

LAOIS COUNTY COUNCIL

COMHAIRLE CHONTAE LAOISE



MONTHLY MANAGEMENT REPORT

MAY 2022

TUARASCÁIL BHAINISTÍOCHTA

BEALTAINE 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 May 2022 is as follows:-

Finance, & Allocations Notified

Expenditure and income to the 30/04/2022 is summarised below:

Service Division	Budget Allocation	Expenditure to 30/04/2022
Housing and Building	19,748,000	5,143,972
Road Transportation and Safety	22,946,000	2,944,639
Water Services	3,259,000	1,125,069
Development Management	9,706,000	2,560,507
Environmental Services	7,939,000	1,717,768
Recreation and Amenity	4,361,000	940,959
Agriculture, Education, Health and Welfare	786,000	79,839
Miscellaneous Services	9,453,000	2,765,991
Central Management Charge	10,139,000	2,587,288
Total	88,337,000	19,866,032

Service Division	Budget Allocation	Income to 30/04/2022
Housing and Building	21,415,000	6,335,433
Road Transportation and Safety	18,682,000	604,718
Water Services	4,380,000	1,586,002
Development Management	6,946,000	2,263,967
Environmental Services	1,942,000	585,845
Recreation and Amenity	781,000	521,966
Agriculture, Education, Health and Welfare	314,000	43,197
Miscellaneous Services	8,702,000	2,658,680
Superannuation	714,000	219,211
Local Property Tax	9,065,150	3,021,716
Rates	14,662,952	4,521,764
Capital transfer	732,898	
Total	88,337,000	22,362,499

Allocations Notified

Anti-Dumping Initiatives – Provision of Audio Devices	€16,000
Mattress Amnesty	€66,000
Housing Voids Programme 2022	€462,000
Local Authority Waste Enforcement Measures	€137,370
LIS Funding	€270,000

Housing & Regeneration

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	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, Portarlington	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. Portlaoise MD Members recently advised of status of scheme. Phase 1 likely to be delivered in Q3 2022.
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, Portarlington	26	Oaklee Housing	Nearing completion on site. Expected delivery mid-June 2022
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, Portarlington	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. Letter of offer gone to Contractor; contract signing date to be agreed.
Mooreville, Rathdowney	7	LCC (Construction)	Stage 4 to be submitted in Q2 2022.
Carraig Glas, Stradbally	26	LCC (Construction)	Stage 2 Approved
Clonrooske, Portlaoise	11	LCC (Construction)	Stage 1 Approved
Iona, Portlaoise	7	LCC (Construction)	Stage 1 Approved
Doonane	12	LCC (Construction)	Stage 1 Approved
Derry Road, Durrow	22	LCC (Construction)	18 dwellings plus 4 serviced sites proposed Stage 1 Approved
Ballyadams	1	LCC (Construction)	Stage 1 Approved – Tender underway for engagement of Design Team
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, Portarlington	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
The Meadows (old Mildand Dairies site) Portlaoise	49	Cluid Housing	On Site for delivery Q4 2023

Convent Lands, Portlaoise (CAS)	51	Sophia Housing	Stage 3 application recently submitted.
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 8 consultation process underway; closing date for submissions 31 st May 2022.
Curragh na Mona, Abbeyleix Rd, Portlaoise	39	Respond Housing	CALF approved – tendered for contractor; commencement on site to be advised.
Doran’s site adj to O’ Moore Place, Portlaoise	50	Coop Housing	Meeting took place with Coop and site owner layout/number of unit to be finalised
TOTAL	459		

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 Technican) 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. When the vacancy status of the identified properties is established, the Working Group will assess the future potential use of such properties, in terms of housing or other use.

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	35
Applications approved to proceed	5
Applications under consideration	3
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
TOTAL (YTD)	27	1	31

NOTE: There are currently 34 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	418	6
February 22	517	495	22
March 22	404	337	67
April	392	259	133
TOTAL (YTD)	1,737	1,509	228

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 started on insulation and new roof on 7 roof extensions. Works to be fully complete in Q3 2022.
Hillview Drive, Portlaoise	18	18	6 houses M&E complete	M&E works complete on six houses. All works on houses to be completed in Q3 2022.
Quigley Pk, Rathdowney	20	20	6 houses M&E complete	M&E works complete on six houses. External insulation started on 8 Maisonettes.
Radharc Alainn, Arles	18	18	18 Houses M&E complete.	DCV Ventilation system to be installed and skirting boards and insulation to be completed.
Derrymore, Portarlinton	26	26	26 houses M&E complete	M&E Works complete. Works on-going on insulation and skirting.
Kirwan Park, Mountmellick	51	51	0	Installation of Windows has started. M&E works to start in June.
Total Properties	157	106	80 Units (M&E complete)	

Energy Efficiency/Retrofitting Programme:

Address	Properties	Units Commenced	Units Completed	Update
O'Moore Place, Portlaoise	28	0	0	Re-tendered – Deadline for receipt of tenders 2 nd June 2022.
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 €36k depending upon the number of properties being retrofitted in each local authority area.

A submission was made to the Dept of Housing on the 27th April 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.)

Confirmation of the exact funding and approved unit numbers has not been confirmed to date.

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

HOUSING NEED

Homeless Presentations

Time Period	Homeless Presentations	Emergency Homeless
14 th April – 18 th May 2022	30	10
Year to Date	88	35

Homeless Accommodation

Individuals Accessing.....	Emergency Accommodation as of 18 th May 2022	Transition Accommodation as of 18 th May 2022
Adults	16	0
Children	14	0

Social Housing List at 18th May 2022

TOTAL No of Social Housing Applicants	1,787
Applicants in receipt of HAP	909

Housing Allocations

Method of Delivery	Allocations to 18 th May 2022	Numbers allocated Year-to-date 2022
First allocation of New Build/Acquired unit	4	7
Relet / Refurbished Stock Allocation	11	27
Nomination to AHB housing	27	36
TOTAL Y-T-D	42	70

Housing Assistance Payment

No of Active HAP Tenancies at 14 th April 2022	909
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LOANS & GRANTS

Loans

*Local Authority Home Loan: 4th January 2022 – 24th MAY 2022	
No of Loan Approvals	7
No of Applications refused	5

Rebuilding Ireland Home Loan Scheme now closed. All applications **received on or after the 4th January 2022 will be in respect of the new Local Authority Home Loan.*

The First Home Shared Equity Scheme will be launched in July 2022 by Dept of Housing. This scheme will be operated by a Special Purpose Vehicle attached to the Dept of Housing, not linked to local authorities. Details of the scheme will be circulated when launched.

Housing Adaptation Grants at 16th May 2022

Allocation 2022 (including LA funded portion)	No of Applications Received in 2022	No of Approved Applications at works stage	Comment
€1,389,375	103	129 (€784,770)	All grants approved can proceed to carry out works and draw down grant monies upon satisfactory completion. Applicants revert to LCC once works are complete.

Disabled Persons Grant for Social Housing at 16th May 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	19	<p>Dept Funding allocation advised must be supplemented by LA's own funds (10%)</p> <p>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.</p> <p>Further Priority 1 (severe) applications for small works received in 2022 will be considered subject to available funding.</p>

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

LEASING

RAS/Leasing Statistics at 18th May 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 472 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	300*

**an increase of 103 inspections since April 2022*

Planning, Development and Heritage

LAOIS DRAFT COUNTY DEVELOPMENT PLAN 2021-2027

The Chief Executive's Report on the Ministerial Direction issued to the Office of the Planning Regulator and the Minister on the 28th April 2022. No further update.

LOCAL AREA PLANS

Work on the 4 Local Area Plans for Portlaoise, Mountmellick, Graiguecullen and Portarlinton will commence following the adoption of the Laois County Development Plan.

Two of the Plans, Graiguecullen and Portarlinton will be in the form of joint plans with Carlow County Council and Offaly County Council respectively.

DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT PERFORMANCE

PLANNING APPLICATIONS COMPARATIVE FIGURES FROM 2021 TO 2022

Year	Valid applications from 01/01/2022 – 20/5/2022	Valid applications from 01/01/2021 – 20/05/2021
	257	270

2022 PERFORMANCE	
Number of valid applications received:	257
Number of decisions made	246
Number of applications granted:	224 (Decisions to Grant)
Number of applications refused:	22 (Decisions to Refuse) 8.5% refusal rate
Invalid applications returned to applicant:	70 (2022 Invalid Applications)
Files scanned up to -	16 th May 2022
Referrals to Area Offices (working days):	within 14 days achieved
Pre planning	
No of requests to date	155
No of meetings held to date	130
Up to and including the 27th of May 2022	
Wait time	2 weeks

ENFORCEMENT UPDATE

Current year	2022		2021	
	Apr	Jan - Apr	Apr	Jan - Apr
Service Review				
Total number of new cases subject to complaints that were investigated	7	42	13	50
Number of Warning Letters served	48	140	46	90
Number of Enforcement Notices served	6	17	10	41
No Of cases referred for legal proceedings	1	2	1	3
Number of cases in Court(incl adjournments)	0	23	0	17
Number of cases Resolved in Court	0	4	0	1
Number of Files Closed	39	89	9	49
Number of cases on system	136	136	170	170
Enforcement Costs recouped	€ -	€3,156.98	€ 550.00	€4,636.24
Number of Valid Retention Applications Received relating to Enforcement Action	6	13	4	13
Fees received through Valid Retention Applications Received relating to Enforcement Action	€ 5,762.40	€11,659.90	€ 785.00	€3,232.00
Legal fees paid	€ 719.55	€6,640.32	€ 5,580.20	€14,140.04

BROADBAND

1. National Broadband Ireland (NBI)

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

NBI are rolling out fibre in the Portlaoise area at present .

The 1st connected premises in Laois is in Monevea, Crettyard and this site was launched on Friday 13th May.

2. WIFI 4 EU.

WiFi4EU is a project developed by the European Union that intends to bring free WiFi to local communities. The aim of WiFi4EU initiative is to bring high-quality WiFi access to places where it is not yet available but would provide value for the community and visitors to the County. The rollout of the provision of WIFI infrastructure in public places has commenced (equipment, installation and maintenance and support) in the following locations : Portlaoise, Portarlinton, Abbeyleix, Mountmellick , Mountrath as follows :

- Fit out in Portlaoise is now complete on 12 building in the town to provide free public WIFI along the Main Street, Fitzmaurice Place, Lyster Square and the Plaza at Co. Hall. This will go live within the next few weeks.
- Fit out is currently under way in Portarlinton and in various building along the Main Street and the Link Road.
- Fit out is currently under way in Abbeyleix and in various building along the Main Street.
- Fit out is currently underway in Mountmellick in the MDA Complex.
- Premises have been secured in Mountrath , Camross and Ballinakill.
- Survey and Consultation is under way with property owners in Mountmellick, Mountrath, The Swan with further proposals in Stradbally.

This project is being delivered by “Network and Infrastructure Support Ltd.” On behalf of Laois County Council. The Broadband Officer is available for any queries in relation to this project.

3. Broadband Connection Points (BCP's)

As part of the roll out of the National Broadband Plan, Laois County Council launched **Broadband Connection Points (BCPs)** in 6 areas in rural Laois.

1. Vicarstown Community Centre
2. Emo “Old School” Community Centre
3. Oisin House Rossmore, Killeshin
4. Donaghmore workhouse and Agricultural Museum
5. Shanganamore Community Centre Barrowhouse
6. Ballyroan Community Centre

Local Enterprise Office (LEO): Summary of actions for May

- €101,871 approved in grant aid to 5 Laois businesses – the next meeting of the Evaluation and Approvals Committee (EVAC) is scheduled for 31st May when a further 5 applications will be assessed.
- 487 owners/managers/employees participated in LEO training programmes
- 57 potential entrepreneurs participated in Start Your Own Business Courses
- 103 Laois businesses availed of mentoring in finance, marketing, exporting, HR & health & safety
- 13 Trading Online Voucher approvals to the value of €26,570
- 13 Laois companies currently taking part in a Green for Micro programme
- 5 Laois companies currently taking part in LEAN programmes

Student Enterprise Awards 2022

The National Student Enterprise Awards took place on the 18th May at The Helix, Dublin.

Two students from Portlaoise College were amongst this year's National Final award winners. Oisín Grundy was the outright winner of the Creative Business Idea Video Competition at Junior Cycle Level and Mosa Hafeez took 2nd place at Intermediate Level in the My Entrepreneurial Journey Competition.

National Enterprise Awards 2022

Salutem Insights will represent Laois at the National Enterprise Awards to be held in the Mansion House on the 2nd June 2022. Salutem Insights create tailored solutions for a variety of complex pharma industry issues within the public and private marketplace.

Ministerial Visit

Minister of State for Business, Employment and Retail, Damien English, visited the Local Enterprise Office (LEO) on 12th May where he met with council members, officials, members of the LEO team as well as some of their client companies. The Minister presented Ger Slevin and Sandra Reddin of Salutem Insights with a plaque as Winners of the County Enterprise Awards.

The Minister visited called to the Portlaoise Enterprise Centre where he visited LEO client company TSI Flowmeters Ltd. He finished his Laois visit at another LEO client. A number of food producers from the Laois Taste Group also were in Ballykilkavan including The Merry Mill, Temptation Patisserie and Mueller and O'Connell Bakery.

Business Support Unit (BSU):

The BSU has processed 66 applications under the Town and Village Streetscape scheme 2021/2022.

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.

Price Escalations for Road Making Materials:

Rising inflation is influencing upwards the price of materials used in the roadworks programme. Having received tender submissions for multiple roadworks programme projects, it is apparent that there are significant cost increases for the supply of bitumen and other road surfacing materials. The cost of bitumen in 2022 is approximately 30-33% more expensive per tonne and the cost of road surfacing materials for overlay project is on average 13-16% more expensive in 2022 than it was in 2021.

The knock-on effect of these price rises is that, based on funding available in 2022 v 2021, there will be a reduction in the outturn of Restoration Improvement (overlay) works of 10-15% in 2022 -v- 2021 and a reduction Restoration Maintenance (surface dressing) works of 15-20%. Similar reductions apply to other areas of the Roadworks Programme.

Local Improvement Scheme 2021

Funding in the sum of €270,000.00 has been announced by DRCD.

In line with allocated funding under the Scheme in 2022, there will be 9 no. schemes progressed (4 in the Eastern MD, 2 in the Central MD and 3 in the Western MD). Assuming offers are accepted, local contributions paid and other LIS issues appropriately addressed, these Schemes will progress in 2022.

The available funds have been allocated in line with the terms agreed with Elected Members in Q4 2021 i.e. funding proportionately allocated across MDs, in line with number of Schemes to hand per MD, and in date order.

Further funds may be made available to those local authorities who realise early delivery of the initial priority list to a value of €270,000. This council will be progressing our current priority schemes as a matter of urgency with a view to obtaining further funding to allow us to progress additional schemes in 2022, should additional funding become available.

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

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

The new SCADA telemetry monitoring system is now installed and operating at the landfill.

Landfill monitoring and aftercare maintenance is on-going.

2. **Bring Banks:**

Tonnages of collected recyclable material in 2022.

Month	Tonnages
January	163.77
February	115.14
March	159.58
April	121.50
May (20/05/2022)	99.50
Total	659.58

Table 1 – 2022 Bring Bank Tonnages

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

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

(a) **Clean-Up Laois Week 2022**

Completed and all collected material disposed of to an authorised facility. Final tonnages of material collected not yet available. The Council expresses its appreciation to the various Tidy Towns Committees and other voluntary groups for their cooperation and assistance. Each year the Council relies significantly on these groups for their support and their commitment in making the Laois Clean-up Week a success.

(b) **Waste Enforcement & Complaints**

Table 1 below details the number and types of complaints received to date (20/05/2022) in 2022 by the Environment Section.

Nature	Number
Waste Management/Enforcement	272
Litter	67
Water	22
Veterinary	15
Air	13
Noise	10
Waste Infrastructure	3
Total	402

Table 2 - Environmental Complaint Register

(c) **Litter Fines**

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

(d) **2022 Anti-Dumping Initiatives**

The Council has received €82,000 funding. The approved projects are:

- The provision of audio devices at illegal dumping black spot areas
- Mattress Amnesty – 3 locations

4. 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 not yet available.

5. Environmental Protection

a) Protect the Water Quality Status in all Water Bodies

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

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

b) Air & Noise:

Laois County Council is awaiting the final report from the EPA on the N77 Nitrogen Dioxide monitoring survey carried out at Abbeyleix, Durrow and Cullahill. All noise and air complaints are being investigated.

Emergency Planning, Fire Services & Flood Relief

In 2022 (to date) Laois County Fire & Rescue Service attended 204 emergency incidents consisting of 68 fires, 107 special service incidents & 29 false alarms.

Turnout by Station*:

Portlaoise – 69	Portarlinton - 30	Stradbally – 44	Mountmellick – 25
Abbeyleix - 32	Mountrath – 18	Durrow – 32	Rathdowney – 25

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

Fire Services Capital Programme

- The Part VIII planning process for a new fire station for Stradbally was approved by Laois County Council at its January 2022 meeting. Correspondence has now been sent to the NDFEM advising them of same & requesting approval to go to tender for a design team to progress the project. An acknowledgement of this request has been received from the NDFEM.
- The upgrade to Mountmellick Fire Station is now at design stage. This work consists of new drill tower, concrete yard & hydrant connection. Tobin Consulting Engineers have been awarded the design contract. The site survey has been completed & the preparation of the documents to progress this project has now commenced.

WATER SERVICES AND RURAL WATER

Portlaoise Water Supply Improvement Scheme - Irish Water now progressing with developing well PW07 and well PW08. 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 and Ballyroan WTP. Process proving now complete at the Knocks and Ballyroan WTPs. Kyle WTP currently in process proving. 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.

Networks and Water Conservation - First fix, find and fix and lead replacement works continue throughout the county. Significant progress in Portarlinton in the area of leakage management. Replacement of watermain in the Swan network is 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.

Well Grants – 22 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 269 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 487 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).

Laos Ukrainian Community Response Forum

Laos 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 fortnightly meeting on Wednesday 18th May 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 5 occasions. Next meeting is scheduled for Wednesday 8th June. At present the forum consists of 44 members representing 23 members groups/agencies.

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

CORPORATE

Civic Receptions in honour of Mr. Gary O’Reilly and Ms. Nicole Turner in recognition of their success at the Paralympics Games, in Toyoko were held on the 28th April and 12th May 2022 respectively.

COMMUNITY

Syrian Resettlement Programme.

Thursday 12th May marked a closing event for the Syrian Resettlement Programme in Laos, with a gathering of the families and all partner agencies at Bloom HQ Mountrath. While the programme itself officially ended on the 18th Dec the gathering was unable to take place due to COVID-19. During the course of the programme 106 people comprised of 22 families were resettled in Portlaoise, Portarlinton and Mountmellick.

Healthy Ireland

Minister Frank Feighan, Minister of State for Public Health, Well Being and National Drugs Strategy visited a number of Healthy Ireland funded initiatives in Laos on Tuesday, 3rd May, to view health partnership programmes and health and wellbeing initiatives being undertaken by Healthy Ireland Laos in the County.

Further correspondence in relation to Healthy Ireland – Round 4 Projects/Actions funding allocations is anticipated in the coming weeks.

2021 Community & Voluntary Awards

On the 5th May Laos County Council were delighted to celebrate an in person presentation of the 2021 Community and Voluntary Awards in association with Laos Public Participation Network, Laos Volunteer Centre and our media partner the Leinster Express. After the last 2 years, it was an honour to be able to celebrate the awards presentation in person, and to acknowledge the incredible contribution made by the community and voluntary sector here in Co. Laos.

Category	Winner	Runner Up
Arts, Culture & Heritage	Colonel James Fitzmaurice Commemoration	Mountrath Youth Theatre
Healthy & Active Community	Teac Tom - The Thomas Hayes Trust	Portlaoise Musical Society
Children & Youth	Oughavale Athletics Club	Ballyroan Bluestars Juvenile
Environment	Abbeyleix Tidy Towns	Camross Tidy Towns
Social Inclusion	PATH	Laois Down Syndrome
Age Friendly	Portarlinton Social Services	Portlaoise Active Retirement
COVID-19 Community Response Award	Order of Malta Portlaoise	PATH
Unsung Hero	Michael Gorman	Gina Reidy

Laois Public Participation Network

- Laois PPN have created an Interactive Map of Sports Clubs & Youth Clubs in Laois welcoming Ukrainians. The map is available on the Laois PPN website and has been shared to the Ukrainian Info Support page on the Laois County Council Website.
- Ukrainian families have benefitted from using the Laois PPN Map of Sports & Youth Clubs to integrate their families into our communities in Laois. Laois PPN have been contacted by a number of Clubs who have welcomed Ukrainian children into their Club over the last few weeks.
- Laois PPN submitted the PPN Annual Report to the Department of Rural & Community Development on Friday 13th May. This is a detailed report of the key activities of Laois PPN for 2021 that will be included on the National PPN Report on the activities of all 31 PPN's which will be published by the DRCD later this year.

Pride of Place

Abbeyleix Tidy Town were winners at the IPB Pride of Place awards 2021. The awards ceremony took place on the 16th May at the INEC Killarney.

Laois Comhairle na nÓg

Laois Comhairle na nÓg continue to meet weekly. They held their Coloured fun run on Friday 13th May 2022 in Vicarstown. This event was organised by Laois Comhairle na nÓg and Youth Work Ireland Laois with over 400 people taking part in the 3km walk/run. The event was organised to create awareness around mental health.

Age Friendly Programme

The National OPC Convention took place in the Knightsbrook Hotel, Trim, Co Meath on the 11th & 12th May. It was a very informative event, covered by RTE news and attended by Minister of State for Mental Health & Older Persons Mary Butler TD. Among the speakers were Professor Rose Anne Kenny of The Irish Longitudinal Aging study on Aging, Deirdre Lang, Director of Nursing, HSE, and Aine Brady, 3rd Age Foundation. The talks were informative and insightful. The overall theme was "Live Well, Be Well" with an emphasis on aging in place, given the predicted demographics of our population. There were workshops on Age Friendly Homes, Climate Action and

Nutritional wellbeing, among other things. Sgt Graham Kavanagh of Laois/ Offaly division also spoke on crime prevention on the day.

It was a very good event, which had been missed in 2020 and 2021 due to Covid-19. It was great opportunity for OPC members and Age Friendly Staff from around the country to network.

World of Work Programme 2021/22

A wrap up session took place at Portlaoise college in May to end the programme for 2021/22. The students made an excellent presentation to Laois County Council staff and the World of Work coordinator.

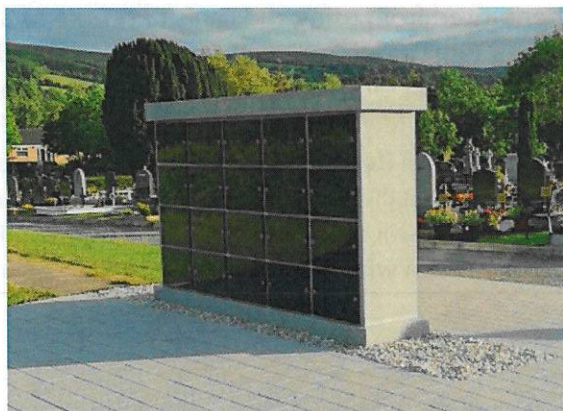
Community Environmental Grants 2022

Arrangements are currently underway for payments totalling €31,000 to 91 approved applicants under this grant Scheme. Applications for funding support were invited from interested bodies, groups, committees and organisations who intended to engage in environmental/amenity works during 2022. Grants were awarded to groups based on amenity works which included landscaping, development of open spaces (planting trees & shrubs, flowerbeds etc) and/or purchase of equipment to maintain/improve/clean up areas/open spaces.

CEMETERIES

Columbarium Wall

The contract has been awarded for the construction of a columbarium wall at St Peter and Pauls Cemetery Portlaoise. The works are expected to commence in Q3 of 2022.



Local Authority Weatherproofing and Outdoor Dining Infrastructure Scheme

Durrow.

The outdoor dining works in Durrow are well progressed with the canopy and seating area completed on 19/05/2022. Landscaping and the installation of information plaque are expected to be completed by the end of May.



Hynd's Square - Portlaoise.

Works in Hynd's Square are expected to commence during the last week of May with installation of the canopies expected by the end of June.

CLIMATE ACTION

Creating Climate Action Champions

A pilot course Creating Climate Action Champions in partnership with LOETB commenced on Wednesday 4th May. The overall objective of the course is to train up community leaders on sustainable living so that they will be climate change champions in their own communities. There is a multi-disciplinary team of experienced tutors lined up to deliver the course over the 8 weeks including Duncan Stewart on Home Energy, Yvonne Carty from Hey Pesto! on Food Waste, Annie Apple on Fast Fashion. The development and delivery of this course has been supported by Laois County Council.

Promotion of Cycle Buses

Resources are being developed and provided under National Bike Week Funding. The Portlaoise Cycle Bus commenced on the 18th May. The Cycle Bus has been organised by members of the Town Team Sub Travel Group. The promo materials have been sponsored by Laois Bike Week via Sports & Leisure Officer and are generic so can be used by other communities. Portarlington are in recruitment phase and hope to get started before end of academic year.

Laois County Council supported the establishment of the Cycle Bus by:

- Organising Briefing Session by Galway Cycle Bus
- Designing Flyers and promo posters which include illustrated map
- Promo day where parents given flyers on way into school
- Facilitating Information Session for Parents on Cycle Bus Marshalling
- Feather Banners, Signs, and branded Hi Vis Jackets and flyers and bespoke Laois Cycle Bus Logo.

Play it Again Musical Instrument Recycling Scheme

This scheme is being piloted in the Month of May in partnership with Music Generation Laois. The public can drop off broken or used musical instruments and they are repaired and given to those who will benefit.

Portlaoise Low Carbon Town Logo

New Portlaoise Low Carbon Town Logo will be launched at the Portlaoise Low Carbon Town Implementation Group Meeting on the 27th May 2022 held in the Council Chamber, Laois County Council. The Implementation Group comprises representatives from public sector and private sector including academia, energy generation, health service, retail, transport, etc and functions as a delivery and implementation network with agreed actions showing leadership at a local level. A competition was held for the design of the logo and the winning entry will receive a prize of an electric bike also on the day.

CAT Facilitation Session

Laois County Council's Climate Action Team meets monthly to progress climate action within the operations and plans of the local authority. The Climate Action Regional Office (CARO) agreed to lead a Facilitation Session with our Climate Action Team on the 6th May 2022 which included an overview of the new Local Authority Climate Action Plans due to commence preparation in the coming months. The Management Team met with the CAT to discuss options to mainstream Climate Action across all operation of the local authority going forward.

Energy Efficiency improvements to County Hall

Installation of Thermostatic Radiator Valves in County Hall takes place on 23rd to 26th May in order to improve energy efficiency of current heating system.

SPORT & LEISURE UPDATE

Bike Week 2022

Laois County Council is co-ordinating Bike Week from 14th - 22nd May with 52 events registered. LCC received €22,500 to co-ordinate and promote Bike Week, which was launched by An Cathaoirleach Conor Bergin MCC. Laois County Council are funding the launch of Portlaoise Cycle Bus.

ARTS & CULTURE

Laois Arthouse & Bealtaine Festival events

A welcome return to physical workshops has started with a wonderful series of Felt making workshops with Marie McGarry and a 4-week series of Creative writing workshops with Laois born writer Pauline Clooney at Laois Arthouse as part of the Bealtaine Festival 2022.

LLPPS Phase 3

Events for this programme are being rolled out across the county including- Panto Production 'Waiting for Gateaux' at the Dunamais Arts Centre running from 19th to 22nd May, and events hosted by Downtown Portlaoise commencing the weekend of the 21st May including busking, music performances and family entertainment that will continue to the end of June.

Re/CENTRING/ Faoin Spéir Portlaoise

Dunamais Arts Centre presents the finale of **re:CENTRING Laois**, funded by the Arts Council's Faoin Spéir/In the Open initiative in collaboration with Music Generation Laois and Laois County Council, on **Sunday 29th May**. Taking place between 2 and 5pm, **Fitzmaurice Place, Portlaoise** will be transformed into a haven for the arts that will feature an extravaganza of FREE entertaining activities and performances for all to enjoy.

Poetry Day in Laois- Thursday, April 28th 2022

For Poetry Day the team from Culture Night Mountmellick 2021, used this auspicious day for their event entitled “Cinniúint”, a commemorative booklet of Culture Night was unveiled (a digital version of which will soon be available on www.mountmellickdevelopment.com), Dr Arthur Broomfield’s poem entitled *The Spirit of Mountmellick Speaks* went on permanent display, and the audience was treated to music and verse from Arthur Broomfield, Ann Egan, Stephen Comerford, Collette Dunne, & Declan Furlong, together with local singer-songwriter Adam Culleton. Contributors on the day were Nina Horan, MC, Muireann Ní Chonaill, Arts Officer and Conor Bergin, Cathaoirleach of Laois County Council. A large attendance was recorded in the afternoon, which included two of the newly arrived Ukrainian residents to the town. Following refreshments, attendees were treated to a free tour of Mountmellick Embroidery and Heritage Museum by Chairperson, Ann Dowling. The legacy of Poetry Town was recalled, while the sense of destiny and hope for the future was inspired.

Creative Ireland Laois

The Laois Short Film Bursary 2022 of €10,000 has been awarded to director, Denis McArdle (Songway Films) and Rosenallis based producer, Collette Wrafter for ‘The Light Within’ which will be filmed in the Rosenallis area before the end of 2022. Equipment grants (full and partial) of €5,178 have been awarded to 11 applicants. Made in Laois (co-create) grants of €3490 have been awarded to 2 applicants.

LIBRARY SERVICE

Libraries around the County have been celebrating Age & Opportunity’s Bealtaine Festival with a mix of crafts, talks and cultural activities.

Highlights include

- Rathdowney Library hosted a Marbling Art Workshop – as part of the Bealtaine festival, artist Caroline Keane delivered a workshop on Monday, 9th May at 7:30pm.
- Gardening Talk – as part of the Bealtaine festival, horticulturist Mary Keenan delivered an instructional gardening talk on Tuesday, 10th May at 3:30pm. Mary is the proprietor of Gash Gardens in Castletown, editor of The Irish Garden magazine and a former college lecturer at the National Botanic Gardens.
- **Fire Safety in the Home**- information sessions by Laois County Council Fire Services were held in all library branches



- **Flower Arranging Demonstrations** –delivered in partnership with the LOETB, Hazel Duffy created flower arrangements in the 8 libraries
Portarlington Library

Cookery Demonstration in Mountrath Library



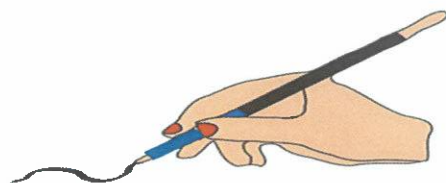
Other Events

- Community Education at LOETB we are delivering Staying Connected Course at Rathdowney Library
- Laois Libraries and energy consultant Colm O'hÁonghusa held a talks on Thursday 26th MAY at 6:30pm in Portlaoise Library, on reducing energy costs in the home
- Mountmellick library hosted a series of mental health workshops in partnership with Mental Health Services , Midlands Louth Meath CHO- details below

Exploring Self Care on Tuesday 17th May from 9.30am to 11.30am, Unwrapping Resilience on Tuesday 31st May from 9.30am to 11.30am, These workshops will look at Recovery from Mental Health challenges, What is Recovery Education, and our services available in Laois & Offaly

Stradbally Library is continuing with Creative Writing Classes - this course, with a focus on telling true stories, memoirs and local history and held in conjunction with the

LOETB, started on Tuesday, 3rd May. Taking place in Stradbally Library on Tuesdays from 3:30pm-5pm – places are limited so booking is essential.



Photography with your Phone – this course, run in conjunction with the LOETB, runs on Thursdays from 1:30pm-3:30pm and will give you hints and tips for taking better photos on your phone. Places are limited so booking is essential.

Local History /Decade of Centenaries

- Portlaoise Library hosted a history talk by RTE's DAVID MCCULLAGH on SATURDAY 28th May at 4-00 pm based on his publication and titled “De Valera's role in the escalation towards the Civil War”.
- Laois County Library and Laois Historian-in-Residence, Terry Dunne, are hosting a three part series of online talks exploring Laois and Ireland in Revolution. The first of these talks on REVOLUTIONARY WOMEN was held in Portlaoise Library at 8pm. For more details

<https://laoislocalstudies.ie/history-events-online/>

Heritage Grant

Laois County library Services in conjunction with Laois Heritage office have been successful in a funding application to The heritage council under the Heritage Stewardship fund to preserve and provide access to two collections of historic photographs relating to County Laois, the Ivo De Vesci Collection owned by Viscount De Vesci and the Johnny O'Brien Collection recently donated

The Ivo De Vesci Collection documents the De Vesci family and landed estate in Laois from 1900-1957. It is a collection of local, social and national historical significance. Digitisation will have long term impacts by creating a preservation copy of a collection that is vulnerable and opening public access to a private collection.

The O'Brien Collection is a remarkable visual history of Portlaoise with invaluable textual information. Rehousing will prevent deterioration and damage in the long term, while facilitating organisation, retrieval and access in the short term.

The grant awarded is €8614 with a matched funding element of 25%

Chief Executive's Orders

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



John Mulholland
Chief Executive

May 25th 2022

