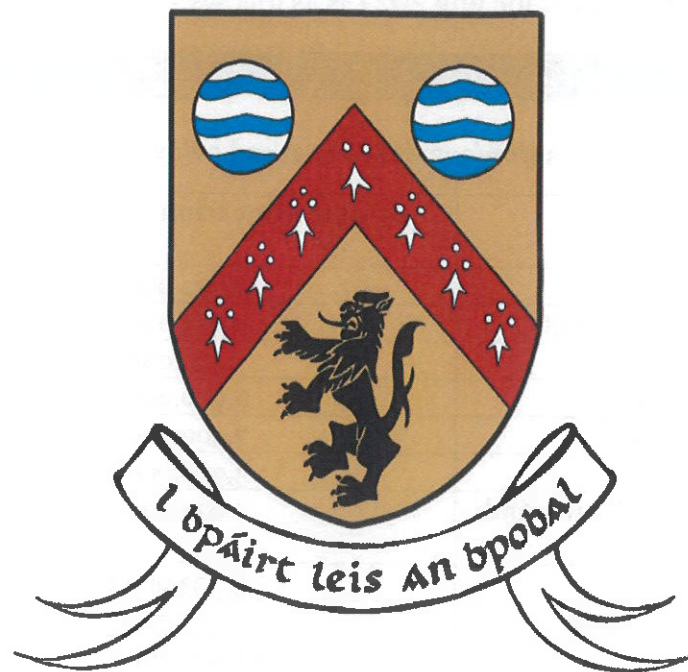


**LAOIS COUNTY COUNCIL**  
**COMHAIRLE CHONTAE LAOISE**



**MONTHLY MANAGEMENT REPORT**  
**JULY 2021**  
**TUARASCÁIL BHAINISTÍOCHTA**  
**IÚIL 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 July 2021 is as follows:-

### Finance, & Allocations Notified

Expenditure and income to the 30/06/2021 is summarised below:

Service Division	Budget Allocation	Expenditure to 30/06/2021
Housing and Building	15,772,000	6,727,346
Road Transportation and Safety	21,225,000	6,529,253
Water Services	3,421,000	1,555,876
Development Management	6,970,000	3,873,574
Environmental Services	7,500,000	2,901,284
Recreation and Amenity	3,926,000	1,556,533
Agriculture, Education, Health and Welfare	822,000	202,305
Miscellaneous Services	9,533,000	5,681,547
Central Management Charge	9,714,000	4,015,221
<b>Total</b>	<b>78,883,000</b>	<b>33,042,939</b>

Service Division	Budget Allocation	Income to 30/06/2021
Housing and Building	17,594,000	7,345,342
Road Transportation and Safety	16,749,000	3,451,501
Water Services	4,534,000	2,034,453
Development Management	4,423,000	3,999,066
Environmental Services	1,501,000	809,100
Recreation and Amenity	601,000	366,532
Agriculture, Education, Health and Welfare	330,000	144,005
Miscellaneous Services	8,126,000	4,565,056
Superannuation	700,000	338,353
Local Property Tax	9,063,079	4,531,539
Rates	14,495,092	6,377,260
Capital transfer	766,829	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>78,883,000</b>	<b>33,962,207</b>

### Allocations Notified

Bike Week (N.T.A.)	€12,400.00
Dormant Account Fund – Library Supports (DRCD) – Library of Sanctuary Portlaoise, Supporting Parents & Sensory Play Equipment, Social Stories & Customised books)	€21,296.78
DRCD – Local Improvement Scheme 2021 additional funding	€270,000.00
DTTaS – Specific Improvement Grant – Foormans Bridge	€340,000.00
DTTaS – Specific Improvement Grant – Lackamore, Mountmellick	€170,000.00
TII – HD28 Projects – 6 No. Projects	€900,000.00

## Housing & Regeneration

### Rebuilding Ireland Construction Programme

Scheme	Units	Progress
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	Tenders advertised in June 2021 with return date of August 2021.
Mooreville, Rathdowney	7	Stage 3 documents to be submitted to Department in Q3 2021.
St. Kierans Park, Errill	14	Stage 4 approved by the Department on 13 <sup>th</sup> July. Site start expected in September.
Clonrooske, Knockmay	13	Revisions made following recent meeting with Portlaoise councillors. Stage 2 to be submitted in Q3
Iona, Abbeyleix Road	9	Draft layout to be discussed with councillors in August.
Oak Park Halting Site	4	Tenders returned in April and submitted to the Department of Housing for their consideration.
Carraig Glas, Stradbally	26	Stage 2 granted. Part VIII advertised in July 2021.

### Urban Regeneration Programme

Scheme	Units	Progress
Former C.B.S. Site	67	Part VIII granted. CLUID Housing in discussions with landowner on progression of the scheme towards a funding submission for construction.
Hepburn/Knockmay	54	Cluid Housing Association are progressing this development. Final site layout to be discussed with local councillors prior to submission of Part 8.

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. Site investigations complete. Enabling works including demolition of structures approved through the Part 8 process commencing in August 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 268 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. 52 vacant houses have been identified to date as being suitable for social housing due to the type of house and location and further action may be taken in these cases. 40 properties have been identified as having potential for use as development sites for social housing and these sites will be examined further.</p> <p>A total of 31 applications have been received to date under the Repair &amp; Leasing Scheme of which 4 are currently under consideration.</p> <p>12 vacant properties have been acquired by CPO and 8 properties are currently going through the CPO process.</p>

#### Turnkey Projects

Scheme	Units	Progress
Expressions of interest		The Council has invited expressions of interest from the public in respect of the supply of newly completed homes as turnkey projects.
Main St., Borris-in-Ossory	11	Contractors on site. 6 units complete with Phase 2 (5 units) due in Q4 2021.
Church Avenue, Stradbally	31	Turnkey application approved by the Department 4 <sup>th</sup> March 2021.

#### Approved Housing Bodies Delivery

Scheme	Units	AHB	Progress
Bellingham, Portlaoise	30	Cluid	Contractor is on site. 24 of the 30 units have been delivered.

			Phase 5 (6 units) expected delivery late July/early August 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 shortly.. 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.

In addition to the units outlined in the above tables, the Housing Department is also in discussion with various AHB's regarding the delivery of further Social Housing units throughout the county. The total number of units currently under discussion in the county, in addition to the units mentioned above, is 509 broken down by MD area as follows –

- Portlaoise MD – 310
- Borris in Ossory/Mountmellick MD – 111
- Portarlinton/Graiguecullen MD – 88

### Refugee Resettlement Programme

There is currently 1 family remaining to be housed under our Refugee Resettlement Programme. It is anticipated that this tenanting will now be able to take place in July and this will see us completing our overall Refugee Resettlement Programme to house 22 families.

### Rebuilding Ireland Home Loan

Since 1<sup>st</sup> February 2018, 111 Rebuilding Ireland Home Loans have been approved. 96 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

A full review of all active HAP tenancies has been carried out over the last number of weeks. There are currently 956 active HAP tenancies, 307 of which have transferred from rent supplement.

### Private House Grants

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

- 81 Housing Aid for Older People Grant Applications approved in the sum of €347,038
- 56 Mobility Aids Grants approved in the sum of €228,170
- 40 Housing Adaptation Grants approved in the sum of €304,790

### Private Rented Inspections

Due to Covid-19 restrictions in place inspections have been carried out virtually until the 14<sup>th</sup> July 2021 when they recommenced as in person.

### Housing Maintenance

Month	Work Orders Raised	Work Orders Closed	Work Orders Open
January 21	234	232	2
February 21	216	216	0
March 21	252	243	9
April 21	368	322	46
May 21	329	238	91
June 21	300	165	135
<b>TOTAL (YTD)</b>	<b>1,699</b>	<b>1,416</b>	<b>283</b>

2020	Work Orders Raised	Work Orders Closed	Work Orders Open
<b>TOTAL JAN to DEC</b>	<b>3,572</b>	<b>3,562</b>	<b>10</b>

### Housing Re-Lets

Month	LA Keys Surrendered	Properties Acquired	Works Completed
January 21	8	0	7
February 21	2	1	6
March 21	3	2	9
April 21	10	1	4
May 21	6	2	5
June	5	0	7
<b>TOTAL (YTD)</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>38</b>

2020	LA Keys Surrendered	Properties Acquired	Works Completed
<b>TOTAL JAN to DEC</b>	<b>78</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>112</b>

**NOTE:** There are currently 30 vacant units from our existing stock and a further 14 units that the Council acquired recently. Works are either ongoing on these properties or specifications are being prepared for works to be carried out.

### 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).

Letter of acceptance issued for Phase 1 (62 units – Mountain View, Quigley Park and Radharc Alainn) with works to commence in shortly. Tenders have been received for Phase 2 and Phase 3 (98 units – Hillview, Derrymore and Kirwan Park).

### 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 are due to be advertised in early Q3 2021.

### Homeless Presentations

Time Period	Homeless Presentations	Emergency Homeless
15 <sup>th</sup> June - 12 <sup>th</sup> July, 2021	20	8
Year to Date	108	43

Individuals Accessing	Emergency Accommodation as of 12 <sup>th</sup> July, 2021	Transition Accommodation as of 14 <sup>th</sup> June 2021
Adults	17	2
Children	5	0

### Housing Allocations Year to 13<sup>th</sup> July 2021.

Method of Housing Delivery	Numbers allocated
1 <sup>st</sup> allocation including new builds LCC	6
2 <sup>nd</sup> and subsequent allocations LCC including refurbished stock	41
Nominations to Approved Housing Bodies	42
<b>Total Allocations</b>	<b>89</b>

### Social Housing List at 13<sup>th</sup> July 2021

Social Housing Applicants	895
Applicants in receipt of HAP	957
<b>Total</b>	<b>1852</b>

## 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. Under Section 12(6) of the Planning and Development Act 2000 as amended, Where, following the consideration of the draft development plan and the Chief Executive's report, it appears to the members of the authority that the draft should be accepted or amended, subject to *subsection (7)*, they may, by resolution, accept or amend the draft and make the development plan accordingly.

The amendments only will be put on public display for a period of four (4) weeks and made available for the Public to view and make further submissions on if required.

### MASTERPLAN UPDATES

#### Stradbally Road Masterplan Portlaoise

It is proposed to bring the draft masterplan for the Stradbally Road site (formerly Tyrrells Lands) to the Portlaoise Municipal District members for their consideration as part of the non-statutory process in the next fortnight.

#### Portarlington Regeneration Strategy

The Portarlington Regeneration Strategy has concluded its Public Consultation and a Chief Executives Report will be presented to the Portarlington Municipal District for their endorsement in July which will conclude this non statutory process.

### DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT REPORT

#### PLANNING APPLICATIONS COMPARATIVE FIGURES FROM 2020 TO 2021

Year	Valid applications from 01/01/2021 – 08/07/2021	Valid applications from 01/01/2020 – 08/07/2020
	386	258

2021 PERFORMANCE	
Number of valid applications received:	386
Number of decisions made	350
Number of applications granted:	338 (Decisions to Grant)
Number of applications refused:	12 (Decisions to Refuse) 3.11% refusal rate
Invalid applications returned to applicant:	114 (2021 Invalid Applications) 29.5%
Pre planning	
No of requests to date	270
No of meetings held to date Up to and including the 8 <sup>th</sup> June 2021	257
Wait time	2 weeks



## ENFORCEMENT UPDATE

<u>Service Review</u>	<u>2021</u>		<u>2020</u>	
	June	Jan - June 2021	June	Jan - June 2020
Total number of new cases subject to complaints that were investigated	14	73	2	37
Number of Warning Letters served	17	133	2	133
Number of Enforcement Notices served	6	53	0	35
No Of cases referred for legal proceedings	0	3	0	1
Number of cases in Court (incl adjournments)	11	34	0	20
Number of cases Resolved in Court	2	3	0	1
Number of Files Closed	9	68	5	60
Number of cases on system	177	177	177	177
Enforcement Costs recouped	€ 1,897.00	€ 7,633.24	€ 1,191.24	€ 1,491.24
Number of Valid Retention Applications Received relating to Enforcement Action	7	26	13	17
Fees received through Valid Retention Applications Received relating to Enforcement Action	€13,080.50	€18,486.00	€4,075.78	€18,412.28
Legal fees paid	€541.20	€14,681.24	€1,613.76	€1,613.76

## HERITAGE OFFICER UPDATE REPORT

### Just Transition Fund Project Conservation and Pollination

The design team for the Conservation and Pollination project was advertised and we are currently in the standstill period. All going well the conservation architect-led team will be announced early August. One site in each MD in Laois and Offaly will be involved, In Laois the sites are Kilmanman (Mountmellick MD), Dysartgallen (Portlaoise MD) and Clopook (Portarlinton Graiguecullen MD). A networking meeting this week in Edenderry with Minister Eamon Ryan and Minister Pippa Hackett was attended by the Heritage Officer and Cathaoirleach.

## Portlaoise Plane

The Portlaoise Plane, built and flown by the Aldritt and John Conroy in 1909, was brought home to Portlaoise this week. It is being stored in the Granary on Tower Hill and councilors will be issued with an invitation to view it before Heritage Week.

## Know your Locality Laois

An online course on the heritage of Laois will be held in September, delivered by Irish Heritage School and funded through Creative Ireland. All are welcome and the booking details are at [laois.ie/know-your-locality](http://laois.ie/know-your-locality).

## 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 construction sector.

## Heritage Week

Many of the Heritage Week events will take place online again this year, with some outdoor events being organised within Covid Guidelines. Details of all projects and events nationally are at [www.heritageweek.ie](http://www.heritageweek.ie) and the week runs from 14<sup>th</sup> to 21<sup>st</sup> August.

## BROADBAND

### 1. National Broadband Ireland (NBI)

A special meeting was held on Monday 10<sup>th</sup> May in which NBI presented to the Council giving an update on the Programme of works and rollout in the county.

Section 254 Licences have been applied for in the Eastern Municipal Area to provide pole network for rollout.

### 2. WIFI for EU.

A Tender in relation to the provision of WIFI infrastructure (equipment, installation and maintenance and support) in the following locations : Portlaoise , Portarlinton, Abbeyleix, Mountmellick and Clonaslee.

It is anticipated that engagement with the successful tenderer will occur after 16<sup>th</sup> August at which time a timeline of works will be agreed.

### 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.

There is a 5<sup>th</sup> BCP applied for:

- Shanganamore Community Centre Barrowhouse – PENDING.

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

- €262,926 approved in grant aid to 13 Laois businesses
- 765 owners/managers/employees participated on LEO training programmes
- 130 potential entrepreneurs have participated on Start Your Own Business Courses to-date
- 140 Laois businesses have availed of mentoring to-date in finance, marketing, exporting, HR & health & safety.
- 55 Trading Online Voucher approvals to the value of €119,614
- 8 Laois Companies currently taking part in a Green for Micro programme
- 27 Laois companies currently taking part in the Client Stimulus Programme

#### THE SMALL BUSINESS ASSISTANCE SCHEME COVID (SBASC)

To-date 30 applications have been received. Payments have been made to 12 applicants. 5 applications have been rejected and 13 applications are currently being processed.

#### WAIVERS : Quarter 3

A further extension of the 2021 Rates Waiver has been approved by the Government. Details of that extension are expected shortly.

### Roads, Transportation & Smarter Travel

#### Roadworks Scheme 2021

The Annual Road Works Scheme 2021 was for the Members' consideration at April 2021 Monthly Meeting. Work is well underway delivering the Road works Scheme across all three Municipal Districts.

#### River Maintenance 2021

Survey work and report preparation for river maintenance works in 2021 have been progressing. Works to the identified locations below will be commencing in the coming weeks subject to the necessary permissions. These works will be undertaken before the work in river window ends at the end of September.

#### Western Area

- Mountmellick Drains.
  - Survey completed.
  - Approval received from LCC Planning Section.
  - Works commencing in the coming weeks.
  - Works include general maintenance to drains in the town
- River Owenass downstream of Mountmellick (silt removal).
  - Awaiting completion of the AA report for 2021 works
  - Works comprising of silt and vegetation removal above the waterline.
- River Barrow from Borness Bridge to Garryhinch Bridge.
  - Works comprising vegetation removal and removal of trees
  - Works due to commence Monday 26<sup>th</sup> July

- River Erkina (Woodenbridges to Durrow)
  - Works comprising vegetation removal
  - Awaiting completion of the AA report for 2021 works

#### Central Area

- Triogue River (vegetation removal).
  - Consultants appointed.
  - Surveys ongoing

#### Eastern Area

- Stradbally River (Main Street to Garrans Bridge).
  - Survey completed.
  - AA report submitted to LCC Planning Section for decision.
  - Works comprising of silt and vegetation removal above the waterline.
  - 2021 surveys will provide the basis for a 2022 application for below waterline works.
- Timogue River (Poles Bridge to Stradbally River (100m)).
  - Survey completed.
  - Approval received from LCC Planning Section.
  - Contractor will be on site in coming week to undertake works.
  - Works comprising of silt and vegetation removal above the waterline.
  - 2021 surveys will provide the basis for a 2022 application for below waterline works.
- River Barrow (Belan to M7 Motorway).
  - Survey completed.
  - Awaiting AA report from consultants.
  - Works comprising of silt and vegetation removal above the waterline.
  - 2021 surveys will provide the basis for a 2022 application for below waterline works.
- River Barrow (Stradbally River to Blackford Stream (700m)).
  - Survey completed.
  - Awaiting AA report from consultants.
  - Works comprising of silt and vegetation removal above the waterline.
  - 2021 surveys will provide the basis for a 2022 application for below waterline works.
- River Douglas (Downstream of Gales Bridge)
  - Survey completed.
  - AA report submitted to LCC Planning Section for decision.
  - Works comprising of silt and vegetation removal above the waterline.
- Ballymanus Bridge
  - Application for Approval made to ABP under Section 177(AE) of the Planning & Development Act 2000 (as amended) for removal of vegetated sand and gravel deposits from the river at Ballymanus Bridge, outside Stradbally, Co Laois.
  - Decision awaited from An Bord Pleanála.

#### Local Improvement Scheme 2021 – additional Funding

Additional funding of €270,000 was announced by DRCD to allow additional LIS schemes to be progressed in 2021. This additional funding will result in an additional 6 schemes being progressed. LIS funding for 2021 has allowed the delivery of 13 schemes submitted between March 2007 and January 2018. The oldest scheme on hand awaiting delivery dates from February 2018. Notwithstanding, there remains in excess of 70 schemes on the list for delivery.

### Community Involvement Scheme

DTTaS has confirmed that the CIS scheme will be continued in 2022 and 2023. Applications for these years will be submitted in 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. Funding allocation has not been confirmed to yet but is expected to be approx. €900,000.

### DTTaS Specific Improvement Grant

DTTaS has approved the following Specific Improvement Grants following successful funding applications;

- Poormans Bridge;
  - o €340,000
  - o This bridge has been on LCC's bridge list for many years awaiting final consents from ABP for works. A Specific Improvement Grant was applied for due to the significant cost of works arising from the requirements for the delivery of the works in compliance with the environmental constraints that are present on the site.
- L-20132 Lackamore, Mountmellick
  - o €170,000
  - o The existing drainage network completely collapsed over the 2020/2021 winter. The water is no longer contained with the drainage system. Water is spilling onto the public road and flows down the cul-de-sac for a distance of c.300 metres. The road pavement has completely eroded down below the foundation layers making it difficult for the public to travel the road safely.

## Environment & Environmental Protection

### 1. Kyletelesha Tipping Head and Civic Amenity Site, Portlaoise:

Normal services continue at the Kyletelesha Landfill & Civic Amenity Site.

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

The management and operation of the facility is progressing satisfactorily.

#### Landfill Aftercare Monitoring:

All waste licence monitoring is on-going and up to date.

#### (b) C&D Waste Material:

It is estimated that in approximately 14 months' time Cell 15 will have reached its permitted Waste Licence intake. A waste licence review will be needed for the continued acceptance of C&D material after this date. A cost benefit analysis is currently being carried to see if it will be financially worthwhile for a waste licence review. This review is on-going.

### 2. Portarlinton Civic Amenity Site:

This facility is operated and managed under contract with AES (Ireland) Ltd.

### 3. Historic Unregulated Waste Disposal Sites:

The tender evaluation is completed and the award of the contract is imminent. The Department Grant must be drawn down by early December 2021.

The historic unregulated sites being assessed are Aghanure, Killabban and the Rathdowney Road, Durrow

4. **Bring Banks:**

There are 42 Bring Bank sites provided in the county A total of 1062.87 tonnes of recyclable material is recorded to 15<sup>th</sup> July 2021.

5. **Waste Enforcement & Litter:**

**Environmental Complaint Register**

Complaint Type	Litter	Abandoned Cars	Waste Enforcement incl. C&D	Management & Infrastructure (Bring Banks)	Air	Water	Noise	Vet	Total
Jan	10	2	53	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
Up to 16/07/21	11	4	22	1	5	3	2	0	48
<b>Total</b>	<b>140</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>421</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>685</b>

- 2021 – 685 complaints logged for investigation to 21<sup>st</sup> June 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.

6. **Illegal Dumping:**

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

Over the Summer months Laois County Council is running two active campaigns across all our social media platforms (Laois.ie, Facebook and Twitter).

The first one is in conjunction with WEEE Ireland to highlight the proper and **FREE** all year round disposal of electrical items, batteries and light bulbs at our Recycling Centres at Kyletalesha and Portarlinton.

The second is run as part of the **Leave No Trace Campaign** with various messages to ask people to take their rubbish home, the danger of fires and to be respectful of the areas and people they visit in the current climate.



**7. Anti-Dumping Initiatives 2021**

Table 1 below lists the approved Anti-Dumping Initiatives for 2021.

Project No.	Project Title	Total Amount Approved (€)
1	Extended National Spring Clean and Autumn Blitz	25,000.00
2	UAV/Drone technology and audio devices	15,760.00
3	Bulky Waste Amnesty	20,000.00
4	Clean up of Bog Areas- Cloninagh/Errill/ Clonreher Bogs	29,500.00
<b>Total</b>		<b>€90,260.00</b>

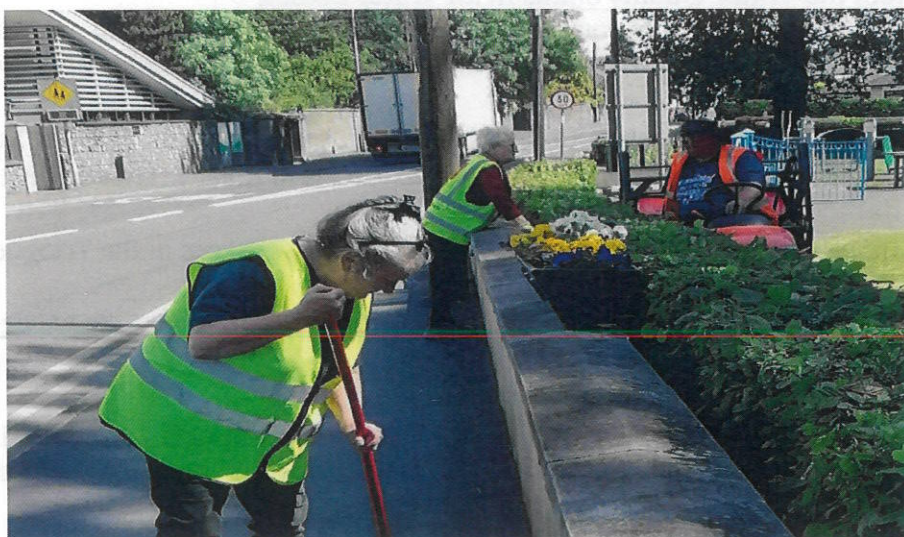
**Table 2 – Approved 2021 ADI Projects**

A programme of works for the above initiatives is currently being prepared by the Waste Enforcement Section.

**8. Clean-Ups by Volunteers, Tidy Towns groups**

Environment Section continue to support Tidy Towns, local Residents and Clean up groups.

Preparation work is currently underway for a planned Autumn Clean Up Blitz which will be run in conjunction with Laois Tidy Towns and funded under the Anti Dumping Initiatives.



(Mountmellick Tidy Towns at work)

Tonnes taken to Kyletalesha Landfill by Litter Wardens 2021	
2021	Monthly Total 2021
January	6.5
February	22.49
March	13.48
April	11.8
May	13.62
June	6.6
July to 15th	4.6

## 9. Anti-Dog Fouling Campaign

70 mutt mitt bins have been installed around Laois, 50 permanent anti dog fouling signs are also being erected at present. The Environment Section held a photoshoot in Pairc on Phobail and an awareness campaign with children from a local school on Monday the 28<sup>th</sup> June. An active social media campaign will be run over the Summer months on our website, facebook and twitter pages. A billboard sign is also planned to raise awareness. We continue to work closely with the Tidy Towns Groups, Residents Association and our Green Dog Walker Campaign to promote responsible dog ownership.



## 10. Environmental Protection:

### i) Protect the Water Quality Status in all Water Bodies:

On site investigations of complaints in relation to water pollution are being carried out by Environmental staff in compliance with Health and Safety and Covid-19 control measures.

- Investigation ongoing into surface water discharges to the lakes at Kilminchy.
- Investigation into elevated Phosphorus Levels in River Erkina downstream of Rathdowney WasteWater Treatment Plant
- Investigation into unauthorised wastewater discharges in the Triogue River at Kyletalesha, Portlaoise
- On-going assessment of planning applications with regards to water quality protection
- Regulation of Discharge Licensed Companies.
- Several Advisory Notices under the Water Pollution Acts 2007 & 2012 have been served relating to domestic wastewater treatment systems and continue to be enforced.



i) Air & Noise:

- In conjunction with the EPA, an NO<sub>2</sub> (Nitrogen Dioxide) monitoring survey will be carried out in the towns of Abbeyleix, Durrow and Cullahill to quantify prevailing air quality. Diffusion tubes were erected at 20 locations across the region on the 6<sup>th</sup> July and will be monitored for the next six months.
- A Section 26 Notice under the “Air Pollution Act, 1987” was issued on the 23<sup>rd</sup> June 2021 to a property in Portarlinton, directing them to cease burning of all materials in a stove until it can be determined whether or not air pollution is being created.

**Emergency Planning, Fire Services & Flood Relief**

- In 2021 (to 12<sup>th</sup> July), Laois County Fire & Rescue Service attended 273 emergency incidents consisting of 135 fires, 89 special service incidents & 49 false alarms.

**Turnout by Station\*:**

Portlaoise – 92	Portarlinton - 62	Stradbally – 34	Mountmellick – 46
Abbeyleix - 26	Mountrath – 38	Durrow – 22	Rathdowney – 22

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

**Fire Services Capital Programme**

- An e-tenders procurement process for the appointment of designers for the Mountmellick Fire Station upgrade (€150,000 project consisting of a fire service drill tower and new concrete yard to the rear of the fire station).
- 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.

**COVID-19 Report update**

- Laois County Fire & Rescue Service continues to provide a full emergency service. In addition Covid – 19 Contingency Planning is still a key focus for the Fire & Emergency Service.
- Laois Civil Defence provide key assistances, servicing requirements of the HSE, the Community Forum Call Centre and other local agencies.

## CIVIL DEFENCE

- Efforts continue to identify a Portlaoise based facility to provide for the long term accommodation needs for Laois Civil Defence.

## 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, bringing of new borewell into supply ongoing. Price now received by Irish Water (IW) from Campions to install larger 6 inch pump with a 4 inch motor and associated works at Fermoy. 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 is now organising and overseeing the delivery of the required works which is expected to be complete in the first half of September, 2021.
- **Disinfection/PH control programme; The Strand WTP** – boil water notice has been issued for this WTP, upgrade works as part of the Laois/Offaly disinfection programme are now complete with a 30-day process-proving period to be completed by the end of July/start of August 2021. New VSD recently installed for the borehole pump and sodium hypochlorite dilution is required on site to improve dosing control. EMR have also been on site as part of the telemetry upgrade programme in Co. Laois.  
Design also progressing at present for Derryguile, Five-Wells, Kilminchy, Kyle, Lough, Derrymoyle, Knocks and Ballyroan 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. Irish Water has recently applied to Laois County Council for planning to carry out the required upgrade works.
- **Containerised unit program** – site survey works ongoing at Aughafeerish WTP. Piling required on site to support the concrete slab for the new container is due to commence on the 14/07/2021. UV containerised unit expected to be installed on site over the coming months.
- **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 in Mountmellick and Portlaoise. 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

### Measure 2 -Public Health Compliance

- The Heath GWS: Work in progress.

### Measure 3 - Enhancement and Water Conservation

- Ballypickas GWS: Meeting on site to progress project to be arranged.
- Heath GWS: Network upgrade –Recommendation of the Consultant due.

### Measure 6 - Community Water and Wastewater Connections

- Waste Water Community Connection at Goodwin Estate: Letter issued to Contractor requesting submission of Insurances, Health & Safety Documents etc.
- New GWS at Shanboe: Department approval received. Committee to proceed to tender with their consultant.

Well Grants – Applications continue to be processed. There were 81 applications received during 2020 of which 31 were paid. The remainder will be processed and progressed as relevant information is returned and works carried out. A further 15 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. It is incrementally developing into a regional scale facility on a phased basis in alignment with the LA National Laboratory Strategy. The sample throughput in 2021 is projected to be 4, 500 compared with 3,800 in 2020. Under the LA National Laboratory Strategy, the Laboratory is designated to accommodate an estimated 9,000 samples in the short-term. Staff have shown great versatility and have been working a shift pattern (09:00 – 16:00 & 16:00 – 23:00) since May 2020 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).

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

### CORPORATE

Work is progressing on the preparations for the draft 2022/2023 Register of Electors.

### COMMUNITY

#### Covid-19 Community Response

##### Covid-19 Helpline

To date (30.03.2020 – 12.07.2021) the helpline has received 797 calls.

Calls Received 2020: 732

Calls Received 2021: 65

#### Breakdown of Calls Received in 2021:

Calls Jan 2021: 24

Calls Feb 2021: 13

Calls March 2021: 13

Calls April 2021: 10

Calls May 2021: 0

Calls June 2021: 5

Calls received in 2021 remain low, accounting for 65 of the 797 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.

#### Public Participation Network

##### LivingWorks START – online suicide prevention programme

Laois PPN in partnership with the HSE are offering LivingWorks START - online suicide prevention programme to help and support our communities in Laois. The programme outlines a four-step model to keep someone safe from suicide and includes impactful and interactive simulations.

##### LCDC Reps

Laois PPN hold 5 seats on the LCDC. Three Laois PPN representative positions on the LCDC ceased membership on Sat 24<sup>th</sup> July 2021, after serving two consecutive three year terms.

- Mr. Robbie Quinn – Community & Voluntary Representative
- Mr. PJ Campbell – Community & Voluntary Representative
- Ms. Mary White – Social Inclusion Representative

Laois PPN sought nominations from groups for replacement nominees and the following nominees are going forward to the July Council Meeting for ratification:

- Mr. John Oxley – Community & Voluntary Representative
- Ms. Nina Horan – Community & Voluntary Representative
- Ms. Joan Bolger – Social Inclusion Representative.

#### Community Enhancement Programme 2021

On Friday 25<sup>th</sup> June the CEP subcommittee convened in order to appraise applications received under the 2021 scheme. A total of 95 applications were received seeking funding in the amount of €350,913.38. The subcommittee again noted that the programme as in previous years was very much oversubscribed with Laois being awarded funding to the value of €136,524. A total of 68 groups had their applications recommended which will go forward to the July LCDC for full approval.

#### Town and Village Renewal Scheme 2021

The following is an update in relation to Town and Village Renewal Scheme projects.

Town/Village	TVRS Project Details	Update
Ballinakill	Upgrade of Ballinakill Swimming Pool	Works complete.
Castletown	Upgrade of Castletown Community Centre to make more energy efficient.	Works due for completion mid August.
Camross	Camross - provide appropriate lighting to the walkway, secure the perimeter of the Village Park and complete the landscaping.	Works due to commence shortly.
Portarlinton	Portarlinton - Public Realm Works	In progress.
Rathdowney	Development of remote working hub and meeting rooms.	In progress.
Stradbally	Conserve the bridge at the centre of the village; implement public realm improvements.	In progress.
Timahoe	Conservation and upgrading of the Community-run Heritage Centre.	In progress.
Durrow	Fit out of community centre/conference/meeting rooms.	In progress.
Broadband (Vicarstown, Emo, Killeslin, Donaghmore, Camross)	Provision of 5 Broadband Connection Points (BCPs) with ICT equipment, office furniture, screening and sanitisers to maximise the potential of High Speed Broadband services.	In progress.

In addition, 14 projects were approved under the Town and Village Renewal Accelerated Measures in 2020. Of the 14 projects 7 are now complete - Cullahill, Stradbally, Shanahoe, Donaghmore, Ballylinan, Portarlinton, Mountrath. 5 are in progress - Portlaoise, Laois Tourism Signage, Woodenbridge, Abbeyleix, Mountmellick,. 2 are at design stage - Durrow, Slieve Bloom Mountains.

8 TVRS applications were submitted to the DRCD under the 2021 scheme on the 16<sup>th</sup> July 2021.

TVRS Grant Type	Town / Village	Project Details	Amount of T&V grant funding requested for this project
TVRS Main Scheme	Killeslin	Establishment of a Digital Hub.	€500,000
TVRS Main Scheme	Mountrath	Renovation of the 1st floor of the Brigidine Convent.	€137,552
TVRS Main Scheme	Ballylinan	Creation of a digitalised Ballylinan History archive, a Heritage Walk and a website. Installation of a bus shelter and litter bins.	€87,300
TVRS Main Scheme	Camross	Completion of new park to include recreational facilities. Complete the Hub with facilities for remote working. Enhance outdoor recreational, seating and meeting facilities.	€33,250

TVRS Main Scheme	Rathdowney	Development of a health check/community plan for Rathdowney.	€29,700
TVRS Main Scheme	Vicarstown	Upgrade of car park surface and provision of footpath.	€54,630
TVRS Main Scheme	Knock	Construction of a new premises for Men's Shed	€95,850
New TVRS Project Development Measure	Mountrath	Development of a detailed landscape plan for the town.	€27,900

## CLIMATE CHANGE & ENVIRONMENT

### Sustainable Energy Communities

Portlaoise 2040 SEC application for Energy MasterPlan (EMP) has been submitted. This has been drafted and is with the SEAI mentor awaiting approval. Portarlington SEC have completed their community charter and are in the process of completing their application for EMP with the SEAI mentor. Arrangements are underway to build up interest into other towns and villages.

### Tidy Towns: Community Heritage Grant for Pilot Climate Change Baseline Study

Laois Federation of Tidy Towns have received €11,326 in funding for a Pilot Laois Tidy Towns Built Heritage and Climate Change Baseline Study to work with 5 Tidy Towns groups. Laois Federation of Tidy Town were the named applicants and this funding covers 80% of the total project costs. The five pilot groups have been selected as Ballacolla, Spink, Stradbally, Portlaoise and Clonaslee.

In this study one feature of built and architectural heritage is identified by the Tidy Towns Committee to encapsulate what they see as a heritage feature that demonstrates the effects of climate change. Effectively they would be adopting one feature to monitor long term as a tangible indicator of Climate Change.

### Stop Food Waste Campaign

Multimedia campaign featuring Catherine Fulvio on Summer BBQ Food Waste ran for 3 weeks over June and received 23.2k views on Laois County Council facebook page alone (it was led by LCC EAO and ran simultaneously across 14 Local Authorities) as well as a two week ad campaign on Midlands 103 with Westmeath County Council and news bulletin item and interview on i Radio as well as national coverage in the RTE Guide and RTE.ie.



## Green GAA

Ratheniska GAA club are participating in national GAA Club pilot under the theme of waste. Environmental Awareness Officer visited club to carry out a Waste Audit and they are undertaking a campaign to eliminate single use plastic bottles

## SPORT & LEISURE UPDATE

- **Bike Week 2021** Funding of €12,400 has been received to deliver a full programme of events from 12<sup>th</sup> - 18<sup>th</sup> September and which will overlap with European Mobility Week 16<sup>th</sup> - 22<sup>nd</sup> September. Flagship event on Wed 15<sup>th</sup> September in partnership with Climate Action team, with plans for over 1000 Primary School children to cycle through Portlaoise, as a promotional tool for Cycle Bus. In total 20 events planned county wide.
- **National Recreation Week and National Play Day Events** delivered from 3<sup>rd</sup> –10<sup>th</sup> July county wide with over 200 children attending outdoor events deliver in compliance with COVID 19 guidelines
- **Healthy Ireland Active Parks Programme:** Currently being delivered at 6 locations weekly countywide

## ARTS & CULTURE

### In the Open | Faoin Spéir

An Arts Office collaborative application with the DAC to the Arts Council under the Faoin Spéir Project Scheme has been successful and funding in the amount of €90,000 will be available to deliver a planned series of performance arts projects in 7 towns in the county over the next few months. Stradbally - Sept 19<sup>th</sup> Abbeyleix October 17<sup>th</sup>, Rathdowney - November 21<sup>st</sup> , Portarlinton - December 12<sup>th</sup>, Mountmellick – February, Mountrath – March, Portlaoise – April. Work is progressing on the programme.

### Poetrytown 10-18 September

Funded by Poetry Ireland and the Arts Council, Mountmellick is one of the twenty towns across the country that have been selected. Under this initiative a Poet laureate is commissioned to write a poem for the town. Local businesses and cafés will ‘prescribe’ poems to customers. Workshops and window displays will be arranged. The photo launch for the national Poetrytown campaign took place in Mountmellick during the week. The national campaign takes place in August when the Laureates and the programme will be revealed.

### Laois Arthouse

The Laois Arthouse Gallery, Stradbally, Co Laois is delighted to re-open with an exhibition entitle *Painting the Particular*-Paintings of Suburban Dublin 2004-2016 by Mary Burke. Mary conducts this year’s annual Adult Summer Art course in the Malthouse, located in the centre of Stradbally, Co Laois with 8 participants.

### Creative Ireland Laois

‘Fadó Faces’ an outdoor drive-by art exhibition by ten local Laois artists celebrates the lives and stories of older people in Laois, through traditional portrait painting and digital art, and took place on July 18 at Laois Co. Council Plaza.

The launch of Laois County Library Service publication ‘Open a Window on the Past: Helen Maybury Roe and Lucy Franks will take place as part of Heritage Week on Aug 14, at 2pm in BloomHQ, Mountrath, and a streamed live ‘reading’ event by author and Historian in Residence, Regina Dunne at the Old Fort Quarter, Portlaoise on Aug 20, at 7pm.

### Local Live Public Performance Scheme LLPPS

Laois County Council has been awarded €143,000 under the governments Local Live Public Performance Scheme. The rollout of the programme commences this month with a focus of filming artists in heritage and tourist settings across the county. The Scheme aims to support the creation of employment opportunities for local professional artists and musicians of all performance genres, cinematographers, technicians, crew, staging, lighting, sound engineers and other support staff working in the live commercial arts and culture sectors in County Laois. Filming will take place and small audiences will be invited to attend the concluding event in each location, in compliance with prevailing Covid 19 restrictions at the time. Screenings of the recordings can be arranged at a later date with an invited audience.

### Chief Executive’s Orders

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

  
John Mulholland  
Chief Executive

July 21<sup>st</sup> 2021