

LAOIS COUNTY COUNCIL

COMHAIRLE CHONTAE LAOISE



**MONTHLY MANAGEMENT REPORT
AUGUST/SEPTEMBER 2022
TUARASCÁIL BHAINISTÍOCHTA
Lúnasa/Meán Fómhair 2022**

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 2022 is as follows:-

Finance, & Allocations Notified

Expenditure and income to the 31/08/2022 is summarised below:

Service Division	Budget Allocation	Expenditure to 31/08/2022
Housing and Building	19,748,000	11,073,292
Road Transportation and Safety	22,946,000	11,368,266
Water Services	3,259,000	2,312,295
Development Management	9,706,000	5,178,511
Environmental Services	7,939,000	4,406,074
Recreation and Amenity	4,361,000	2,790,480
Agriculture, Education, Health and Welfare	786,000	331,106
Miscellaneous Services	9,453,000	5,583,845
Central Management Charge	10,139,000	5,792,852
Total	88,337,000	48,836,721

Service Division	Budget Allocation	Income to 31/08/2022
Housing and Building	21,415,000	11,350,043
Road Transportation and Safety	18,682,000	5,042,882
Water Services	4,380,000	3,029,195
Development Management	6,946,000	3,976,811
Environmental Services	1,942,000	1,435,952
Recreation and Amenity	781,000	676,396
Agriculture, Education, Health and Welfare	314,000	135,002
Miscellaneous Services	8,702,000	4,806,154
Superannuation	714,000	458,327
Local Property Tax	9,065,150	6,043,432
Rates	14,662,952	9,582,669
Capital transfer	732,898	
Total	88,337,000	46,536,863

Allocations Notified

TVRS 2022 Building Acquisition Measure-Portarlinton	€350,000
Local Improvement Schemes	€508,397
Clár Measure 1	€317,605
Clár Measure 1 – Tranche 2	€126,500
Dormant Account Fund (Librarues)– DRCD	€27,035
ORIS 2022	€219,712

HOUSING DELIVERY

Housing Delivery Action Plan (May 2022)

The Housing Delivery Action Plan (HDAP) can be found on <https://laois.ie/wp-content/uploads/LCC-Housing-Delivery-Action-Plan-2022-2026.pdf>

The following targets have been approved for social housing delivery -

Proposed delivery programme by year (approved and proposed units)

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 f social housing delivery figures.

Social Housing Schemes completed – September 2022

Location	No. of Houses	House Types	Constructed by	Comment
Coolroe, Ballybrittas	1	3-bed bungalow	LCC Construction	Complete
The Orchard, Ballylynan (Phase 1)	2	2 No. 3-Bed 2 Storey	LCC Turnkey	2 units delivered from a total of 5.
Droughill Lawns, Portarlinton	26	14 no. 2-beds (8 bungalows) 12 no 3-beds	Oaklee Housing	Tenanted
Bruach Na Habhainn, Killeen (Phase 1)	3	3 No. 3 Bed 2 Storey	LCC Turnkey	Complete – to be tenanted. Final unit to be delivered in Q2 2023.
Rathvarna, Killeshin	2	2 No. 3 Bed 2 Storey	Part V	Delivered & Tenanted
Aughnaharna, Portlaoise	2	2 No. 3 Bed 2 Storey	Part V	To be tenanted
Gleann na Glaise, Ballyroan	10	10 No. 3 Bed 2 Storey	LCC (Construction)	Construction phase completed – handover in progress
Sean Doire, Durrow	22	10 No. 2 Bed 2 Storey 8 No. 3 Bed 2 Storey 4 No. 2 Bed 1 Storey	LCC (Construction)	Construction phase completed – handover in progress
The Maltings & Roselawn, Portlaoise (Phase 1)	15	Roselawn (15 no. 3 bed 2 storey)	Cluid Housing	Transfer of units at end of September.
TOTAL UNITS COMPLETE	83			

Social Housing Schemes Currently Under Construction – September 2022

Location	Total No. of Houses	House Types	Constructed by	Comment

Featherbed Lane, Borris-In-Ossory (Ph 2)	5	5 No. 3 Bed 2 storey	LCC Turnkey	Delivery imminent - end September.
Pattison Estate, Mountmellick	10	10 No. 3 Bed 2 Storey	LCC (Construction)	On site – expected delivery Q4 2022
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 Q2 2023
The Orchard, Ballylynan (Phase 2)	2	2 No. 3-Bed 2 Storey	LCC (Turnkey)	On Site – Phase 2 (3 units) delivery Q4 2022
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 – delivery Q3/Q4 2023
Market Square, Portarlinton	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	TAU funded scheme. Issues have arisen with discovery of an underground ESB cable on site. Estimated delivery date Q1 2023 but dependent on ESB addressing issue as a matter of urgency.
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 Q1 2023
Clonrooske Abbey, Portlaoise	32	28 no. 3 bed 2 storey 4 no. 4 bed 2 storey	Cluid Housing	Cluid Housing has advised that: Phase 1 (14 units) now have utility connections, snagging to be completed over the coming weeks, with delivery expected by the end of October 2022. Phase 2 (6 units) are at second fix stage. It is not likely that these will be ready for handover in 2022. Phase 3 (12 units) are completed, however utilities not yet connected. The developer has not been able to give Cluid definitive dates for connections, but it is possible that pending connections, these units may be delivered in 2022. This will be will monitored over the coming weeks. Overall, there has been progress noted on-site in particular to the phase 1 units over the last few weeks. Cluid will advise any updates as soon as they have same.
The Maltings & Roselawn, Portlaoise (Phase 2)	40	Maltings (40 no. 2 bed apts – over 55's)	Cluid Housing	On site. Phase 2 (40 units) expected delivery date Q1 2023

Holdbrook, Portlaoise	10	10 no. 2 bed apts (over 55's)	Cluid Housing	On site. Expected delivery Q4 2022
The Springs, Kilminchy, Portlaoise	43	43 no. 3 bed houses	Cluid Housing	On site – 2 phases to be delivered together in Q4 2022
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. First phase (13 units) delivery Q4 2022
Ballymorris Green, Portarlinton	46	46 no. 3 bed houses	Cluid Housing	3 phases. Currently on site - Phases 1 and 2 (34 units) expected delivery Q4 2022. Phase 3 (12 units) expected delivery Q1 2023
Doirinn Alainn, Ballylinan (Phase 4)	9	6 no. 3 bed houses 3 no. 2 bed houses	North & East Housing	Last phase of this development – on site; expected delivery Q4 2022.
South Dublin Road, Kilminchy	36	13 no. 2 bed houses 23 no 3 bed houses	Cooperative Housing	On site – 3 phases for delivery during 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	459			

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

Location/Scheme	No of Houses	House Types	To be constructed by	Comment
St. Kieran's Errill	14	6 No. 2 Bed 2 Storey 8 No. 2 Bed 1 Storey	LCC (Construction)	Construction to commence in Q4 2022.
Mooreville, Rathdowney	7	3 No. 2 Bed bungalow 4 No. 3 Bed 2 Storey	LCC (Construction)	Construction to commence in Q4 2022.
Carraig Glas, Stradbally	26	15 no. 2 bed houses 9 no. 3 bed houses 2 no 4 bed houses	LCC (Construction)	Awaiting Stage 3 approval from DHLGH.
Clonrooske, Portlaoise	12	8 No. 2 Bed 2 Storey 3 No. 3 Bed 2 Storey 1 No. 3 Bed 1 Storey	LCC (Construction)	Stage 2 approved in June 2022. Part VIII report to be presented at Sept Council meeting consultation advertised.
Iona, Portlaoise	7	2 No. 3 Bed 2 Storey 1 No. 2 Bed 2 Storey 4 No. 1 Bed Apt	LCC (Construction)	Stage 2 to be submitted in Q3 2022
Doonane	12	12 no. 3 bed 2 storey	LCC (Construction)	Stage 2 submitted in Q3 2022
Derry Road, Durrow	22	9 No. 1 Bed 1 Storey 4 No. 2 Bed 2 Storey 5 No. 3 Bed 2 Storey	LCC (Construction)	18 dwellings and a minimum of 4 serviced sites proposed Stage 1 Approved
Ballyadams	1	1 no. 6 bed bungalow	LCC (Construction)	Stage 1 Approved – Design Team appointed; Stage 2 to be submitted in Q4 2022

Stradbally Road, Portlaoise	80		Mixed Tenure	Masterplan for entire lands recently noted by Portlaoise MD members. Tender recently issued for design team, closing date mid Oct 2022.
Bracklone St, Portarlington	15	15 no. 2 bed houses	LCC (Construction)	Stage 1 approved in Q3 2022
Rushall Mountrath	2	2 no. 3 bed 2 storey	LCC (Construction)	Stage 1 To Be Submitted in Q4 2022
Main St, Ballinakill	3	2 No. 2 Bed 2 Storey 1 No. 1 Bed Apt	LCC (Construction)	Stage 1 To Be Submitted in Q4 2022
Moanbaun, Mountrath	15	4 No. 3 Bed 2 Storey 7 No. 2 Bed 2 Storey 4 No. 2 Bed 1 Storey	LCC (Construction)	Stage 1 submitted in Q3 2022
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	Application submitted to DHLGH in Q3 2022
Convent Lands, Portlaoise (CAS)	52	33 no 2 bed apts 15 no 1 bed apts 4 no. 2 bed houses	Sophia Housing	Stage 3 application approved; Stage 1 of tender process for construction published on e-tenders on 26 th August; closing date for pre-qualification submissions in 30 th Sept.
County Hotel, Portlaoise (CAS)	10	8 no. 1 bed apts 2 no. 2 bed apts	Cluid Housing	Site investigations to inform Stage 2 CAS application and planning have commenced.
“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	Part VIII approved; proceeding to site transfer to Cluid for commencement of construction in Nov 2022 Radharc Darach – new name agreed by the Naming Committee.
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 to revert regarding construction commencement date. CALF Funding issues to be resolved
Doran’s site adj to O’ Moore Place, Portlaoise	50		Cooperative Housing	Discussions ongoing with landowner in relation to site development.
TOTAL	447			

AFFORDABLE HOUSING

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

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

Discussions currently ongoing with house builders based on Expressions of Interest submitted for turnkey arrangements and potential mixed tenure options on some sites. Housing Team are also pursuing eligible Part V units for affordable housing under recent legislation allowing for 20% contribution applying to land purchased before 1st September 2015 and after 1 August 2021.

Further details on the Affordable Housing Scheme and related legislation will be presented to the members in Q4 2022.

REGENERATION / VACANT HOMES

Croí Cónaithe (Towns) Fund: Ready to Build Scheme (Serviced Sites for New Homes)

The second stream of the Croí Cónaithe (Towns) Fund : Ready to Build Scheme (Serviced Sites for New Homes), was launched on the 21 September 2022 by the Minister for Housing, Local Government and Heritage, Darragh O'Brien T.D., together with Minister of State Peter Burke T.D and Minister of State Malcolm Noonan T.D. where local authorities will make available serviced sites at reduced cost to support self-build home ownership.

Local authorities will 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. It is intended that the local authority will develop existing site(s) in their control or purchase site(s) and make them available for development by providing services and access to the site(s) concerned.

The Vacant Homes Officers (VHOs) will oversee a coordinated approach to the scheme and will actively lead the uptake within the local authority of the Croí Cónaithe (Towns) Fund.

The **Croí Conaithe (Towns) Scheme** was launched on the 14th July 2022.

A grant of up to a maximum of €30,000 will be 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. This will be subject to upper limits for the types of work specified below having regard to a reasonable cost assessment by the local authority. The grant is inclusive of VAT cost of the works. The Scheme is being administered by the Local Authority.

To date, 7 applications for the Croí Cónaithe (Towns) Fund have been received. 2 of these have been refused and 5 are under consideration.

Other schemes which continue to be in use are:

- (a) The Buy and Renew Scheme
- (b) The Repair and Leasing Scheme

CPO

Vacant Properties acquired by CPO now in Council ownership	15
Properties currently undergoing CPO	5

Repair & Leasing

Applications received to date	38
Applications approved to proceed	7
Applications under consideration	3
No. of Leases commenced	1
Applications Refused	27*

*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.

It is proposed to hold a vacancy seminar/workshop with the elected members to discuss vacancy and the measures available to reduce it.

This seminar will take place in Q4 2022, members will be sent a date for diary in the coming week.

HOUSING STOCK**Housing Re-Lets**

Month	LA Keys Surrendered	Properties Acquired	Works Completed
January 22	9	0	3
February 22	6	1	11
March 22	5	0	4
April 22	5	0	14
May 22	6	0	5
June 22	3	0	7
July 22	3	0	3
August 22	4	0	5
TOTAL (YTD)	41	1	52

NOTE: There are currently 23 vacant units from our existing stock and a further 7 units that the Council acquired. Works are either ongoing on most of these properties or specifications are being prepared for works to be carried out. However, there are 5 houses amongst the 23 that are in a state of gross disrepair and will require significant levels of expenditure before they are deemed fit for reletting.

NOTE: Laois County Council have been approved Voids Department funding in 2022 for 55 units at a total cost of €605,000.

Housing Maintenance

Month	Work Orders Raised	Work Orders Closed	Work Orders Open
January 22	424	424	0
February 22	517	517	0
March 22	404	404	0
April 22	392	384	8
May 22	352	333	19
June 22	363	339	24
July 22	340	306	34
August 22	364	286	78
TOTAL (YTD)	3,156	2,993	163

Midlands Retrofit Programme:

Address	Properties	Units Commenced	Units Completed	Update
Mountain View Sq., Portlaoise	24	24	24 houses M&E complete	M&E Works complete on 24 houses. Boxing of piping and plastering around doors on-going. All Works to be fully complete by 23 rd September 2022.
Hillview Drive, Portlaoise	19	19	19 houses M&E complete	M&E Works complete on 19 houses, Boxing of piping and plastering around doors on-going. Additional house added. All Works to be fully complete by 23 rd September 2022. Snagging on 10 houses starting Monday 5 th September.
Quigley Pk, Rathdowney	20	20	20 houses M&E complete	M&E Works complete on 20 houses, Post air-tightness completed on 15 houses. All Works to be fully complete by 18 th September 2022.
Radharc Alainn, Arles	18	18	18 Houses M&E complete.	M&E Works complete on 18 houses, Boxing of piping and plastering around doors on-going. All Works to be fully complete by 30 th September 2022
Derrymore, Portarlinton	26	26	26 houses M&E complete	M&E Works complete on 26 houses. Post Works BER's to be completed on 02/09/2022.
Kirwan Park, Mountmellick	51	51	35 houses M&E complete	Insulation and DCV unit to be installed. Windows and Doors complete on 49 houses. All works including, DCV Ventilation system, pipe surround boards and insulation to be fully complete by 31 st October 2022. Delayed due to issues with supply and delivery of heat Pumps
Total Properties	158	158	142 Units (M&E complete)	

Energy Efficiency/Retrofitting Programme:

Address	Properties	Units Commenced	Units Completed	Update
O'Moore Place, Portlaoise	14	0	0	Tenderer to be appointed in coming week. PSCS approval now received. Works due to commence Q4 2022
Total Properties	14	0	0	

NOTE: Laois County Council have been approved Department Retrofitting funding for 47 units at a total cost of €1,299,987. Surveys of these properties (listed below) commenced in Q3 2022 and tenders will be advertised in Q4 2022.

Thornberry, Abbeyleix – 16 units.

- 1) Church Avenue, Stradbally – 9 units.
- 2) Slieve Bloom Park, Clonaslee – 8 units.
- 3) St. John's Square, Portlaoise – 7 units.
- 4) Old School Road, Ballylynan – 7 units.

There will be a match funding requirement from the Council in the above regard, which will be determined when tender prices are returned.

HOUSING NEED

Homeless Presentations

Time Period	Homeless Presentations	Emergency Homeless
14 th July 2022 – 8 th September 2022	41	12
Year to Date	170	79

Homeless Accommodation

Individuals Accessing.....	Emergency Accommodation as of 8 th September, 2022	Transition Accommodation as of 8 th September 2022
Adults	18	0
Children	15	0

Social Housing List at 12th September

TOTAL No of Social Housing Applicants	1,785
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Social Housing Income thresholds

Laois County Council have been advised of a planned change to the social housing income eligibility thresholds and the move of five local authorities, including Laois County Council, from Band 3 to Band 2.

The change will be implemented via Ministerial Regulations and will most likely come into effect from 1 October 2022.

The baseline income eligibility threshold for the affected local authority areas – Carlow, Clare, Galway County, Laois and Westmeath – will increase from €25,000 to €30,000 from that date.

Accordingly, social housing applications decided by local authorities after 1 October 2022 should be assessed per the revised thresholds. Applications already decided prior to the effective date, deemed to exceed the extant threshold, but which meet the new income thresholds, can be resubmitted by applicants for assessment.

Housing Allocations

Method of Delivery	Allocations from 15 th July – 7 th Sept 2022	Numbers allocated Year-to-date 2022
First allocation of New Build/Acquired unit	1	11
Relet / Refurbished Stock Allocation	7	43
Nomination to AHB housing	13	63
	21	117

Housing Assistance Payment

No of Active HAP Tenancies at 12 th September 2022	898
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LOANS & GRANTS

Loans

Local Authority Home Loan: 4 th January 2022 – 12 th Sept 2022	
No of Loan Approvals	15
No of Applications refused	13

GRANTS

Housing Adaptation Grants at 9th September 2022

Allocation €1,389,375.00

	Applications Received to date in 2022	Applications approved and on hand	Value of applications approved to date	No of grants drawn down to date in 2022	Value of grants paid to date
HOP	102	116	€539,470	54	€241,600
MAG	20	46	€205,900	35	€157,200
HGD	65	58	€654,480	19	€163,500
TOTAL	187	220*	€1,399,850	108**	€562,300

*Grants approved can relate to previous years also, if applicant has not advised that works are carried out or sought drawdown.

**It should be noted that applicants must have approved works completed and request for payment of grant submitted by end of October in order to draw down their grant in the current year, as funding must be recouped from the Dept of Housing by end of November each year. Grant payments after this date are made from the subsequent year's funding, in this case 2023.

Disabled Persons Grant for Social Housing

In February 2022, Laois County Council made a submission to the Dept of Housing seeking funding in the amount of €716,570 in respect of 51 applications for small DPG works and 3 extensions.

Funding was subsequently awarded in the sum of €613,382, which including 10% LA match funding gave a total allocation of €674,720.

Several alterations were made to the above submitted programme during the year, for the following reasons:

- Works omitted as the tenants in question do not wish for works to proceed;
- Changes to pricing and increased costs on some works;
- Tenant transfer to alternative accommodation;
- Due to the exponential increase in applications received in 2022 deemed medically 'severe', it was necessary to remove those applications deemed medically 'moderate' from the original submission to accommodate these additional applications, some of which are urgently required.

The above resulted in:

- a. The removal of all applications deemed medically 'moderate' from the 2022 works programme;
- b. The adjustment of cost of works following pricing of individual works;
- c. The addition of 26 new applications to the 2022 works programme received between February and August 2022 and deemed medically 'severe', costing an additional €228,000. All of these works will be completed by the recoupment deadline in 2022 and have been allocated to a contractor, subject to the availability of additional funding being made available by the Dept of Housing.

Accordingly, Laois County Council recently made a further submission to the Dept of Housing seeking the approval of additional works costing in the region of €150,000 (based on quotations; this figure may alter on final recoupment). A response is awaited in this regard.

While there will also be an additional match funding outlay for the local authority, it is considered that the serious nature of the works required in the additional applications received since the original submission, merits this additional expenditure.

Current position regarding DPG works as of 12th September 2022:

Allocation 2022 (including LA funded portion)	€674,720
No. of Applications currently on site or completed	38 (including 3 extensions)
Value	€ 653,732.51
No. of Applications on works list awarded to contractor, to be carried out in 2022	22
Value	€ 168,348.34*

*A no of works yet to be priced; this may alter the final value of total recouped.

There are currently 31 applications on hand, of varying levels of medical need, which the Council not be in a position to consider until 2023 given the funding position and availability of contractors. All applications on hand will be submitted to the Dept of Housing for approval in 2023.

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

LEASING

RAS/Leasing Statistics at 12th September 2022

Active RAS tenancies	82
Active short-term leasing tenancies (Social Housing Leasing Scheme)	31
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

PRIVATE RENTED INSPECTIONS

All private rented dwellings must comply with the Housing (Standards for Rented Houses) Regulations 2019.

This also includes those properties whose landlords are availing of the HAP scheme, who agree to an inspection of the property when they sign up for the scheme. Property owners not availing of the HAP scheme are also subject to inspection if they rent the property in a private arrangement.

At 9th September, the Council had issued 896 Notices of Works in 2022 to property owners in the form of a letter detailing the works that need to be carried out to bring the property up to the required standard. The Notice of Works also gives the property owner a timeframe in which the works must be carried out as recommended in the guidelines for private rental inspections issued by the Department of Housing, Local Government & Heritage.

Queries from landlords relate mostly to technical aspects of the works required, with an understanding of the need to comply with the Regulations. If a property owner is anxious about aspects of an improvement letter issued, they can contact the local authority and be assured that a reasonable practical approach will be taken to give them the opportunity to address the issues raised.

The Housing Inspections team can be contacted via email at propertyinspections@laoiscoco.ie. Notwithstanding the above and recognising the health and safety of the tenant as priority, should urgent works be required, the property owner is made aware of the consequences of non-compliance within a safe timeframe, i.e., fines and/or prosecution under the Regulations.

Private Rental Standards - Housing Inspections

Target for private rented inspections in 2022	1,181
No of private rented inspections carried out 01/01/2022 – 31/08/2022	754

Planning, Development and Heritage

LAOIS DRAFT COUNTY DEVELOPMENT PLAN 2021-2027

No further correspondence has been received from the minister in relation to the Ministerial Direction.

GRAIGUECULLEN JOINT LOCAL URBAN AREA PLAN

- An issues paper has been prepared and is on public display since Friday 16th September and until 14th October 2022.
- 2 information sessions have been arranged as follows

PUBLIC INFORMATION SESSIONS		
Carlow Shaw Room at Carlow Central Library, Tullow Street, Carlow	Thursday 29th September	14:30 - 18:00p.m.
Graiguecullen Talbot Hotel, Graiguecullen, Portlaoise Road, Carlow	Tuesday 6th October	14:30 - 18:00p.m.

RESIDENTIAL ZONED LAND TAX

Draft Maps are being prepared for all settlements within the county indicating all lands which fall within the scope of the legislation.

Consultations have been held with service providers e.g. Irish Water in order to determine lands that are considered serviced in accordance with the guidelines .

The final draft maps will be finalised for public display by 1st November 2022.

DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT PERFORMANCE

PLANNING APPLICATIONS COMPARATIVE FIGURES FROM 2021 TO 2022

Year	Valid applications from 01/01/2022 – 15/9/2022	Valid applications from 01/01/2021 – 15/09/2021
	442	510

2022 PERFORMANCE	
Number of valid applications received:	442
Number of decisions made	459
Number of applications granted:	420 (Decisions to Grant)
Number of applications refused:	39 (Decisions to Refuse)
Invalid applications returned to applicant:	136 (2022 Invalid Applications)

Files scanned up to -	14 th September 2022
Referrals to Area Offices (working days):	within 14 days achieved
Pre planning	
No of requests to date	262
No of meetings held to date Up to and including the 6 th September 2022	237
Wait time	2 weeks

E Planning Project

Laois County Council is part of Wave 1 of the roll out of the E Planning Project which will commence in Laois in **October 2022**. The LGMA has provided training for admin and technical staff. An agents meeting is planned for early October to provide information and training to them in this area.

ENFORCEMENT UPDATE

Current year Service Review	2022		2021	
	Aug	Jan - Aug	Aug	Jan - Aug
Total number of new cases subject to complaints that were investigated	11	85	11	101
Number of Warning Letters served	27	275	5	165
Number of Enforcement Notices served	4	30	1	57
No Of cases referred for legal proceedings	0	6	0	6
Number of cases in Court(incl adjournments)	0	37	0	39
Number of cases Resolved in Court	0	7	0	3
Number of Files Closed	12	123	4	84
Number of cases on system	141	141	189	189
Enforcement Costs recouped	€ -	€ 7,520.26	€ 600.86	€8,884.10
Number of Valid Retention Applications Received relating to Enforcement Action	3	36	4	33
Fees received through Valid Retention Applications Received relating to Enforcement Action	€7,128.00	€33,491.70	€4,143.72	€23,508.72
Legal fees paid	€587.94	€20,061.50	€0.00	€14,964.14

HERITAGE

1. MRTTT Just Transition Project Conservation and Pollination

Works: Contractor appointed, John Lonergan of Revamp Conservation - commenced on site at Clopook. This year's works will take in Clopook, Dysartgallen and Monasteroris in Offaly. Works will restart early next year at remaining sites, Kilmanman, Kilbride and Kilmurryely.

2. Laois Heritage Plan Projects.

Heritage Week in August went well with over 40 events in person. Schools events planned for Science Week in November;

Work ongoing on film about the Gordon Bennett race in Laois, with Carlow and Kildare County Councils

“In Your Nature” Podcasts by BirdWatch Ireland almost complete for this year with 12 episodes released to date and download figures for the full series now at over 50,000.

3. Publications

- Rock of Dunamase Book will be published and launched this year.
- Gardening for Biodiversity Book and colouring book reprinted and distribution is ongoing

4. Biodiversity and Climate Change

Local Biodiversity Action Fund Wetland Survey

Wetland Survey Phase II Field Survey is ongoing. To date 30 sites have been surveyed this year, of a total 302 sites recorded in the desk study. A public event at the Ridge of Capard was held during Heritage Week.

Local Biodiversity Action Fund Communications

Radio ads featuring wildlife and how nature can benefit mental health will continue to December 2022.

Local Biodiversity Action Fund Timahoe

Additional LBAF funding was made available for a project to enhance biodiversity at Timahoe in partnership with the Irish Wildlife Trust Laois Offaly Branch.

5. Community Monuments Fund

A total of 5 projects received funding under the **Community Monuments Fund** for 2022. All projects to be completed and funds recouped by November 2022. Planning and consultation for 2023 applications has started.

6. Creative Ireland

Mountmellick Mural

A Mural will be installed in Mountmellick to celebrate the importance of the town for Swifts, a threatened urban bird, in partnership with BirdWatch Ireland. Artist James Kirwan has been appointed and the mural will be unveiled for Culture night, with Science Week workshops planned for local schools by Ricky Whelan of BirdWatch Ireland.

7. Community Action Projects

Heritage Council funding applications were submitted with support from the Heritage Officer. Projects in Abbeyleix and Donaghmore have received offers of funding. The Heritage Officer is working with each of the groups to provide support and technical assistance as required.

A new Conservation Advice Pilot Grant Scheme has been announced by the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage.

The scheme is open to owners of properties on the Record of Protected Structures. Successful applicants will receive conservation advice including maintenance guidelines and suggested repairs and improvements to enhance the building’s character, integrity, and amenity. A summary of the scheme is provided below.

The scheme will provide grants of €3,000 (ex. VAT) to cover the cost of having a conservation-accredited architect visit a protected structure, conduct a survey, and compile tailored conservation advice for the property owner. The report will suggest a

maintenance schedule for the building, and outline repairs and improvements which would enhance the building's character, integrity, and amenity.

The aim of the scheme is to help owners of protected structures to understand the value and potential of the architectural heritage of their buildings, and to prompt them to consider investments which could enhance that value, whether funded privately or through conservation grants.

Applicants must complete the form (on the Laois.ie website) and submit it to builtheritage@housing.gov.ie by Friday, September 30th using the subject line 'Conservation Advice Pilot Scheme'.

Local Enterprise & Economic Development

Demand continues to be high for supports through LEO from businesses across all sectors. They are continuing to engage and are presenting with similar challenges.

Business Mentoring

LEO continues to offer complimentary mentoring in any aspect of business from HR to Finance for all existing businesses in the County. This mentoring support is currently being delivered remotely via zoom, teams etc. To-date over 140 businesses have availed of mentoring with ongoing enquiries regarding same.

Business Training

LEO is continuing to offer a range of online interactive training programmes to support businesses. The courses are free to clients and are delivered online via zoom. Over 650 people have availed of online training this year with plans to deliver a mix of both inhouse and online training from 1st January 2023.

Trading Online Vouchers

The trading online voucher is an initiative which aims to support small Irish businesses to enhance their online trading presence. Vouchers to the value of €2,500 (50% of eligible costs up to the maximum of €2,500) continue to be available through LEO. 41 applications have been submitted, 27 of which have been approved to-date to the value of €58,980.

Financial Assistance

Eligible businesses (manufacturing or Internationally trading business employing 0 or less) continue to apply to LEO for financial assistance. To-date €227,666 has been approved in funding with further applications on hands for consideration.

Green for Micro

Green for Micro is a free programme that helps small businesses take the first step towards becoming more sustainable, giving them access to a green consultant who will show them the small changes that can have a big impact on their business. Businesses can apply for two days mentoring with a specialist Green Consultant. This will include recommendations on specific changes which the business can implement. 26 Green for Micro assignments have been approved for Laois businesses to-date.

Digital Start

Digital Start is a pilot initiative to help businesses prepare and implement a plan for the adoption of digital tools and techniques across their businesses. LEO will promote this to small businesses in the County.

Road Construction at J17 National Enterprise Park

Construction of a new road, with an overall length of 1km, linking the ‘Glanbia Roundabout’ to the ‘Iarnróid Eireann Depot Roundabout’ commenced on Monday 5th September 2022. The first phase of works includes site clearance, construction of foul and surface water networks and the laying of the sub-base granular layers. These works are being carried out directly by Laois County Council on a project management basis.

J17 Access Road looking North towards Iarnróid Eireann Depot



Roadworks Programme 2022

The Annual Road Works Scheme 2022 was adopted by the Members at the March 2022 Monthly Meeting. The programme is progressing across all 3 MD’s with significant works being delivered.

Local Improvement Scheme Funding:

LIS funding has been confirmed by the DRCD in the amount of €351,880.00. A second round of funding was announced in August 2022 in the amount of €508,397.00. This gives a total LIS allocation to Laois County Council for 2022 of €860,277.00. Overall the funds will result in the delivery of up to 22 LISs across the 3 Municipal Districts in 2022.

	LIS schemes to be completed in 2022
Eastern MD	8
Central MD	4
Western MD	10

Development of New Car/Cycle Parking at Railway Street, Portlaoise

Construction works to deliver a new 96 space car park at Railway Street adjacent to the Railway Station are progressing well. In keeping with Smarter Travel objectives the car park will provide multiple e-charging points together with cycle friendly facilities. The car park is due to be operational by mid-2023.

Environment & Environmental Protection

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

Normal services continue at the Kyletalesha Landfill Facility and Civic Amenity Site.

Landfill monitoring and aftercare maintenance is on-going. All monitoring results are being submitted to the EPA.

2. Bring Banks:

Tonnages of collected recyclable material in 2022.

Year	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	July	Aug	Sept	Total Tonnage
2022	163.77	114.28	162.18	120.57	133.64	149.84	132.44	172.27	57.17	1206.16
2021	196.89	140.31	177.84	173.60	143.65	170.08	153.40	139.77	160.03	1455.57
2020	138.37	86.81	121.35	205.29	195.24	190.74	177.39	160.14	146.11	1421.44
2019	138.80	113.96	86.93	108.42	122.60	86.79	129.25	105.45	86.87	979.07

2022 September figure is to the 16th September 2022.

Table 2 – 2022 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) Illegal Dumping

Tonnes of material collected to date is 642 tonnes. Table 3 below shows the material collected from 2019 to 2022.

Year	2019	2020	2021	2022
Tonnage	367	238	530	642

Table 3 – Illegal Dumping Tonnages

b) Waste Enforcement & Complaints

Table 4 below details the number and types of complaints received in 2022.

Nature	Number
Waste Management/Enforcement	466
Litter	124
Abandoned Vehicles	25
Water	38
Veterinary	26
Air	22
Noise	20
Waste Infrastructure – Bring Banks	5
Total	726

Table 4 – Environmental Complaint Register

c) Litter Fines

To date 40 litter fines have been issued (37–litter & 3–dog fouling).

d) 2022 Anti-Dumping Initiatives

A Mattress Amnesty was held at three locations (Portlaoise, Rayhdowney & Pedigree Corner) in July 2022. This amnesty was well received with 1,204 mattresses collected.

A Bulky Goods Amnesty collection is scheduled for the 23rd September 2022 in Portarlington.

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**

- Investigation of complaints on a priority basis.
- Investigation and wastewater connection survey on-going into wastewater discharges to Kilminchy lakes.
- On-going assessment of planning applications regarding water quality protection.
- Included in Funded Pilot Programme to deliver increased number of Farm Inspections. A Programme of Works is currently being prepared.

b) **Air & Noise:**

- Investigation of complaints on a priority basis.
- In conjunction with the EPA, an **NO₂ (Nitrogen Dioxide) Monitoring Survey** was carried out in the towns of Abbeyleix, Durrow and Cullahill to quantify prevailing air quality. The EPA Final Report Data concluded that there was no exceedance of the EU Annual Average NO₂ limit of 40µg/m³ at any of the locations monitored.

Emergency Planning, Fire Services & Flood Relief

In 2022 (to August) Laois County Fire & Rescue Service attended 487 emergency incidents consisting of 187 fires, 222 special service incidents & 78 false alarms.

Turnout by Station*:

Portlaoise – 205	Portarlinton - 89	Stradbally – 85	Mountmellick – 68
Abbeyleix - 65	Mountrath – 49	Durrow – 59	Rathdowney – 37

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

New Irish/English language signs have been erected at Abbeyleix Fire Station to comply with the Official Languages Act 2003.

NDFEM capital funded projects

Water tanker

- In 2021 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 is now in service in Durrow.
- A new Class B fire appliance funded by NDFEM is nearing completion in the manufacturers, delivery is currently expected in October, this vehicle is due to go into service in Portarlinton.

Portlaoise Water Supply Improvement Scheme - Irish Water now progressing with developing well PW07 and well PW08. IW/NOD currently agreeing design with the ESB. William Gorman Plant Hire to install ESB ducts and rising main pipework. M + E works to be carried out by Champions. Telemetry works to be carried out by EMR. A draft planned maintenance programme has been submitted to IW and agreed, with funding available under Capital Maintenance. William Gorman Plant Hire expected to start on site before the end of September/start of October 2022 installing ESB ducting.

Disinfection/PH control programme – Civil works progressing in Meelick, Derryguile, Kyle, Five Wells, Derrymoyle and Lough WTPs. MEICA works progressed at the Strand, Knocks, Derryguile, Lough, Kyle, Five Wells, Clonin Hill, Derrymoyle and Ballyroan WTP. Process proving now complete at the Knocks, Kyle and Ballyroan WTPs. ESB supply upgrade currently being progressed for Five Wells and Lough WTPs - power switchover at Lough WTP scheduled for 5 October 2022. Design for Kilminchy WTP and Fermoy WTP currently being progressed by CWL/IW.

Lead Mitigation Strategy – Derryguile WTP has been identified as a priority plant under the IW Lead Mitigation Strategy for addition of Orthophosphate Treatment.

Mountrath Sewer Diversion - diversion of sewer from under Patrick Street Bridge, Mountrath recently completed by Dunne Brothers Ltd.

Inlet Works Storm and Sludge Programme – Castletown WwTP - New Storm Tank installation is complete. Training for LCC operational staff now complete. Snagging list has been issued by IW to EPS.

Ballyroan WwTP Upgrade – A laser scan survey of the plant and an asbestos survey are being progressed/carried out. Catchment questionnaire completed by LCC for IW. Works now expected to progress in 2023.

Filter Upgrade Programme – Kilminchy WTP put forward for upgrades, confirmation of scope required post filter assessment report.

Networks and Water Conservation - First fix, find and fix and lead replacement work continue throughout the county. Significant progress in Portarlinton in the area of leakage management. Replacement of watermain in the Swan network is now complete, mains rehabilitation works currently being carried out in Portlaoise and Stradbally, back yard services ongoing in Mountmellick.

Mountmellick and Portarlinton DAP – Catchment Appreciation Meeting took place between IW/LCC/Jacobs on the 31/8/2022. Follow on meeting schedule for 23/09/2022.

National WWPS programme – Bob's Bar Pump Station has been issued by Irish Water to Ward & Burke Construction / Tobin Consulting Engineers for detailed design. Survey works recently completed on site by Tobin's to finalise design.

Taking in Charge

Continue working with IW to take the 17 no. outstanding legacy estates in charge by IW - already taken in charge by LCC. 10 no. estates have been progressed and referred to the Planning Section and work is ongoing on the remaining 7 no. estates.

Multi Annual Rural Water Programme.

Projects under the current programme, 2019 – 2021, are being completed and claims paid and recouped. The Department has advised that details of the next Rural Water Programme will be issued during Q4. Measure, A8 (*Waste Water Collection and Treatment Needs for Villages and Settlements without access to Public Waste Water Services*) – Application and

Feasibility Studies for Vicarstown and Cullohill submitted to the Department on the 15th of September.

Rosenallis/Goodwin Estate Group Sewerage Scheme – Contractor to start in November 2022.

Well Grants – 53 no. applications have been received in 2022 and all are being progressed.

HUMANITARIAN RESPONSE TO REFUGEES FLEEING CONFLICT

Laois County Council continues to assist IPAS with the temporary accommodation of a number of persons who have arrived into Ireland over the past number of weeks. There are currently 307 persons accommodated through LCC and IPAS in hotels, guesthouses and hostel accommodation. Many others have also come into the county by their own means, some residing with families and others accommodated by the various parishes. While there is constant movement into and out of the county, most recent data indicates there are currently an estimated 672 displaced Ukrainian citizens in County Laois.

The Local Authority has also provided, upon request, details in relation to:-

- Vacant buildings and;
- Site suitable for medium to long term solutions

and is engaging with the Department of Housing with regard to same.

Private accommodation via Red Cross and other pledges has to date accommodated 30 persons (9 households). The matching of Ukrainian nationals to shared pledged accommodation in County Laois is currently on-going.

Laois Ukrainian Community Response Forum

Laois County Council established a “Ukrainian Crisis Multi Agency Response Forum” along the lines of and largely similar to the Covid-19 Community Response Forum of the past two years. The forum convened its most recent meeting on Wednesday 31st August 2022 at which a number of tasks and local actions were agreed. All efforts currently are being supported by An Garda Síochána, Dept of Social Protection, the HSE, Civil Defence, the Local Development Company, LOETB, TUSLA and various local voluntary groups, and local communities. To date the forum convened on 8 occasions. At present the forum consists of 44 members representing 23 members groups/agencies.

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

CORPORATE

A Civic Reception in honour of Mike Dunphy, President, Laois Association New York was held on Friday 29th July 2022 in recognition of his dedication and contribution to the promotion of County Laois in New York and New Jersey. An Official Welcome was accorded to the World Ploughing Organisation and the National Ploughing Association on Monday 19th September 2022 on the occasion of Laois hosting the 2022 National and World Ploughing Championships

Laois PPN

Laois will host the National PPN Conference 2022 for the first time ever in October 2022. There will be delegates from the 31 PPN and Local Authorities in attendance. The event will take place from Friday 21st of October and Saturday 22nd of October 2022. The conference will feature a number of workshops and excursions to showcase the work of PPN member groups in Laois. Minister Joe O’Brien T.D. (Minister of State at the Department of Rural and Community Development) will in attendance at the conference.

Laois PPN ran two events for Heritage Week 2022:

- A Tour of the Portlaoise Plane – which was the winner of the Arts, Culture and Heritage for the Community and Voluntary Awards 2021.
- Heritage Walk at the Rock of Dunamase – A guided walk led by Trudy Carmody of Experiencing Ireland.

Laois PPN hosted a Welcome to the Community Coffee Morning on Ukrainian Independence Day, Wednesday the 24th of August 2022 – in the Community Garden in Abbeyleix. Ukrainian families from across Laois were in attendance.

Laois Comhairle na nÓg

Preparations are ongoing for the Laois Comhairle na nÓg AGM will be held on Tuesday the 25th of October from 10am to 3pm in the Midlands Park Hotel.

Two members of Laois Comhairle na nÓg will present at the TEDX Dun Laoghaire again this year. The final day will be held in November where the young people will present their TEDX Talk experience to the audience.

Two young members took part in the Consultation of “Night Time Economy” on the 20th of September. The Night Time Economy should provide a safe and secure space for young people to work and socialize.

Age Friendly Programme

A public consultation workshop on the Age Friendly Strategy took place on the 26th July 2022 in Bloom HQ, Mountrath with over 100 members of the public in attendance. The information and feedback gathered at this workshop is currently being reviewed.

Positive aging week takes place from the 25th September to the 1st of October. There will be a feature in local papers highlighting positive aging, by way of a “reframing aging” campaign. This will feature a number of members of the older community, with their positive traits highlighted and the message that these traits don’t age.

Age Friendly Ireland had a stand at the national Ploughing Championships, to increase awareness of the age friendly programme, both nationally and locally.

Laois Connects takes place through the month of October, and there are a number of events planned which are suitable to the older person, including Activator Poles, Tai Chi , Prime Time of Life programme and Live Theatre shows.

Laois Community and Voluntary Awards

The 2022 Community and Voluntary Awards will take place on Friday 28th October in the Midlands Park Hotel. Once again, the awards are being hosted in association Laois Public Participation Network being sponsored by People First Credit Union. This year has some changes to the Awards, most notable the formation of four new categories to include Sports Award, Best Kept Residential Area Award, Health and Wellbeing Award and the Junior Volunteer of the Year. Three categories remain unchanged i.e. Arts Culture Heritage, Social inclusion and Unsung Hero. The application process has now closed with all 62 nominations being sent to various independent PPN judges.

Pride of Place

Ballinakill have been entered into the IPB Pride of Place 2022 competition by Laois County Council. The judging took place on Friday 16th September in Ballinakill. The community presented extremely well on the day and were supported by the Cathaoirleach, local

elected members, and officials of Laois County Council and other local organisations and agencies.

Laois Joint Policing Committee

Laois County Joint Policing Committee held its meeting on 12th September 2022 at which the Laois JPC Strategic Plan was approved.

Town and Village Renewal Scheme

Laois County Council received funding of €350,000 under the Town and Village Renewal Scheme (TVRS) Building Acquisition Measure in respect of Portarlington.

Eight TVRS 2022 applications were submitted to the DRCD in late July, this year as follows:-

TVRS	Name of Town / Village	Project Description	Amount of T&V grant funding requested for this project
TVRS Main Scheme	Portarlington	Delivery of Phase 3 of the Portarlington People's Park Landscape Masterplan to include the following; Central Plaza/Event Space, Community GIY Garden, Outdoor Adventure Activity Area, upgrade of play equipment features in the existing playground and development of natural play features, upgrade of park furnishings throughout including park benches, signs, bins and associated professional fees.	€500,000.00
TVRS Main Scheme	Ballinakill	Further development of Ballinakill Amenity Park and Outdoor Swimming Pool to include Installation of a Multi Use Games Area, Pool Tanking System, and surfacing of an Accessible Parking Area.	€250,000.00
TVRS Main Scheme	Mountrath	Renovation of the outdoor work sheds in BloomHQ Mountrath for a food manufacturing space for food production start-up business.	€50,400.00
TVRS Main Scheme	Abbeyleix	Adult Training Centre of Excellence for people with an intellectual difficulty to support them in gaining the skills to hold down meaningful paid employment in the community leading to integration and socialisation in the community.	€250,000.00

TVRS Main Scheme	Borris in Ossory	Refurbishment of kitchen, furnishing of old chapel at old Convent building as training room/community space and fit out of 2 hot desk rooms at the Old Convent, Borris in Ossory.	€65,377.00
TVRS Main Scheme	Mountmellick	The further development of the Community Arts Centre in Mountmellick to enhance the existing Arts & Music Venue in the town through the surfacing of an Accessible Parking Area.	€67,500.00
TVRS Project Development Measure	Ballyroan	Conduct a feasibility study on the site of the Old Boys School Ballyroan with a view to determining future uses.	€50,000.00
TVRS Marketing Campaign Measure	County Laois	Develop a marketing campaign to attract remote workers and mobile talent to the county of Laois, through showcasing the centrality of the county, the quality of life, access to hubs and an extensive recreation offering.	€49,995.50

SPORT & LEISURE UPDATE

Parks Tennis Programme

Following a successful partnership with 3 community groups the Parks Tennis programme was successfully rolled out in Mountmellick, Vicarstown and Mountrath with 150 children and young people participating. Funding of €1500 was allocated from Tennis Ireland towards the programme delivery

CLÁR 2022

Laois County Council received confirmation in July 2022 from DRCD that an initial allocation for 8 projects under Measure 1 of €317,605.

An additional Tranche 2 of Measure 1 of the 2022 CLÁR programme was announced on 13th of September, with an additional funding allocation for 3 projects of €126,500

ORIS 2022

Laois County Council received confirmation in August 2022 from DRCD that an initial allocation for 7 projects of €219,712 inclusive of an allocation of €41,463 for Durrow Walking & Cycling Hub feasibility study

Green Flag Award

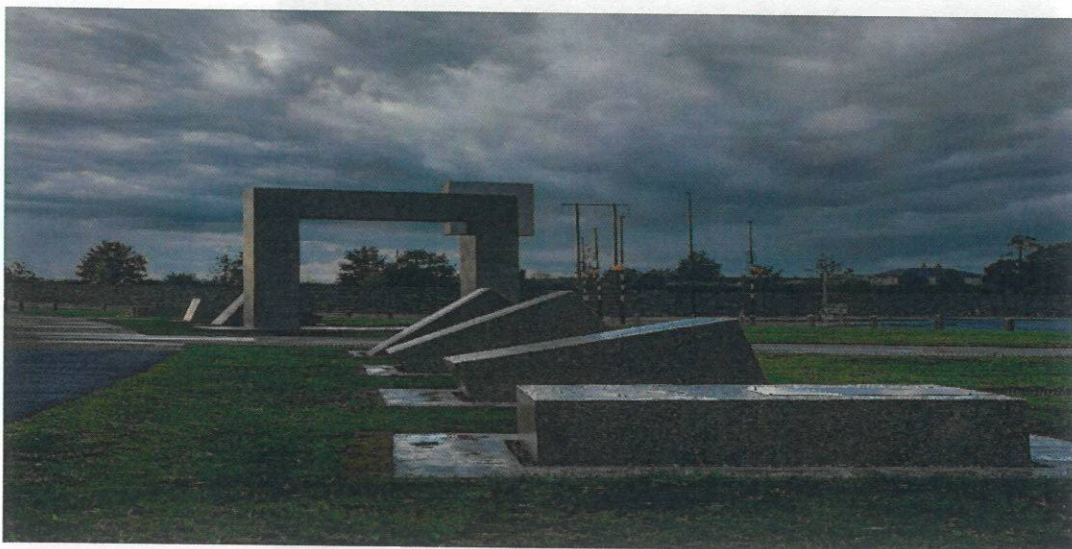
Judging of the Green Flag Award of Páirc an Phobail and The People's Park Portarlinton took place in August 2022. It was confirmed in early September that both parks successfully retained the green flag. Photo taken at the raising of the 2022/23 flag in the Peoples Park



ARTS & CULTURE

Launch of Protectour Sculpture

The sculpture was launched on 23rd September by Cathaoirleach Thomasina Connell. This forms part of the percent for arts scheme attendant to the Portlaoise Southern Circular Road that opened in November 2019.



Local live performance programme phase 4

Eleven applications from individuals/groups/promoters in the County have been approved for funding for Phase 4 running up the 31st October – events include Exhibitions, Recitals, performances in care settings and in the prison, outdoor film screening, and dance performances to take place in a host of venues and locations in the county.

Culture Night: Friday 23rd Sept

Sixteen events took place on Culture Night – free to the public and included a rich mix of performances, exhibitions, as well the launches of new sculpture in Portlaoise and the launch of a new mural in Mountmellick.

Laois Arthouse Studio Award

Three artists were selected to take part in this new programme at Laois Arthouse and they include Emily Miller, Orla McDonagh and Aileen Conroy. Emily will work at Laois Arthouse for the month of September and will take part in an open studio event for Culture Night during her stay.

LIBRARY SERVICES

Summer Stars Reading

Summer Stars reading initiative continued in July and August with over 1200 children in Laois signing up for the free reading and literacy programme . During the months public libraries all over the county issued over 23,000 books and other library items to primary school children on holidays coming to their local libraries to read.

Highlights included

A Story Stroll based on the book 'Wee Donkey's Treasure Hunt' by author Erika McGann took place throughout the county public parks in July August 2022 in Portlaoise,Portarlington , Mountmellick, Mountrath , Abbeyelix , Stradbally and Rathdowney

An accompanying quiz sheet was available in the local library and if the completed sheet was returned , a small surprise awaited ! If you would like to read all about Wee Donkey's Adventures around Ireland, copies of the book are available to borrow in the library .



“Dog Man “Art Competition

Based on the novels of Dave Pilkey , the “Dogman” themed Art competition was held as part of the summer stars in 2022 . Over 70 entries were received from the public with winners selected in age groups 6-9 and 10- 13 and displayed in Mountrath Library

Heritage week

Events, talks and Exhibitions took place in Libraries throughout the county as part of national Heritage week .

Highlights include

- Historian in Residence Terry Dunne gave a talk ‘Cattle Drives, Crime Waves and Republican Police in Laois in the 1920’s’ on Thurs, 18th Aug in Mountrath Library
- **Mountmellick Heritage Group** curated an exhibition for Heritage Week 2022 on the rich and long history of Mountmellick its town and environs and included documents, photographs, memorabilia and other artefacts in the Gallery in Mountmellick Library .
- **Ivo DeVesci Photographic Collection** – This two part event on the 18th of August 2022 featured presentations from Sinead Holland, Laois Local Studies Librarian on the digitising of the Ivo De Vesci Photographic Collection, followed by a talk by Tom De Vesci on Lady Emma De Vesci, her work and legacy. This Heritage Week talk took place on Thurs, 18th Aug at 6pm.



- Biologist, environmentalist, author and broadcaster **Éanna Ní Lamhna** presented an enjoyable talk on the importance of local biodiversity and wildlife in Co. Laois. This talk took place in Portlaoise Library, on Wednesday the 17th of August with a large attendance .



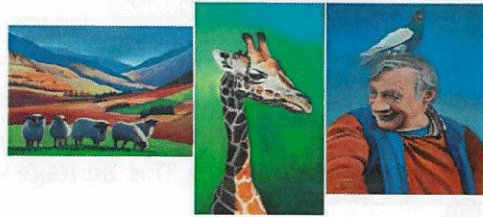
Dormant Accounts

Laois County Library services were awarded funding of €27, 035 under the Dormant accounts funding across a range of initiatives.

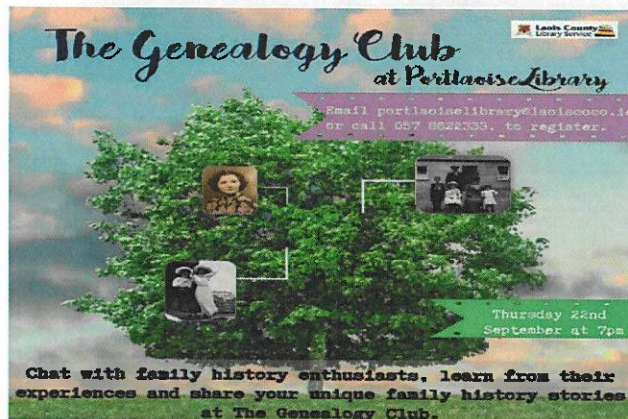
Upcoming Events in Library branches -selection

- Mountmellick Library and Gallery presents :

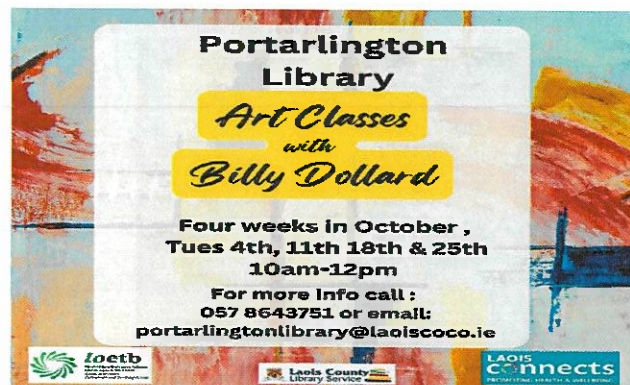
**DEIRDRE DUNNE
ART EXHIBITION
SEPTEMBER 2022**



- Portlaoise Library has commenced a genealogy club that will run monthly , new members are welcome



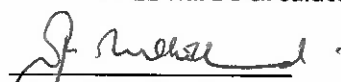
- Portarlington Library are running a series of art classes in partnership with the LOETB



- Mountrath Library are now offering free education and craft courses as below

Chief Executive's Orders

- ✚ A schedule of Chief Executive Orders signed during the month of August/September 2022 will be circulated.


John Mulholland
Chief Executive

September 22nd 2022