A Virtual Tour of ABBEYLEIX Heritage House and Museum and a film on The art of woodcraft: by sculptor Evgeny Chubatyy – CASTLETOWN native Tony Ferns presented a Comedy and Open Mic event Battle of the Axe.

### Poetrytown

Lots of interest generated in this project with poetry workshops and local poems created. Arthur Broomfield appointed as Poet Laureate for Mountmellick. Nationwide featured the town in the lead up to Culture Night highlighting the making of a film to showcase the rich history of textiles and the Poetrytown project.

### Laois Arthouse

New exhibition opened for Culture Night- Ceramic Work by Monica O'Meara titled 'Moving On' available from Friday 17<sup>th</sup> Sept – 15<sup>th</sup> October.

A 10 year commemoration of the Arthouse has commenced with exhibition and publication in planning for December.

### Creative Ireland Laois

The second of the Laois Series: Celebrating Laois Women was launched on Culture Night with an outdoor projection on the life and work of Mountmellick native, Anne Jellicoe (1823-80). The commissioned animation work by artist, Caroline Conway was projected onto the front façade of Mountmellick Community School.

A mural created by artist, ADW in consultation with Rathdowney community members and students from St Fergal's College - celebrating the spirit and people of Rathdowney, was launched on Culture Night. In addition, the newly formed Rathdowney Artists Group was also launched at the same event.

### ASSOCIATED COMPANIES

#### *Dunamaise Arts Centre*

The impact on the company of the long phases of closure in 2020 has resulted in a stark reduction of all generated income and a reliance on state funding. The Covid-19 pandemic has impacted the company very severely.

Both the Arts Council and Laois County Council maintained their annual funding commitments. The Department of Arts also made emergency re-opening funding available, and the Arts Council granted a Capacity Building Fund. The latter was awarded to the company to invest in a new Strategic Business Plan 2021- 2025. The Board and Staff team engaged consultant Karan Thompson and worked through this project in early 2021. The roll out of this Plan will be undertaken in a strategic, structured way over late 2021 and into the coming years, and sets the company up for a carefully managed recovery, building back up audiences and ticket sales as well as commercial client base and pursuing new opportunities. Staff resources were kept to a minimum until the venue reopened gradually in phases from 5 July, 2021, with first live performances in September 2021, through still under strictly limited capacities and operations.

While it is hoped to get back to fuller capacities and a busier programme of events over Q4 2021 it will take time throughout 2022 to build back up. In order to

continue to provide services and facilities to artists and audiences alike across our community, the Company relies on local authority and arts council funding as well as careful management of the cost base, to minimise the burden of expenditure while trading is at a reduced level.

#### *Laois Leisure / Portarlington Leisure Centre CLG.*

At the June monthly meeting of Laois County Council, the Members were advised that a licence to manage and operate the Portlaoise Leisure Centre had been granted to Portarlington Leisure Centre Company Ltd.

Accordingly, both centres (Portlaoise and Portarlington) have been under licence to that Company since the end of June 2021.

Following a period of governance consolidation over the summer, the board formally appointed Mr. Sean Quirke as Operations Manager over both centres. This came into effect on September 1<sup>st</sup>.

In an effort to have the Portlaoise Centre fully open to the public the new Board/licensee has set about

- Recruitment of staff
- The preparation of revised safe operating procedures to ensure the safety of staff and patrons
- An audit of facilities and equipment, a review of procedures and client services with a view towards achieving a recognised quality standard.

For its part, Laois County Council has assigned a Chartered Engineer from its staff to oversee and implement a number of essential refurbishment and improvement works to the value of >€300,000. Work done and to be completed to date includes:

- Replacement of tiles
- Replacement of flooring to majority area of the building
- Replacement of wooden door elements
- Replacement of the pool heating system
- Upgrade of lighting and ventilation
- New layout for café area
- New Building Management System
- Painting throughout and renewal of lockers
- Improvements to external drainage and damp proofing

Elected members should be assured between the new Board, the newly appointed Centre Manager and the works being implemented by Laois County Council, that a clean, revitalised and fully functioning centre will be open to the public within about 5 or 6 weeks.

It should also be noted that Portarlington Leisure Centre has been open to the public for a couple of months and operating in accordance with Covid-19 guidance for the sector.

#### *Portlaoise Enterprise Centre Ltd*

The Company reports a positive rebound of business and occupancy at the property in Clonminam.

#### *Portarlington Enterprise Centre Ltd*

The Company reports a positive rebound of business and occupancy at the property in Ballymorris.

### *Treo Nua*

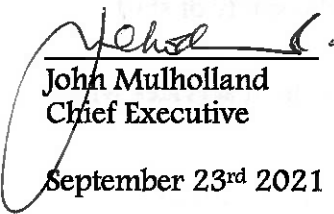
Treo Nua Resource Centre remained opened through Covid for tenants, but Training Rooms were not available due to government restrictions. However, bookings have now resumed with clients such as LOETB and Laois Partnership. Dance classes, Latvian Sunday school and other church group bookings have also resumed. Art classes for older people which ceased last year are starting back in October. The centre continues to play an important role not only for tenants but the local and wider community. All usage continues in compliance with the prevailing Covid rules.

### *Portlaoise Innovation Centre DAC (The Cube)*

The DAC is on the point of signing the Turnkey contract in respect of the premises at Tower Hill, Portlaoise. The Cube Director is currently engaged in providing virtual services connected with low carbon economy and is also working on attracting various businesses and start-ups to the Centre.

## Chief Executive's Orders

- ✚ A schedule of Chief Executive Orders signed during the month of August/September 2021 will be circulated.



John Mulholland  
Chief Executive

September 23<sup>rd</sup> 2021