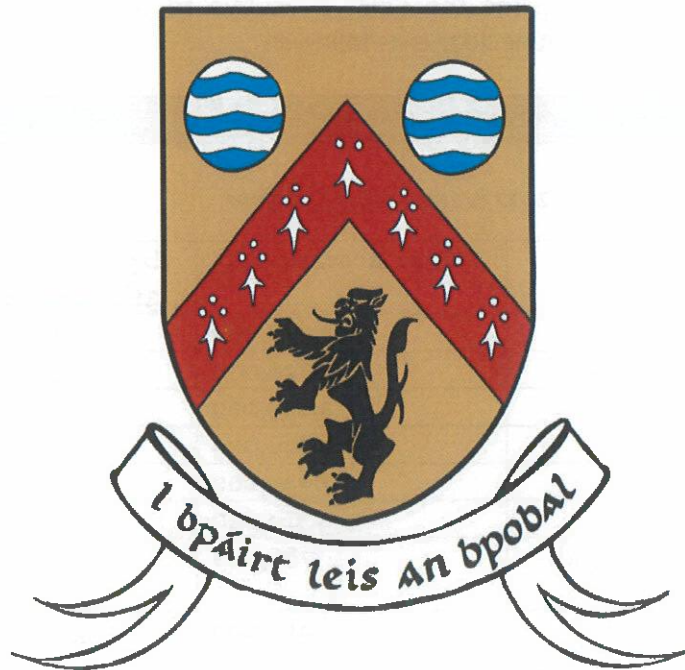


LAOIS COUNTY COUNCIL

COMHAIRLE CHONTAE LAOISE



MONTHLY MANAGEMENT REPORT

JUNE 2022

TUARASCÁIL BHAINISTÍOCHTA

MEITHEAMH 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 June 2022 is as follows:-

Finance, & Allocations Notified

Expenditure and income to the 31/05/2022 is summarised below:

Service Division	Budget Allocation (€)	Expenditure to 31/05/2022 (€)
Housing and Building	19,748,000	7,446,334
Road Transportation and Safety	22,946,000	4,910,217
Water Services	3,259,000	1,586,156
Development Management	9,706,000	3,546,830
Environmental Services	7,939,000	2,411,938
Recreation and Amenity	4,361,000	1,680,287
Agriculture, Education, Health and Welfare	786,000	250,687
Miscellaneous Services	9,453,000	4,038,848
Central Management Charge	10,139,000	4,132,817
Total	88,337,000	30,004,114

Service Division	Budget Allocation (€)	Income to 31/05/2022 (€)
Housing and Building	21,415,000	7,732,977
Road Transportation and Safety	18,682,000	2,443,824
Water Services	4,380,000	1,890,820
Development Management	6,946,000	2,868,173
Environmental Services	1,942,000	862,636
Recreation and Amenity	781,000	542,274
Agriculture, Education, Health and Welfare	314,000	105,315
Miscellaneous Services	8,702,000	3,907,362
Superannuation	714,000	323,533
Local Property Tax	9,065,150	4,532,574
Rates	14,662,952	6,446,990
Capital transfer	732,898	0
Total	88,337,000	31,656,478

Local Live Public Performance Scheme 2022 Round 4 (July - December 2022)	€143,000
Healthy Ireland Fund Round 4 2022-2025 (Indicative Budget)	€160,000
DECDIY National Play Day (2 nd -9 th July)	€3,000

HOUSING DELIVERY

Housing for All 2022-2026 Social Housing Build Delivery Target

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

Social Housing Schemes Currently Under Construction – LCC & AHB

Location	Total No. of Houses	Constructed by	Comment
Moore St, Rathdowney	6	LCC (Construction)	On site – expected delivery Q4 2022
Pattison Estate, Mountmellick	10	LCC (Construction)	On site – expected delivery Q3 2022
Gleann na Glaise, Ballyroan	10	LCC (Construction)	On Site – expected delivery Q3 2022
Sean Doire, Durrow	22	LCC (Construction)	On Site – expected delivery Q3 2022
Coolroe, Ballybrittas	1	LCC (Construction)	Complete
Harbour Court, Mountmellick	6	LCC (Construction)	On Site – expected delivery Q2 2023
Featherbed Lane, Borris-In-Ossory (Ph 2)	5	LCC (Turnkey)	On Site – expected delivery Q3 2022
Bruach Na Habhainn, Killeen	4	LCC (Turnkey)	On Site – Phase 1 (3 units) delivery Q2 2022 On Site – Phase 1 (1 unit) delivery Q2 2023
The Orchard, Ballylynan	5	LCC (Turnkey)	On Site – Phase 1 (2 units) delivered On Site – Phase 1 (3 units) delivery Q4 2022
Market Square, Portarlinton	18	LCC (Turnkey)	On site – delivery Q2 2023
Oak Park Halting Site	4	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	Respond Housing	On site – expected delivery Q1 2023
Clonrooske Abbey, Portlaoise	32	Cluid Housing	On site. Cluid met with developer to agree timeframe for delivery of all units, September is likely for Phase 1 (14 units). Portlaoise MD Members being regularly updated in this regard.
The Maltings & Roselawn, Portlaoise	55	Cluid Housing	On site. Phase 1 (15 units) expected delivery date Q4 2022.
Holdbrook, Portlaoise	10	Cluid Housing	On site. Expected delivery Q3 2022

Droughill Lawns, Portarlinton	26	Oaklee Housing	Units completed. AHB has advised that tenancing will commence in July.
The Springs, Kilminchy, Portlaoise	43	Cluid Housing	On site currently Phase 1 (19 units) expected delivery Q3 2022; Phase 2 (24 units) expected delivery Q4 2022.
Goldencroft, Portlaoise (Old CBS site)	67	Cluid Housing	3 Phases – on site. First phase (13 units) delivery Q4 2022
Ballymorris Green, Portarlinton	46	Cluid Housing	3 phases. Currently on site - Phase 1 (15 units) expected delivery Q3 2022.
Doirinn Alainn, Ballylinan	9	North & East Housing	Last phase of this development – on site; expected delivery Q4 2022.
South Dublin Road, Kilminchy	36	Cooperative Housing	On site – 3 phases for delivery during 2023.
The Meadows (old Midland Dairies site), Portlaoise	48	Cluid Housing	Currently on site – expected delivery Q3 2023
TOTAL	507		

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

Location/Scheme	No of Houses	To be constructed by	Comment
St. Kieran's Errill	14	LCC (Construction)	Stage 4 approved in Q2 2022. Contractor to be appointed in Q2 2022.
Mooreville, Rathdowney	7	LCC (Construction)	Stage 4 submitted in Q2 2022.
Carraig Glas, Stradbally	26	LCC (Construction)	Stage 3 to be submitted in Q3 2022.
Clonrooske, Portlaoise	11	LCC (Construction)	Stage 2 approved in June 2022.
Iona, Portlaoise	7	LCC (Construction)	Stage 2 to be submitted in Q3 2022
Doonane	12	LCC (Construction)	Stage 2 to be submitted in Q3 2022
Derry Road, Durrow	22	LCC (Construction)	18 dwellings and a minimum of 4 serviced sites proposed Stage 1 Approved
Ballyadams	1	LCC (Construction)	Stage 1 Approved – Design Team to be appointed in Q2 2022
Stradbally Road, Portlaoise	80	Mixed Tenure	Masterplan for entire lands recently noted by Portlaoise MD members. Options being explored for tenure and delivery of scheme.
Bracklone St, Portarlinton	12	LCC (Construction)	Stage 1 To Be Submitted
Rushall Mountrath	2	LCC (Construction)	Stage 1 To Be Submitted
Main St, Ballinakill	3	LCC (Construction)	Stage 1 To Be Submitted
Moanbaun, Mountrath	9	LCC (Construction)	Stage 1 To Be Submitted

Convent Lands, Portlaoise (CAS)	52	Sophia Housing	Stage 3 application recently submitted, awaiting approval.
County Hotel, Portlaoise (CAS)	10	Cluid Housing	Site investigations to inform Stage 2 application and Part 8 docs to be prepared thereafter for Council approval
Hepburn Court, Portlaoise	54	Cluid Housing	Part VIII consideration by members at June Council Meeting
Curragh na Mona, Abbeyleix Rd, Portlaoise	39	Respond Housing	AHB has issued letter of intent to contractor; commencement on site date to be advised.
Doran's site adj to O' Moore Place, Portlaoise	50	Cooperative Housing	Meeting took place with Coop and site owner layout/number of units to be finalised.
TOTAL	411		

AFFORDABLE HOUSING

Minimum targets recently 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

Expressions of Interest submitted for advanced purchase turnkey arrangements are currently being examined. Members are also advised that the Council's Housing Team has met local builders on a face to face basis to explore the potential of affordable and cost rental agreements.

REGENERATION / VACANT HOMES

A Vacant Homes/ Regeneration internal working group (comprised of SEO Housing, Vacant Homes Officer, Derelict Sites Technician, Planner and Chief Technician) has been established to map and examine vacancy and dereliction in a number of towns.

Vacancy Surveys

Initial surveys have been completed in Mountmellick and Mountrath. The information on the surveys has been mapped and further investigation on a number of identified properties to confirm their vacancy status is being carried out by making contact with property owners.

	Mountmellick	Mountrath
No. of properties initially identified as potentially Vacant	123 95 Residential 26 Commercial 2 Vacant Sites	92 70 Residential 20 Commercial 2 Vacant Sites
Net no of above properties (following night-time occupancy survey)	103	79
No. of properties identified for further examination where action could be taken by the Vacant Homes Office or Derelict Sites Section	57	70

A plan for acquisition of properties, subject to available funding and/or use of the CPO process will then be determined for each area.

This will be dependent on

- (a) the number of viable properties for residential use,
- (b) the requirement for and level of social housing already in that locality and
- (c) the capacity of the local authority to carry out works to the property with funding provided for under the **Buy and Renew Scheme** criteria if dereliction is extensive or the property is difficult to renovate for housing purposes.

Owners will also be encouraged to use the **Repair and Leasing Scheme** to bring properties back into use.

Generally, across the County, Expressions of Interest were invited via advertisement and LCC website for vacant /derelict properties.

CPO

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

Repair & Leasing

Applications received to date	37
Applications approved to proceed	5
Applications under consideration	5
No. of Leases commenced	1
Applications Refused	26*

*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.

HOUSING STOCK

Housing Re-Lets

Month	LA Keys Surrendered	Properties Acquired	Works Completed
January 22	10	0	3
February 22	7	1	11
March 22	5	0	4
April 22	5	0	13
May 22	5	0	5
TOTAL (YTD)	30	1	36

NOTE: There are currently 23 vacant units from our existing stock and a further 8 units that the Council acquired recently. Works are either ongoing on these properties or specifications are being prepared for works to be carried out.

NOTE: Laois County Council have been approved Voids Department funding in 2022 for 42 units at a total cost of €462,000.

Housing Maintenance

Month	Work Orders Raised	Work Orders Closed	Work Orders Open
January 22	424	397	27
February 22	517	483	34
March 22	404	373	31
April	392	354	38
May 22	352	248	104
TOTAL (YTD)	2,089	1,855	234

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. Works completed on insulation and new roof on 7 roof extensions. All works to be fully complete by Q3 2022.
Hillview Drive, Portlaoise	18	18	14 houses M&E complete	M&E works complete on 14 houses. All works on houses to be completed in Q3 2022.

Quigley Pk, Rathdowney	20	20	14 houses M&E complete	M&E works complete on 14 houses. External insulation completed on 8 houses.
Radharc Alainn, Arles	18	18	18 Houses M&E complete.	DCV Ventilation system installed, skirting boards and insulation to be completed.
Derrymore, Portarlington	26	26	26 houses M&E complete	M&E Works complete. Houses to be snagged 16 th June 2022. Works to be fully complete by Q3 2022.
Kirwan Park, Mountmellick	51	51	4 houses M&E complete	Insulation and DCV unit to be installed. Windows and Doors on-going.
Total Properties	157	157	100 Units (M&E complete)	

Energy Efficiency/Retrofitting Programme:

Address	Properties	Units Commenced	Units Completed	Update
O'Moore Place, Portlaoise	28	0	0	Retendered in Q2 2022 and evaluation is ongoing
Total Properties	28	0	0	

Target Retrofitting Programme for 2022

The target number of units determined for 2022 to retrofit to a B2/Cost Optimal standard in County Laois - **Target of 39 residential units.**

The programme will allow for an average spend of €33,333 per property on eligible energy efficiency works with additional project management fees also available, the detail of which will issue under separate cover.

This will bring the overall average grant available per property to approximately €36,000 depending upon the number of properties being retrofitted in each local authority area.

A submission was approved by the Dept of Housing on the 14th of June for **47 units** in the following estates.

- 1) Thornberry, Abbeyleix – 16 units.
- 2) Church Avenue, Stradbally – 9 units.
- 3) Slieve Bloom Park, Clonaslee – 8 units.
- 4) St. John's Square, Portlaoise – 7 units.
- 5) Old School Road, Ballylynan – 7 units.

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

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
19 th May – 17 th June 2022	19	15
Year to Date	107	40

Homeless Accommodation

Individuals Accessing.....	Emergency Accommodation as of 17 th June 2022	Transition Accommodation as of 17 th June 2022
Adults	16	0
Children	14	0

Social Housing List at 17th June 2022

TOTAL No of Social Housing Applicants	1,797
Applicants in receipt of HAP	901

Housing Allocations

Method of Delivery	Allocations to 21 st June 2022	Numbers allocated Year-to-date 2022
First allocation of New Build/Acquired unit	3	10
Relet / Refurbished Stock Allocation	9	36
Nomination to AHB housing	1	37
TOTAL Y-T-D	13	83

Housing Assistance Payment

No of Active HAP Tenancies at 17 th June 2022	901
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LOANS & GRANTS

Loans

Local Authority Home Loan: 4 th January 2022 – 20 th June 2022	
No of Loan Approvals	7
No of Applications refused	5

Housing Adaptation Grants at 20th June 2022

Allocation 2022 (including LA funded portion)	No of Applications Received in 2022	No of Approved Applications at works stage	Comment
€1,389,375	129	161 (€1,035,920)	All grants approved can proceed to carry out works and applicants recoup down grant monies from LCC upon satisfactory completion of works.

Disabled Persons Grant for Social Housing at 20th June 2022

Allocation 2022 (including LA funded portion)	Expenditure / Commitments to date	No. of applicants benefitting	No of new applications Received in 2022	Comment
€681,535	€263,697	25	25	Dept Funding allocation advised must be supplemented by LA's own funds (10%) Funded programme provides for all Priority 1 (severe) applications for small works received by date of funding submission to DHLGH (18/02/22) and construction of 3 extensions in 2022. Further Priority 1 (severe) applications for small works received in 2022 will be considered subject to available funding.

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

LEASING

RAS/Leasing Statistics at 20th June 2022

Active RAS tenancies	83
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	10
Active long-term Mortgage to Rent leasing tenancies with a private company	21

PRIVATE RENTED INSPECTIONS

All private rented dwellings must comply with the Housing (Standards for Rented Houses) Regulations 2019 and the local authority has no discretion in this regard. 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.

The Council has issued 582 Notices of Works to date in 2022 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 – 18/05/2022	414*

*an increase of 114 inspections since May 2022

Planning, Development and Heritage

LAOIS DRAFT COUNTY DEVELOPMENT PLAN 2021-2027

No further update in relation to the Ministerial Direction.

LOCAL AREA PLANS

Work on the 4 Local Area Plans for Portlaoise, Mountmellick, Graiguecullen and Portarlington has commenced.

Two of the Plans, Graiguecullen and Portarlington will be in the form of joint plans with Carlow County Council and Offaly County Council respectively. Initial contact has been made with both Offaly and Carlow in relation to the commencement of these plans.

A meeting was held on June 8th in Graiguecullen with Officials from Carlow County Council and the elected members of the Graiguecullen/Portarlington Municipal District. This meeting set out the process of making a LAP.

Pre-Draft Consultation will take place during Q2 2022.

DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT

PLANNING APPLICATIONS COMPARATIVE FIGURES FROM 2021 TO 2022

Year	Valid applications from 01/01/2022 – 20/6/2022	Valid applications from 01/01/2021 – 20/06/2021
	307	348
2022 PERFORMANCE		
Number of valid applications received:	307	
Number of decisions made	300	
Number of applications granted:	277 (Decisions to Grant)	
Number of applications refused:	23 (Decisions to Refuse) 7.6% refusal rate	
Invalid applications returned to applicant:	81 (2022 Invalid Applications)	
Pre planning		
No of requests to date	177	
No of meetings held to date Up to and including the 20 th June 2022	161	
Wait time	2 weeks	

ENFORCEMENT UPDATE

Current year	2022		2021	
	May	Jan - May	May	Jan - May
Total number of new cases subject to complaints that were investigated	15	58	9	59
Number of Warning Letters served	16	161	26	116
Number of Enforcement Notices served	1	19	5	46
No Of cases referred for legal proceedings	1	3	0	3
Number of cases in Court(incl adjournments)	4	27	6	23
Number of cases Resolved in Court	1	5	0	1
Number of Files Closed	9	102	10	59
Number of cases on system	138	138	172	172
Enforcement Costs recouped	€554.98	€3,711.96	€ 1,100.00	€5,736.24
Number of Valid Retention Applications Received relating to Enforcement Action	8	23	6	19
Fees received through Valid Retention Applications Received relating to Enforcement Action	€5,239.8	€20,729.8	€2,173.50	€5,405.50
Legal fees paid	€12,555.64	€19,195.96	€0.00	€14,140.04

HERITAGE

1. MRTT Just Transition Project Conservation and Pollination

- *Works:* Tender for preliminary works at all six sites in 2022 published 31st May on eTenders, following approval by Procurement Officer. Closing date for tenders 21st June.
- *Training:* Ecologist for community training is planning summer and autumn workshops
- *Communications:* Film company Crannog Media is continuing recording of the project

1.1. Laois Heritage Plan Projects

Awareness

- a) Biodiversity Week events (online and in person) went well with good engagement and publicity. Plans for Heritage Week in August and Science Week in November now underway;
- b) Work going well on film about the Gordon Bennett race in Laois, in partnership with Carlow and Kildare County Councils and the Gordon Bennett Committee;
- c) "In Your Nature" Podcasts by BirdWatch Ireland continue with 6 episodes released to date this year and download figures for the full series now at over 40,000.

1.2. *Connecting Communities – Local Heritage Projects:*

a) Portlaoise Plane and Col Fitzmaurice Commemoration

The Laois Festival of Flight went extremely well in April, with very good attendance at all events, good feedback from schools flight workshops and good press coverage. The Portlaoise Plane featured as part of the Gordon Bennett event launch at the June Bank Holiday Weekend, and the James Fitzmaurice Commemoration Group are planning Heritage Week events towards the end of August.

b) Timahoe

Vegetation Management has started for the year at Timahoe, with a six week mowing rotation being used to allow pollinator plants to flower and set seed before cutting to keep down woody plants. The Heritage Office has covered the cost of the School of Irish Archaeology Workshops for children at the Timahoe Heritage Festival on the June Bank Holiday weekend, including autism friendly sessions delivered in collaboration with Laois-Offaly Families for Autism,

1.3. *Publications*

Final phase of Rock of Dunamase Book is now complete. The book will be published and launched this year.

Gardening for Biodiversity Book and colouring book have been reprinted and distribution has commenced

Design and print of Laois Heritage and Biodiversity Strategy 2021 – 2026 awaits appropriate assessment of the Plan.

1.4. **Local Biodiversity Action Fund Wetland Survey**

Wetland Survey Phase II Field Survey has commenced, it is hoped that 20 – 30 sites will be surveyed this year, of a total 302 sites recorded in the desk study. A further public events will be held to mark Water Day during Heritage Week.

1.5. **Local Biodiversity Action Fund Communications**

A series of radio ads on topics featuring pollinators, wildlife, how nature can benefit mental health and gardening for biodiversity will be broadcast throughout the year. This has already commenced and will continue to December 2022.

1.6. **Climate Change Webinars**

Complete - series of 4 online webinars on the topic of climate change and heritage held in February and March, with over 200 attendees at each. Presentations archived on Youtube.

2. **Community Monuments Fund**

A total of 5 projects received funding under the **Community Monuments Fund** for 2022, from a total of 7 applications. Projects included are conservation plans for Ballyadams Castle, Clonreher Castle and Baunaghra Church and conservation works at Rahin Church Ballylinan and Dysart Enos Church. All projects to be completed and funds recouped by November 2022.

3. **Portlaoise Projects**

- Conservation of Old St Peters Graveyard is complete.
- Fort Protector Conservation Plan complete and was launched as part of the Old Fort Festival, 23rd June 2022
- Interpretation of historic Portlaoise as part of the Tourism led Portlaoise destination town project is now designed and all content agreed. Tender for manufacture and installation of interpretive material to be prepared.

4. Creative Ireland

4.1. Mountmellick Mural

Approval has been given to install a Mural in Mountmellick to celebrate the importance of the town for swifts, a threatened urban bird, in partnership with BirdWatch Ireland on this.

4.2. Heritage and Landscape Training “Know your Locality”

Now complete and went very well.

5. Town and Village Renewal and Regeneration Projects

5.1. Timahoe TVRS

The proposed works costed by Lotts Architecture that are required to protect the fabric of this historic building and provide adequate facilities and heritage interpretation on this project have come in higher than anticipated. These works which include roofing repairs to external doors, painting, new kitchenette and reception area, heating system, floor coverings etc have been designed not to affect the special character of this protected structure. The Dept of Rural & Community Development advised that extra funding will not be made available to carry out the works on this project. Following a review Laois County Council will provide an additional €92,119. €26,756 has already been agreed. Lotts Architecture have been advised of the revised budget allocated to this project and are currently revising the specifications and cost and preparing to go to Tender for the proposed works (June 23rd).

5.2. Stradbally TVRS

Final specifications for Stradbally Bridge now agreed with TII, Tender to be advertised shortly. Swift boxes installed and biodiversity planting plan complete. Public realm works ongoing with assistance of MD.

Local Enterprise & Economic Development

Local Enterprise Office (LEO):

- €227,666 approved in grant aid to 10 Laois businesses up to 31st May.
- 553 owners/managers/employees participated in LEO training programmes
- 76 potential entrepreneurs participated in Start Your Own Business Courses
- 131 Laois businesses availed of mentoring in finance, marketing, exporting, HR and health & safety
- 17 Trading Online Voucher approvals to the value of €35,320
- 20 Laois companies currently taking part in a Green for Micro programme
- 5 Laois companies currently taking part in LEAN programmes
- 7 Laois companies have submitted applications Micro Finance Ireland, with 5 approvals to date.

National Enterprise Awards 2022

Salutem Insights Ltd. won a National award (Mid East Regional over all winner) at the National Enterprise Awards which were held in the Mansion House on the 2nd June 2022. They received their award from Mr Damian English, Minister of State for Business, Employment and Retail. Salutem Insights create tailored solutions for a variety of complex pharma industry issues within the public and private marketplace.

National Women’s Enterprise Day 2022

National Women’s Enterprise Day is taking place this year on Thursday October 13th. The Theme is “Our Future, Our Way”. A Regional National Women in Business Event (Laois, Offaly, Westmeath, Longford) will be held in the Glasson Lakehouse Hotel, Athlone, Co Westmeath.

Suzanne Jackson (Irish blogger and businessperson) is the main speak for the event and Patricia Gibney (Irish author of crime fiction) is the leading light.

Women in Business Network

The second meeting of the Women’s Inspire Networking Laois circle took place on Wednesday 15th June with 26 in attendance from various businesses across the County.

Roads, Transportation & Smarter Travel

Roadworks Programme 2022;

The Annual Road Works Scheme 2022 was adopted by the Members at the March 2022 Monthly Meeting. Work has commenced to deliver the Road Works Scheme across the three Municipal Districts.

River Drainage Maintenance;

Various, county-wide surveys are ongoing to inform and underpin river drainage maintenance works later in 2022.

As of mid-May 2022 there are two planning consents recently issued to Laois County Council from An Bord Pleanala and 11 Appropriate Assessment Screening Reports under development for approval by LCC Planning Department. Additionally, a further 7 Appropriate Assessment Screening Reports give rise to a requirement for planning applications to An Bord Pleanala. In the case of those 7 Assessments, works are unlikely to be possible in 2022, pending assessment by An Bord Pleanala.

Motorway & National Road Works;

The following works will be undertaken in the following months on the motorway and national road networks in County Laois.

- M7 between junctions 14 (Monasterevin) and 15 (Emo); the M7 motorway will be temporarily closed to through traffic between Junction 15 and Junction 14, and between Junction 14 and Junction 15, between the 11th of July to the 3rd of October 2022, to facilitate pavement renewal works to be carried out. These will be night works, and the motorway will reopen to traffic outside of the working hours. The works will be undertaken utilising a phased approach, with diverted traffic directed to follow signage along an alternative route. Only one direction will be closed at any one time.
- HD 28 works will take place in July as follows;

N80 GRAIGUECULLEN	15 NIGHTS	20TH JUNE-7TH JULY	PARTIAL CLOSURES
N80 GARROUGH	4 DAYS	11TH -14TH JULY	CLOSURE
N80 WINDY GAP, STRADBALLY	3 DAYS	18TH-20TH JULY	CLOSURE
N80 JFL AVENUE, PORTLAOISE	3 NIGHTS	25TH-28TH JULY	PARTIAL CLOSURES

- N80 Derrycloney to Mountmellick Pavement rehabilitation. Works area will be on the N80 from its junction with the R423 Ballyfin Road to its junction with the R422 Rosenallis Road. The works will be undertaken utilising a phased approach, with diverted traffic directed to follow signage along an alternative route. It is anticipated that these works will commence in July, with a projected works programme of 10 weeks. A further update will issue to Members when start dates are confirmed.

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

Normal services continue at the Kyletalesha Landfill Facility and Civic Amenity Site. The recent changes in the cost for the disposal of household black-bag municipal waste and domestic green/garden waste are outlined below:

Waste Type	Old Charge	New Charge
Household Black-Bag	For weights less than or equal to 40kg: €5 per bag or minimum charge of €15, whichever is the lowest.	For weights less than 20kg - €5 For weights between 21kg & 40kg - €10
Domestic Green	For weights less than or equal to 40kg: €2.50 per bag or minimum charge of €10, whichever is the lowest. Weights above 40kg will be charged at €200 per tonne.	For weights less than or equal to 40kg: €1.00 per bag or minimum charge of €3.00, whichever is the lowest. Weights above 40kg will be charged at €80 per tonne.

This Green/Garden Waste Charge does not apply to timber.

Table 1 – Revised Waste Disposal Charges

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	Total Tonnage
2022	163.77	114.28	162.18	120.57	133.64	99.69	794.13
2021	196.89	140.31	177.84	173.60	143.65	170.08	1,002.37
2020	138.37	86.81	121.35	205.29	195.24	190.74	937.80
2019	138.80	113.96	86.93	108.42	122.60	86.79	657.50

2022 June figure is to the 20th June 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

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

Tonnes of material collected to date is 266 tonnes. Table 3 below shows the material collected from 2019 to 2022.

Year	2019	2020	2021	2022
Tonnage	367	238	530	266

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	357
Litter	76
Abandoned Vehicles	17
Water	28
Veterinary	21
Air	12
Noise	16
Waste Infrastructure – Bring Banks	3
Total	530

Table 4 – Environmental Complaint Register

c) Litter Fines

To date 32 litter fines have been issued (30–litter & 2–dog fouling).

d) 2022 Anti-Dumping Initiatives

A Mattress Amnesty is organised for the 02nd July 2022 at Portlaoise Rugby Club, Togher. Laois County Council wishes to thank the Rugby Club for the use of their grounds for this event.

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.

b) Air & Noise:

- Investigation of complaints on a priority basis.

Emergency Planning, Fire Services & Flood Relief

In 2022 (to date) Laois County Fire & Rescue Service attended 302 emergency incidents consisting of 116 fires, 147 special service incidents & 39 false alarms.

Turnout by Station*:

Portlaoise – 117	Portarlinton - 45	Stradbally – 54	Mountmellick – 47
Abbeyleix - 46	Mountrath – 29	Durrow – 45	Rathdowney – 28

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

Laois County Fire & Rescue Service recently took delivery of a former HSE/NAS Intermediate Care Vehicle which will be repurposed as an Incident Command Vehicle.

WATER SERVICES AND RURAL WATER

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.

Disinfection/PH control programme – Civil works progressing in Derryguile, Kyle, Five Wells, Derrymoyle and Lough WTPs. MEICA works progressed at 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.

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. Remaining civil works and M + E works to be completed over the coming weeks.

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.

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, works in Emo ongoing.

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 Q3. An Advance Measure, A8 – *Waste Water Collection and Treatment Needs for Villages and Settlements without access to Public Waste Water Services* is currently being assessed with a view to an application from Laois County Council. An on-line information workshop was provided by the Dept on

Wednesday 15th June to discuss this new measure and attended by 2 members of the Water Services staff.

Well Grants – 26 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. Currently there are 277 persons that have been 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. There are currently 507 displaced Ukrainian citizens in County Laois.

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

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

Private accommodation via Red Cross and other pledges has to date accommodated 21 persons (7 households).

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 8th June 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, the St. Vincent de Paul, Civil Defence, the Local Development Company, various local voluntary groups, local communities and Housing personnel at this point. To date the forum convened on 6 occasions. At present the forum consists of 44 members representing 23 members groups/agencies.

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

CORPORATE

Preparatory work has commenced on the preparation of the 2023/2024 Draft Register of Electors.

A Cathaoirleach’s Reception in honour of the Laois Association Dublin in recognition of their contribution to promoting the interests of County Laois in Dublin was held on the 27th of May 2022.

COMMUNITY

Healthy Ireland

The **Healthy Ireland Fund 2022-2025 Grant Agreement** was signed on the 9th June 2022, which includes an allocation of an indicative Budget of €160,000. The final Annual allocation will be confirmed in Q4 of each year.

As part of **International Men's Health Week** on Monday 13th-Sunday 19th June, the Irish Men's Shed's Association launched a new Walkshop Resource for its members across Ireland. Created in partnership with Men's Sheds, Mental Health Ireland and Get Walking Ireland the resource aims to encourage Men to make the first steps back toward Sheds, after a challenging 2 years of Pandemic lockdowns, disruption and social isolation.

To celebrate this launch, Laois Men's Shed, led out by Laois Sport Partnership, using Fitsticks funded by Healthy Laois, arranged a 5km walk around Abbeyleix Bog on Tuesday, 14th June 2022, enjoyed by Shedders from Laois, Navan, Slane and Waterford, pictured below.

Laois Public Participation Network

Social Inclusion Photograph Competition-Laois PPN organised a photography competition as part of their Social Inclusion week in May. The theme was 'What does Social Inclusion mean to you?' The winning entries were - Suaimhneas Community Childcare, La Leche League and O'Moore's Camogie Club. The photography competition showed that there is a strong social inclusion spirit in Laois with a wide variety of entries.

Sports Capital Draw Down Talk- Laois PPN and Laois County Council Sports section have organised a Sports Capital Grant Draw Down Talk at the Council Chamber on Tuesday 28th June at 7pm. There was a record number of 55 Sports Clubs in Laois who were approved for Sports Capital Grants with a further 4 who were successful with their appeals. This talk will support Sports Clubs across Laois with the draw down process of the Sports Capital Grants.

People's First Credit Union to sponsor the Community & Voluntary Awards 2022- Laois PPN have secured €4,000 in funding from People's First Credit Union towards the Community and Voluntary Award 2022.

Laois Comhairle na nÓg

Two members of Comhairle na nÓg will attend the Comhairle Regional Networking Events on Thursday June 30th in Dublin. A date has been set for the AGM which will take place in the Midlands Park Hotel in November. Comhairle members are also working on their survey regarding what resources young people would like to see put in place, whether it is in a school setting, youth reach, youth facilities etc.

Age Friendly Programme

Age Friendly Strategy development is ongoing with survey data collected and under analysis. The Age Friendly Alliance meets on 22nd June and together with action partners, will develop a series of actions for the upcoming strategy.

The OPC has nominated Breda Cooley, from the OPC to represent Laois on the Integrated Care Programme for Older People(ICPOP) working group. At the meeting on the 7th June, the HSE lead person, Mary Doolan, sought nominations from the OPCs in both Laois & Offaly, in order that their views be represented. The next meeting is on the 12th July, in Portlaoise Hospital.

Local Authority Weatherproofing and Outdoor Dining Infrastructure Scheme

Durrow.

The outdoor dining works in Durrow are completed and were officially declared open by the Cathaoirleach on 20th June 2022.



Hynd's Square - Portlaoise.

Works in Hynd's Square have commenced with installation of the canopies expected by the end of June.

CLIMATE ACTION

In House Heat Pump training by Technical University of the Shannon (TUS)

The technical staff received training on the HP4ALLL specifier/Designer learning units, on 26th May followed with presentations from our colleague Benny McDonagh on the projects GUPP (Green procurement) and BUSLeague (construction skills). Grant Engineering demonstration vehicle was also onsite to provide a demonstration of their heat pump technologies.

SPORT & LEISURE UPDATE

Parks Tennis Programme

The Sport & Leisure Section have partnered up with four community partners to implement the annual Parks Tennis Programme. The programme will be delivered in Mountmellick, Vicarstown, Mountrath and Rathdowney over 4 weeks commencing July 11th 2022.

ARTS & CULTURE

Local Live Public Performance Scheme Phase 3

The programme continues to roll out this month. 'Return to the Dome' by Frances Harney took place in Dunamais in association with Mountmellick Community School.

LLPPS Phase 4

A new Phase under the Scheme has been announced for the period 1st July 2022-31st December 2022. With an allocation of €143,000 attaching.

Cruinniú na nÓg 11 June

Cross county arts events took place on 11 June for children and young people, with a varied programme of events below throughout the County:

Laois Le Chéile – Laois Together, Laois Music Centre, **Portlaoise**, 1-4pm

Rathdowney Arts Group Family Fun Day: The Square, 1-6pm

Family Fun at **Knockmay**, Portlaoise, 1-4.30pm

Youth Theatre Taster sessions in **Portarlington & Rathdowney**

Launch of Cruinniú na nÓg Laois Series: Sense of Place art exhibition, **Dunamaise Arts Centre**, 4pm

Beat goes On Workshops, **Clonaslee Parish Hall**, 12-12.45pm

Wexford Studio Theatre present 'Tallulah the Long-Haired Hare from Liverpool', **Abbeyleix, Rathdowney & Borris in Ossory**

Lúminaria Dunamaise Arts Centre, **Portlaoise**, 12pm & 3pm.

Mountrath Sustainable Art Making Project, 2-6pm

Acrylic Painting Workshop Heritage House, **Abbeyleix**, 10am-2pm

Virtual Reality and Podcast demos at Makeport makerspace, **Portarlington**, 12-1.30pm and 1.30-3pm

Laois Libraries also hosted a range of separate events to mark the occasion.

New Mural, Main Street, Portlaoise

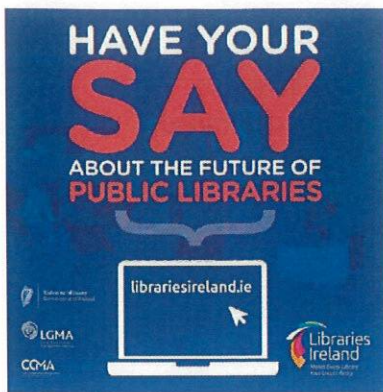
A mural was commissioned and installed at the Old County Hotel, Main Street, Portlaoise. Entitled 'Fionn and the Women who Made Him', it depicts the hero as a child in Glenbarrow at the Slieve Blooms. It was created by Ciaran Dunlevy, and funded by Portlaoise Municipal District. It has lifted the area immensely and received positive attention from the public and the local media.

LIBRARY SERVICES

New National Library Strategy-Public Consultation

A new public library strategy for Ireland is being developed to meet a range of new challenges and emerging opportunities. The new strategy will help to shape our public library service for the next five years and we want to hear everyone's views and ideas. Pick up a hard copy version of the survey at your nearest local library or click her to complete online:

<https://www.librariesireland.ie/public-libraries-strategy...>



World Refugee Week

Laois County Library Service celebrated World Refugee Day 20th June with a new selection of books and displays of them to mark World Refugee Day and the UNHCR/CBI reading campaign around it.

Mountmellick Library Quilting Exhibition

The Gallery in Mountmellick Library is delighted to host “Language – Landscape – Migration” -a national exhibition featuring work from Quilting members all over the country from 8th – 29th June during library opening hours. The exhibition demonstrates the wealth and depth of techniques and artistry of current practitioners in these textile crafts.

Thanks to all who attended the launch on Tuesday evening June 7th in Mountmellick Pictured are Ethelda Ellis from Laois Quilters and Mary Hunter current Chair of the Irish Patchwork Society.



Mountrath Library

Mountrath library -Now open on Saturdays. Mountrath library has introduced Saturday opening since the 11th of June operating from 10-1pm

Summer stars reading challenge 2022 and Storystroll 2022

Summer Stars 2022 is back. Laois County Library are delighted to be part of this annual National reading initiative . Children and their parents can drop into your local library to sign up for the Summer Reading Adventure. It's for children up to 12 years of age and absolutely free. A programme of free events are also provided in each of the 8 libraries. see below

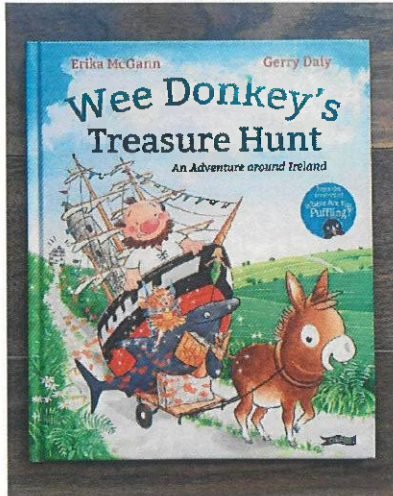
<https://laois.ie/wp-content/uploads/Summer-Stars-Booklet-2022c.pdf>

Read a book in the open air! Author Erika McGann has kindly allowed the library to convert her book *Wee Donkey's Treasure Hunt* to outdoor format. Click to download and print the [Quiz](#) and [Answer Sheet](#) or call into your nearest library to pick up a copy. When you've completed your answer sheet, bring into your local library to get a small prize! The Story Stroll will be available in the following places over the summer:

- People's Park, Portlaoise – Sat, 11th Jun to Wed, 31st Aug
- Mountmellick Playground – Fri, 10th Jun to Thurs, 30th Jun
- Rathdowney Playground – Sat, 2nd Jul to Thurs, 14th Jul
- Mountrath Playground – Sat, 16th Jul to Thurs, 21st Jul
- Abbeyleix Playground – Sat, 23rd Jul to Thurs, 4th Aug
- Stradbally Playground – Sat, 6th Aug – Thurs, 11th Aug
- Portarlinton Park – Sat, 13th Aug – Wed, 31st Aug



In Mountmellick Playground
from Friday 10th June to
Thursday 30th June.



Call to the library to pick up your Wee Donkey quiz and take your Story Stroll. Return the answers to the quiz to the library, you'll get a small prize!

Abbeyleix library Art exhibition

Decade of Centenaries

Laois Libraries were delighted to present Revolutionary Workers, an online talk with Terry Dunne, Laois Historian-in-Residence, and Francis Devine, labour historian. This was the second in a three-part series of talks on Revolutionary Laois organised by Laois Libraries as part of its Decade of Centenaries programme for 2022. The talk took place on 16th JUNE 2022 at 8 PM to coincide with the centenary of the first election in the Irish Free State.

Chief Executive's Orders

- 📅 A schedule of Chief Executive Orders signed during the month of June 2022 will be circulated.


John Mulholland
Chief Executive

June 23rd 2022

