

LAOIS COUNTY COUNCIL

COMHAIRLE CHONTAE LAOISE



**MONTHLY MANAGEMENT REPORT
OCTOBER/NOVEMBER 2022
TUARASCÁIL BHAINISTÍOCHTA
DEIREADH FOMHAIR/SAMHAIN 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 October/November 2022 is as follows:-

FINANCE & ALLOCATIONS NOTIFIED

Expenditure and income to the 31/10/2022 is summarised below:

Service Division	Budget Allocation	Expenditure to 31/10/2022
Housing and Building	19,748,000	13,793,583
Road Transportation and Safety	22,946,000	19,382,289
Water Services	3,259,000	2,858,344
Development Management	9,706,000	6,816,944
Environmental Services	7,939,000	6,073,249
Recreation and Amenity	4,361,000	3,607,352
Agriculture, Education, Health and Welfare	786,000	689,246
Miscellaneous Services	9,453,000	6,628,422
Central Management Charge	10,139,000	7,230,614
Total	88,337,000	67,080,043

Service Division	Budget Allocation	Income to 31/10/2022
Housing and Building	21,415,000	15,465,417
Road Transportation and Safety	18,682,000	12,006,797
Water Services	4,380,000	3,770,060
Development Management	6,946,000	4,491,281
Environmental Services	1,942,000	1,750,020
Recreation and Amenity	781,000	855,013
Agriculture, Education, Health and Welfare	314,000	208,586
Miscellaneous Services	8,702,000	5,559,998
Superannuation	714,000	564,327
Local Property Tax	9,065,150	7,554,290
Rates	14,662,952	11,155,016
Capital transfer	732,898	
Total	88,337,000	63,380,805

Allocations Notified

Built Heritage Investment Scheme	€96,000
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HOUSING & REGENERATION

HOUSING DELIVERY

Housing Delivery Action Plan (May 2022)

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

The following targets have been approved for social housing delivery -
Proposed delivery programme by year (approved and proposed units)

Year	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026	Total
Units	254	365	175	66	40	*900

*Total figure of 925 units published in HDAP includes 25 proposed LA Buy and Renew units. These units are not counted f social housing delivery figures.

Social Housing Schemes completed – September 2022

Location	No. of Houses	House Types	Constructed by	Comment
Coolroe, Ballybrittas	1	3-bed bungalow	LCC Construction	Complete
The Orchard, Ballylynan (Phase 1)	2	2 No. 3-Bed 2 Storey	LCC Turnkey	2 units delivered from a total of 5.
Droughill Lawns, Portarlinton	26	14 no. 2-beds (8 bungalows) 12 no 3-beds	Oaklee Housing	Tenanted
Bruach Na Habhainn, Killeen (Phase 1)	3	3 No. 3 Bed 2 Storey	LCC Turnkey	Complete – to be tenanted. Final unit to be delivered in Q2 2023.
Rathvarna, Killeslin	2	2 No. 3 Bed 2 Storey	Part V	Tenanted
Aughnaharna, Portlaoise	2	2 No. 3 Bed 2 Storey	Part V	Tenanted
Gleann na Glaise, Ballyroan	10	10 No. 3 Bed 2 Storey	LCC (Construction)	Tenanted
Sean Doire, Durrow	22	10 No. 2 Bed 2 Storey 8 No. 3 Bed 2 Storey 4 No. 2 Bed 1 Storey	LCC (Construction)	Complete - to be tenanted.
The Maltings & Roselawn, Portlaoise (Phase 1)	15	Roselawn (15 no. 3 bed 2 storey)	Cluid Housing	Roselawn Tenanted
Holdbrook, Portlaoise	10	10 no. 2 bed apts (over 55's)	Cluid Housing	Tenanted
Clonrooske Abbey, Portlaoise	14	10 no. 3 bed 2 storey 4 no. 4 bed 2 storey	Cluid Housing	Cluid Housing advised that: Phase 1 (14 units) to be delivered w/c 28th November.

Featherbed Lane, Borris-In-Ossory (Ph 2)	5	5 No. 3 Bed 2 storey	LCC Turnkey	Tenanted.
TOTAL UNITS COMPLETE	112			

Social Housing Schemes Currently Under Construction – September 2022

Location	Total No. of Houses	House Types	Constructed by	Comment
Pattisons Estate, Mountmellick	10	10 No. 3 Bed 2 Storey	LCC (Construction)	On site – expected delivery Q4 2022
Harbour Court, Mountmellick	6	6 No. 2 Bed bungalows	LCC (Construction)	On Site – expected delivery Q2 2023
Moore St, Rathdowney	6	6 No. 2 Bed 2 Storey	LCC (Construction)	On site – expected delivery Q4 2023
St. Kieran's Errill	14	6 No. 2 Bed 2 Storey 8 No. 2 Bed 1 Storey	LCC (Construction)	On site – expected delivery Q4 2023
The Orchard, Ballylynan (Phase 2)	2	2 No. 3-Bed 2 Storey	LCC (Turnkey)	On Site – Phase 2 (3 units) delivery Q4 2022
Church Avenue, Stradbally	31	9 No. 4 Bed 2 Storey 20 No. 3 Bed 2 Storey 2 No. 2 Bed 1 Storey	LCC (Turnkey)	On site – delivery Q3/Q4 2023
Market Square, Portarlinton	18	15 No. 2 Bed 1 Storey 2 No. 2 Bed Apts 1 No. 3 Bed Apt	LCC (Turnkey)	On site – delivery Q2 2023
Bruach Na Habhainn, Killeen	1	1 No. 3 Bed 2 Storey	LCC (Turnkey)	On Site – Phase 1 (1 unit) delivery Q2 2023
The Orchard, Ballylynan (Phase 3)	1	1 No. 3-Bed 2 Storey	LCC (Turnkey)	On Site – Phase 3 (1 unit) delivery Q3 2023
Oak Park Halting Site	4	4 no. serviced bays	LCC	TAU funded scheme. Issues have arisen with discovery of an underground ESB cable on site. Estimated delivery date Q1 2023 but dependent on ESB addressing issue as a matter of urgency.
Harpurs Lane, Portlaoise	44	20 no. 2 bed houses 16 no. 3 bed houses 4 no. 1 bed apt 4 no. 2 bed apt	Respond	On site – expected delivery Q2 2023
Clonrooske Abbey, Portlaoise	18	18 no. 3 bed 2 storey	Cluid Housing	Cluid Housing advised that: Phase 2 (6 units) are at second fix stage. To be delivered Q2 2023. Phase 3 (12 units) are completed, however utilities not yet connected. Delivery Q1 2023.
The Maltings & Roselawn, Portlaoise (Phase 2)	40	Maltings (40 no. 2 bed apts – over 55's)	Cluid Housing	On site. Phase 2 (40 units) expected delivery date Q1 2023

The Springs, Kilminchy, Portlaoise	43	43 no. 3 bed houses	Cluid Housing	On site – issues with utility connections – units will not be delivered until Q1 2023
Goldencroft, Portlaoise (Old CBS site)	67	13 no. 2 bed apts 24 no. 3 bed houses 26 no. 2 bed houses 4 no. 2 bed bungalow	Cluid Housing	3 Phases – on site. First phase (13 units) delivery Q1 2023 as ESB connection not yet made
Ballymorris Green, Portarlinton	46	46 no. 3 bed houses	Cluid Housing	3 phases. Currently on site - Phases 1 and 2 (34 units) expected delivery changed to Q1 2023 due to utility connection issues. Phase 3 (12 units) expected delivery Q1 2023
Doirinn Alainn, Ballylinan (Phase 4)	9	6 no. 3 bed houses 3 no. 2 bed houses	North & East Housing	Last phase of this development – on site; expected delivery Q4 2022.
South Dublin Road, Kilminchy	36	13 no. 2 bed houses 23 no 3 bed houses	Cooperative Housing	On site – 3 phases for delivery during 2023.
The Meadows (old Midland Dairies site), Portlaoise	48	19 no. 3 bed houses 9 no. 4 bed houses 20 no. 2 bed apts	Cluid Housing	Currently on site – expected delivery Q3 2023
TOTAL	444			

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

Location/Scheme	No of Houses	House Types	To be constructed by	Comment
Mooreville, Rathdowney	7	3 No. 2 Bed bungalow 4 No. 3 Bed 2 Storey	LCC (Construction)	Construction to commence in Q4 2022.
Carraig Glas, Stradbally	26	15 no. 2 bed houses 9 no. 3 bed houses 2 no 4 bed houses	LCC (Construction)	Stage 3 approved
Clonrooske, Portlaoise	12	8 No. 2 Bed 2 Storey 3 No. 3 Bed 2 Storey 1 No. 3 Bed 1 Storey	LCC (Construction)	Part VIII approved. Stage 3 to be submitted in Q1 2023.
Iona, Portlaoise	7	2 No. 3 Bed 2 Storey 1 No. 2 Bed 2 Storey 4 No. 1 Bed Apt	LCC (Construction)	Stage 2 submitted in Q3 2022
Doonane	12	12 no. 3 bed 2 storey	LCC (Construction)	Stage 2 approved. Part VIII to be progressed.
Derry Road, Durrow	22	9 No. 1 Bed 1 Storey 4 No. 2 Bed 2 Storey 5 No. 3 Bed 2 Storey	LCC (Construction)	18 dwellings and a minimum of 4 serviced sites proposed Stage 1 Approved
Ballyadams	1	1 no. 6 bed bungalow	LCC (Construction)	Stage 1 Approved – Design Team appointed; Stage 2 to be submitted in Q4 2022
Stradbally Road, Portlaoise	80		Mixed Tenure	Masterplan for entire lands recently noted by Portlaoise MD members. Tender recently issued for design team, closing date mid Oct 2022.

Bracklone St, Portarlinton	15	15 no. 2 bed houses	LCC (Construction)	Stage 1 approved in Q3 2022
Rushall Mountrath	2	2 no. 3 bed 2 storey	LCC (Construction)	Stage 1 To Be Submitted in Q4 2022
Maryborough School, Stradbally Road, Portlaoise	11	2 No. 2 Bed 1 Storey 7 No. 2 Bed 1 Storey 2 No. 1 Bed 1 Storey	LCC (Construction)	Stage 1 To Be Submitted in Q4 2022
Main St, Ballinakill	3	2 No. 2 Bed 2 Storey 1 No. 1 Bed Apt	LCC (Construction)	Stage 1 To Be Submitted in Q4 2022
Moanbaun, Mountrath	15	4 No. 3 Bed 2 Storey 7 No. 2 Bed 2 Storey 4 No. 2 Bed 1 Storey	LCC (Construction)	Stage 1 approved
1 New Road, Portlaoise	1	1 No. 4 Bed 1 Storey	LCC (Construction)	Single Stage 1 To Be Submitted in Q1 2023
6 Emmett Terrace, Mountmellick	1	1 No. 4 Bed 1 Storey	LCC (Construction)	Single Stage 1 To Be Submitted in Q1 2023
Townparks, Rathdowney Rd, Borris-in-Ossory	26	4 No. 3 Bed 2 Storey 12 No. 2 Bed 2 Storey 10 No. 2 Bed 1 Storey	LCC Turnkey	Application submitted to DHLGH in Q3 2022
Convent Lands, Portlaoise (CAS)	52	33 no 2 bed apts 15 no 1 bed apts 4 no. 2 bed houses	Sophia Housing	Stage 3 application approved; Stage 1 of tender process for construction – tenders currently being assessed.
County Hotel, Portlaoise (CAS)	10	8 no. 1 bed apts 2 no. 2 bed apts	Cluid Housing	Bat Survey complete – no findings. Propping up works to commence shortly to enable the completion of further investigation site which will inform Stage 2 CAS application and planning.
“Radharc Darach” Hepburn Court, Portlaoise	54	8 no. 2 bed bungalow 12 no. 2 bed 2 storey 34 no. 2 bed 2 storey	Cluid Housing	Part VIII approved; proceeding to site transfer to Cluid for commencement of construction in Q1 2023.
Curragh na Mona, Abbeyleix Rd, Portlaoise	39	5 x 2 bed fully accessible apts 12 x 2 bed bungalows 6 x 3 bed house with downstairs bedroom 2 x 4 bed house with downstairs bedroom 2 x 2 bed apts – accessible (ground floor) apts 2 x 1 bed 1 st floor apts 4 x 3 bed 2 storey. 6 x 2 bed 1 st floor apts	Respond Housing	Respond to advise early in the new year re review of CALF Funding issues by the Dept of Housing and likely construction commencement date.
Doran’s site adj to O’ Moore Place, Portlaoise	50		Cooperative Housing	Discussions ongoing with landowner in relation to site development.
TOTAL	446			

AFFORDABLE HOUSING

Minimum targets for Laois issued by Dept of Housing in relation to the delivery of Affordable Purchase/Cost Rental housing by the local authority are as follows:

	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026	TOTAL
LA Affordable Purchase & Cost Rental Delivery Target	5	7	10	8	8	38

Call remains open for Expressions of Interest in respect of:

- a. Appropriately zoned land for housing development
- b. Advanced Turnkey Purchase arrangements for un-commenced residential developments

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

A workshop/seminar for members will be arranged for January 2023 in relation to Affordable Housing.

REGENERATION / VACANT HOMES

The Vacant Homes Office is currently working with the results of the surveys carried out in Mountmellick and Mountrath earlier in 2022. Further vacancy surveys have been carried out in Rathdowney under the TCF planning and will be used to progress derelict and vacant sites.

CPO

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

The following funding streams are available and open for applications

- **Croí Conaithe (Towns) Fund: Ready to Build Scheme (Serviced Sites for New Homes)**
- **Croí Conaithe (Towns) Fund Vacant Property Refurbishment Grant**
 - A grant of up to a maximum of €30,000, including VAT, will be available for the refurbishment of vacant properties for occupation as a principal private residence, including the conversion of a property which has not been used as residential heretofore.
 - **The scheme was previously limited to properties located in towns or villages but has recently been expanded to include all properties per DHLGH Circular 43/2022.**

Croí Conaithe (Towns) Fund Vacant Property Refurbishment Grant

No of Applications to date	7
No refused	3
No Granted	2
No under consideration	2

- **The Buy and Renew Scheme**
- **The Repair and Leasing Scheme**

Applications received to date	45
Applications approved to proceed	7
Applications under consideration	10
No. of Leases commenced	1
Applications Refused	27*

*Applications refused as properties deemed to be unsuitable for the R&L Scheme due to:

- (a) their location in areas of low housing demand or;
- (b) the extent of works required exceeded the Scheme limit or;
- (c) works were commenced or almost complete before an application was submitted, which is not permitted under the R&L Scheme.

HOUSING STOCK

Housing Re-Lets

Month	LA Keys Surrendered	Properties Acquired	Works Completed
January 22	9	0	3
February 22	7	1	11
March 22	5	0	4
April 22	5	0	14
May 22	6	0	5
June 22	3	0	7
July 22	3	0	5
August 22	6	1	3
September 22	4	0	6
October 22	5	2	5
TOTAL (YTD)	53	4	63

NOTE: There are currently 21 vacant units from our existing stock and a further 7 units that the Council acquired. 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 60 units at a total cost of €660,000.

Housing Maintenance

Month	Work Orders Raised	Work Orders Closed	Work Orders Open
January 22	424	424	0
February 22	517	517	0
March 22	404	404	0
April 22	392	392	0
May 22	352	352	0
June 22	363	363	0
July 22	340	328	12
August 22	364	338	26
September 22	406	353	53
October 22	374	250	124
TOTAL (YTD)	3,936	3,721	215

Midlands Retrofit Programme:

Address	Properties	Units Commenced	Units Completed
Mountain View Sq., Portlaoise	24	24	24 houses complete
Hillview Drive, Portlaoise	19	19	19 houses complete
Quigley Pk, Rathdowney	20	20	20 houses complete
Radharc Alainn, Arles	18	18	18 Houses complete.
Derrymore, Portarlinton	26	26	26 houses complete
Kirwan Park, Mountmellick	51	51	51 houses M&E complete
Total Properties	158	158	107 Units (fully complete)

Recoupment in relation to this funding is currently under way with the Dept of Housing.

Energy Efficiency/Retrofitting Programme:

Address	Properties	Units Commenced	Units Completed	Update
O'Moore Place, Portlaoise	27	13	0	Works commence on 25 th November on first 13 units and works on remaining units will commence in Q1 2023.
Total Properties	27	13	0	

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

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.

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
9 th Sept – 16 th Nov 2022	43	17
Year to Date	213	96

Homeless Accommodation

Individuals Accessing.....	Emergency Accommodation as of 16 th November 2022	Transition Accommodation as of 16 th November 2022
Adults	22	0
Children	15	0

Social Housing List at 17th November 2022

TOTAL No of Social Housing Applicants	1,805
Proportion of SH applicants availing of RAS supports	195
Proportion of SH applicants availing of HAP supports	882

Social Housing Needs Assessment 2022

As provided in the Social Housing Assessment (Summary) Regulations 2016 and per DHLGH Circular 32/2022, a statutory Housing Needs Assessment is currently underway in respect of all social housing applications on hand not yet assessed for the first time, or which haven't been reviewed since 3rd September 2021.

A Summary of Social Housing Assessment to be forwarded to the Dept by 29th November 2022. Summaries help identify the level of social housing support need nationwide and are an important tool for informing of national housing policy.

Social Housing Income thresholds

The Social Housing Assessment (Amendment (No. 2) Regulations 2022 (S.I. 446 of 2022) Laois County Council prescribes a maximum income threshold of €30,000 for eligibility for social housing support in the administrative area of Carlow, Clare, Galway, Laois and Westmeath with effect from from 1st October 2022. The baseline income eligibility threshold for the affected local authority areas will increase from €25,000 to €30,000 from that date.

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

Housing Allocations

Method of Delivery	Allocations from 8 th Sept – 18 th Nov 2022	Numbers allocated Year-to-date 2022
First allocation of New Build/Acquired unit	19	30
Relet / Refurbished Stock Allocation	13	56
Nomination to AHB housing	34	97
	66	183

The total number of allocations in 2022 to persons with a disability at the end of Q.3 is 49 (this figure includes AHBs). The breakdown is as follows: Physical 29, Mental Health 9, Intellectual Disability 8 and Sensory 3.

LOANS & GRANTS

Loans

Local Authority Home Loan: 4 th January 2022 – 14 th November 2022	
No of Loan Approvals	27
No of Applications refused	18

GRANTS

Housing Adaptation Grants at 16th November 2022

Allocation €1,389,375.00

	Grant Amount Approved	Final Adjusted amount*	Not proceeding	Paid	Outstanding being followed up
HOP	€566,070	€536,420	€30,300 (6 grants)	€384,870 (85 grants)	€152,250 (31 grants)
MAG	€207,300	€178,100	€28,700 (6 grants)	€164,000 (37 grants)	€14,100 (4 grants)
HGD	€704,950	€624,700	€109,500 (11 grants)	€294,500 (33 grants)	€306,700 (21 grants)
	€1,478,320	€1,339,220	€168,500 (23 grants)	€843,370 (155 grants)	€473,050 (56 grants)

*Adjusted amount is a combination of changes to cost of works during application process as advised by applicants and also those not proceeding with their application for various reasons.

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

It should be noted that applicants must have approved works completed and request for payment of grant with accompanying documentation submitted by 25th November in order to draw down their grant in the current year, as funding must be recouped from the Dept of Housing by end of November each year.

Grant payments after this date are made from the subsequent year's funding, in this case 2023.

Disabled Persons Grant for Social Housing

In February 2022, Laois County Council made a submission to the Dept of Housing seeking funding in the amount of €716,570 in respect of 51 applications for small DPG works and 3 extensions. An allocation of €674,720 was received in this regard.

Laois County Council recently made a further submission to the Dept of Housing to fund additional works and has been approved to progress our programme for 2022 in respect of applications deemed urgent and medically 'severe' and to recoup the cost of same this year.

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

Current position regarding DPG works as of 18th November 2022:

Original Allocation 2022 (including LA funded portion)	€674,720
No. of Applications currently on site or complete (including 3 extensions)	55
Value	€754,032
No of works awarded to contractor but yet to be agreed/arranged with tenant (may not be complete in 2022)	4
Value	€39,000
No of applications on original programme but not progressing (all with varying rationale)	8

There are currently 31 applications on hand, of varying levels of medical need, which the Council is not in a position to consider until 2023 given the funding position and availability

of contractors. All applications on hand will be submitted to the Dept of Housing for approval in 2023.

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

LEASING

RAS/Leasing Statistics at 14th November, 2022

Active RAS tenancies	78
Active short-term leasing tenancies (Social Housing Leasing Scheme)	31
Active Repair & Leasing Scheme tenancies	1
Active long-term leasing tenancies with private landlords/investors	11
Active long-term Mortgage to Rent leasing tenancies with a private company	27

PRIVATE RENTED INSPECTIONS

All private rented dwellings must comply with the Housing (Standards for Rented Houses) Regulations 2019. This includes those properties whose landlords are availing of the HAP scheme, who agree to an inspection of the property when they sign up for the scheme. Property owners not availing of the HAP scheme are also subject to inspection if they rent the property in a private arrangement.

At 31st October, the Council had issued 1,030 Notices in 2022 to property owners in the form of a letter detailing the works that need to be carried out to bring the property up to the required standard. The Notice also gives the property owner a timeframe in which the works must be carried out as recommended in the guidelines for private rental inspections issued by the Department of Housing, Local Government & Heritage.

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

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

Private Rental Standards - Housing Inspections

Target for private rented inspections in 2022	1,181
No of private rented inspections carried out 01/01/2022 – 31/10/2022	1,028

PLANNING, DEVELOPMENT & HERITAGE

RESIDENTIAL ZONED LAND TAX

Advertisement placed in the papers circulated in the County and available on www.consult.laois.ie advising of preparation of RZLT mapping. Maps available for viewing and public submissions invited before 01/01/2023.

LOCAL AREA PLANS

Portlaoise

Pre Draft Stage - Issues paper and public notice currently on display since November 18th. Members of the public can make submissions until 16th December 2022.

An open morning will be held for members of the public at the offices of Laois County Council, JFL Avenue, Portlaoise, County Laois on **Thursday, 1st December 2022** from 10am to 1pm and from 2 pm to 5pm.

Graigucullen

Chief Executive's Report currently under preparation with Carlow County Council - 20 Submissions received during Pre Draft Consultations

Rathdowney Town Centre First Plan

KPMG Consultants engaged to deliver TCF plan, Data Gathering and Survey work has commenced, One to one interviews completed, Meeting with MD members and newly formed Town Team arranged for 23rd November 2022.

DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT REPORT

E-Planning Project	Webinar held with on the 27 th October 2022 to brief in relation to the lodging of planning applications electronically. E-Planning went live on November 11 th 2002 with 4 planning applications received to date.		
Planning Applications	Year	Valid applications from 01/01/2022 – 18/11/2022	Valid applications from 01/01/2021– 18/11/2021
		548	621
Total Number of valid applications received:	548		
Number of decisions made	556		
Invalid applications returned to applicant	175 (2022 invalid applications)		
Number of applications granted:	516 (Decisions to Grant)		
Number of applications refused:	40(Decisions to Refuse)		
Files scanned up to	15 th November 2022		
Referrals to Area Offices (working days):	within 14 days achieved		
No of appeals to ABP	21		
PRE PLANNING			
No of requests to date	323		
No of meetings held to date	303		

ENFORCEMENT UPDATE

Current year	2022		2021	
Service Review	Oct	Jan - Oct	Oct	Jan - Oct
Total number of new cases subject to complaints that were investigated	16	108	8	121
Number of Warning Letters served	25	351	32	240
Number of Enforcement Notices served	11	43	3	61
No of cases referred for legal proceedings	1	7	0	6
Number of cases in Court(incl adjournments)	7	50	8	58
Number of cases Resolved in Court	1	8	0	4
Number of Files Closed	8	137	14	117
Number of cases on system	151	151	177	177
Enforcement Costs recouped	€ 952.69	€ 8,472.95	€ 357.84	€10,545.94
Number of Valid Retention Applications Received relating to Enforcement Action	4	44	3	38
Fees received through Valid Retention Applications Received relating to Enforcement Action	€2,726.40	€43,012.50	€1,833.20	€26,093.92
Legal fees paid	€848.70	€21,085.40	€18,302.40	€37,056.54

Conservation Grants recently announced – Built Heritage Investment Scheme, Historic Structures Fund and Community Monuments Fund.

All details on our website www.laois.ie, all closing dates 31st January 2023.

MRTTT Just Transition Project Conservation and Pollination

Works: Contractor appointed, John Lonergan of Revamp Conservation. Works complete on site at Clopook, ongoing at Dysartgallen and going well. This year's works will also take in Monasteroris in Offaly. Depending on weather, works will restart early next year at remaining sites, Kilmanman, Kilbride and Kilmurryely.

Training: tendering underway

Communications: Film company Crannog Media is continuing recording of the project

Laois Heritage Plan Projects

Awareness

- Most awareness for the year now complete. Small number of events planned for Science Week in November;
- Work on film about the Gordon Bennett race in Laois, is on schedule

- c) "In Your Nature" Podcasts by BirdWatch Ireland complete for this year with 18 episodes released this year and download figures for the full series now at over 60,000.

Connecting Communities – Local Heritage Projects:

Portlaoise Plane and Col Fitzmaurice Commemoration

Teddy Fennelly was selected as the Heritage Council's Heritage Hero for 2022. Presentation event October 20th in Dublin. Festival of Flight shortlisted for Midlands 103 event of the year awards, culture section.

Timahoe

Vegetation Management is ongoing for the year at Timahoe, with one further mow required before year end. All awareness raising complete.

Publications

Rock of Dunamase Book is now complete and published and was launched on the 23rd November in the Midlands Park Hotel. Gardening for Biodiversity Book and colouring book have been reprinted and distribution is ongoing with high demand again from schools and groups nationwide

Biodiversity and Climate Change

Local Biodiversity Action Fund Wetland Survey

Wetland Survey Phase II Field Survey is complete and report writing is underway.

Local Biodiversity Action Fund Communications

A series of radio ads are ongoing and will continue to December 2022.

Local Biodiversity Action Fund Timahoe

Additional LBAF funding was made available for a project to enhance biodiversity at Timahoe in partnership with the Irish Wildlife Trust Laois Offaly Branch. Nest boxes have been purchased and will be installed. Sign design is underway for two wildlife signs for the site.

National Biodiversity Action Plan

National Biodiversity Action Plan draft has been published for consultation. Closing date for submissions was 9th November.

Community Monuments Fund

Works underway for conservation plans for Ballyadams Castle, Clonreher Castle and Baunaghra Church.

- Conservation works at Rahin Church Ballylinan and Dysart Enos Church complete. All projects to be completed and funds recouped by November 2022.

Works underway at Killeshin Graveyard wall.

Creative Ireland

Mountmellick Mural

Swift Mural launched for Culture Night, all went well, very positive local response.

Community Action Projects

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

Community Grants

1. Abbeyleix Tidy Towns - Condition Assessment and Restoration Plan (Including Public Information Campaign) For Abbeyleix Fountains
2. Donaghmore Famine Workhouse & Agricultural Museum CLG - Donaghmore Virtual Accessibility Project

LOCAL ENTERPRISE & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

LEO Performance to-date:

- €319,514 approved in Grant Aid to 14 business
- €71,870 approved in Trading Online Vouchers to 35 businesses
- 80 training programmes delivered to-date with 850 participants
- 9 Start Your Own Business Courses Delivered with 97 participants
- 262 mentoring sessions delivered to-date
- 34 businesses approved under the Green for Micro Programme

Ukraine Enterprise Crisis Scheme

Under this new scheme there will be funding available to assist viable but vulnerable firms of all sizes in the manufacturing and internationally traded services sectors. Stream 1 will assist firms suffering liquidity problems with aid of up to €500,000 available.

Stream 2 of the Scheme is for “energy-intensive businesses” (where energy cost was at least 3% of turnover prior to the crisis) with aid of up to €2m available.

The Local Enterprise Offices will have a role to play in supporting companies access Stream 1 of the Scheme. LEO applicants for direct grant assistance of €20,000 will be processed through the LEO office. Applications for awards of €40,000 or greater will require the LEO to undertake the commercial appraisal but will then be approved through the Enterprise Ireland Investment Committee. The LEO’s are only required to signpost businesses to Stream 2 of the Scheme.

Portlaoise Christmas Festival

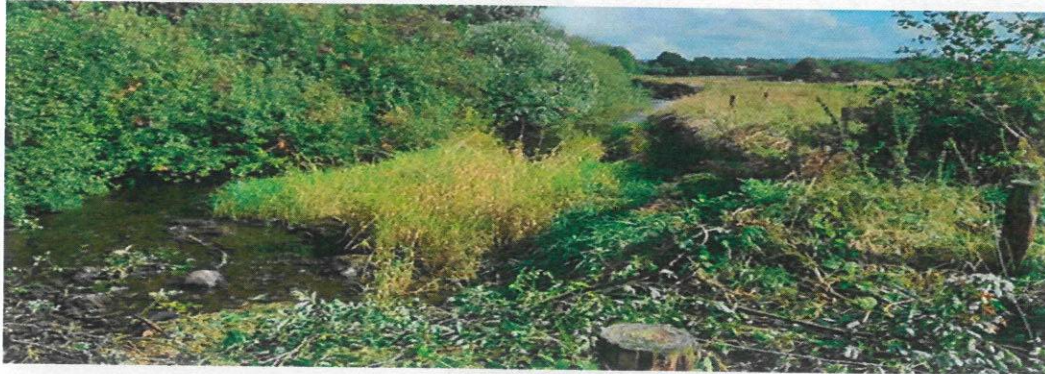
- A 2 day Christmas market will take place on Saturday 26th November and Sunday 27th November.
- An event management company has been hired to deliver a family Christmas event entitled ‘The National Elf Academy’ in the Dunamais Arts Theatre from Sunday 27th November to Tuesday 20th December. The aim of this event is to attract families to Portlaoise during the Christmas period and thereby generating increased activity for all businesses.
- Road signs will be erected on all the approach roads promoting Portlaoise as a place to visit during Christmas.
- A social media campaign commenced on Monday 21st November by Downtown Portlaoise to promote the above events. Laois County Council and Laois Chamber Alliance will collaborate with Downtown Portlaoise on promoting these events.

River Drainage Maintenance Programme 2022

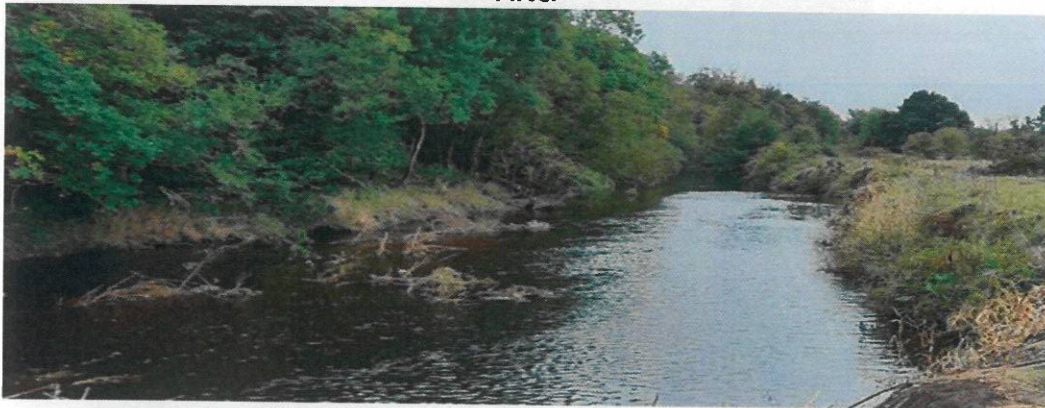
A comprehensive, multi-annual programme of River Drainage Maintenance has been progressing across the three Municipal Districts in 2022, as follows;

1. River Nore –6.8km of Vegetation Clearance (Knapton Bridge To Watercastle Bridge) OPW Minor Works €70,000 Grant

Before



After



2. River Nore - 3km Vegetation removal works (Derryduff Bridge to Danganroe Bridge)

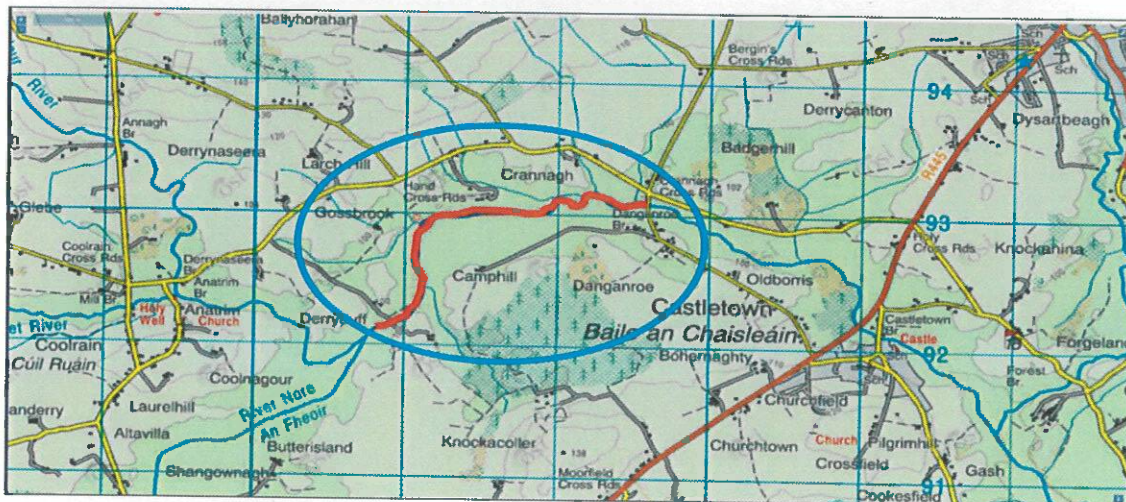
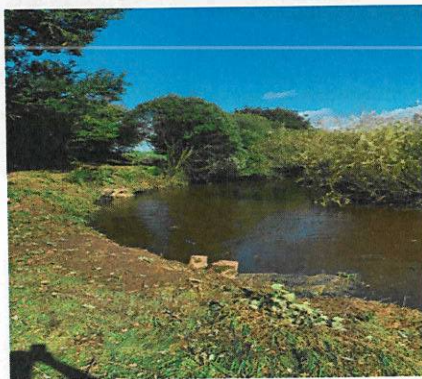


Figure 1.1 Location of the proposed works on the River Nore between Derryduff Bridge and Danganroe Bridge. [Source: NBDC maps]

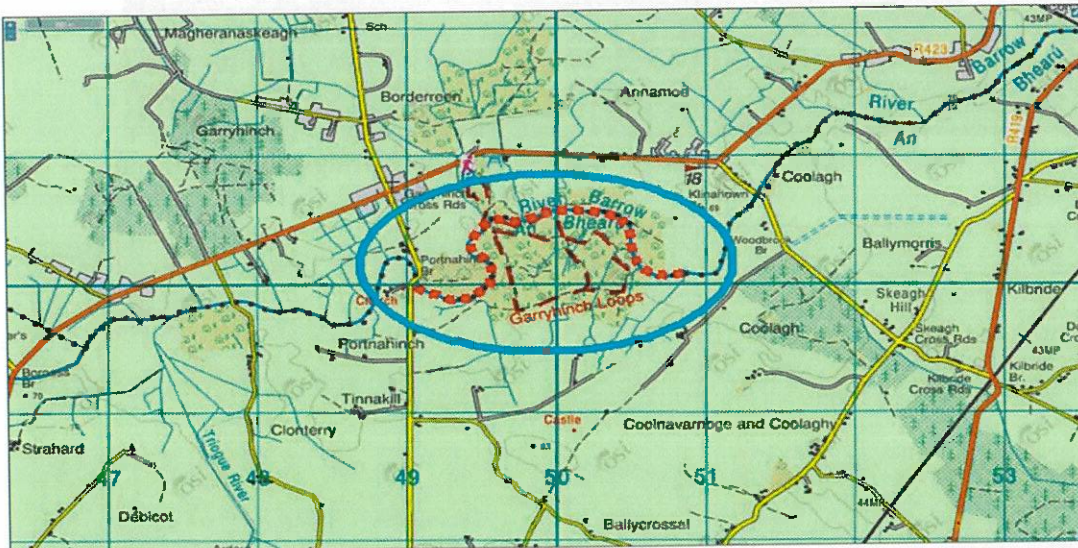
Before



After



3. River Barrow – 3km Vegetation Removal (Portahinch to Garryhinch)



Before



After



4. Stradbally River - Inch Bridge - Repair and replacement of the stone pitched flooring of the western arch of the Inch Bridge on L7950 across the Stradbally River.

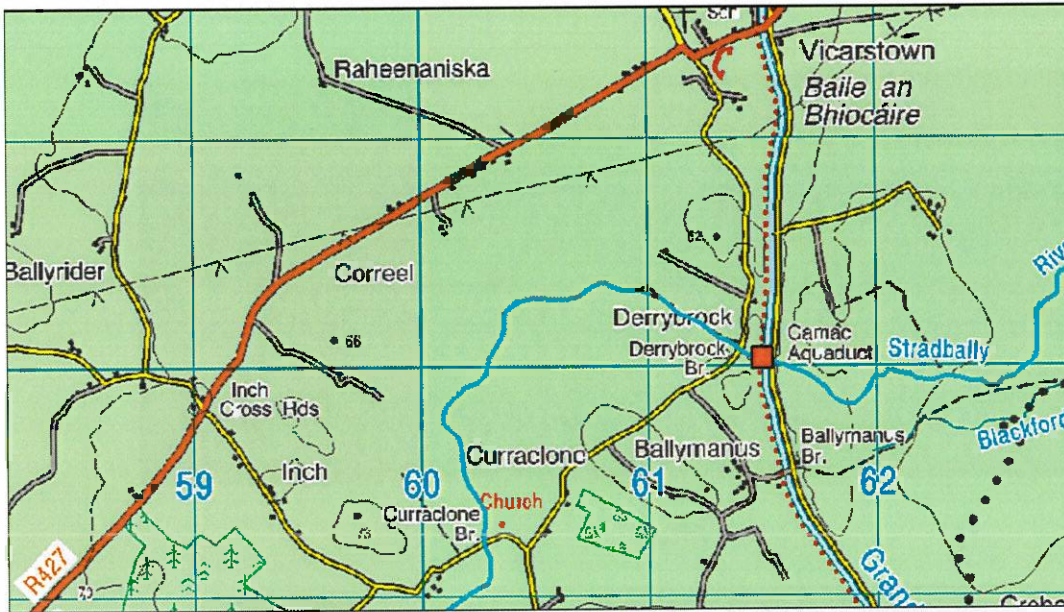
Before



After



5. Stradbally River - Ballymanus Bridge - Removal of silt islands in Stradbally River just upstream of canal aquaduct.

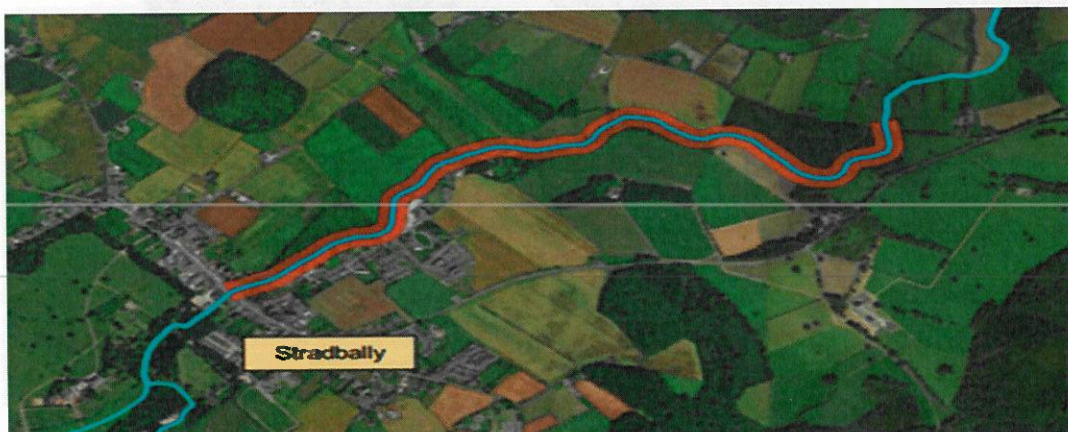


Before

After



6. Stradbally River (Stradbally to Garrans); 3.2km Vegetation removal works (Stradbally Town to Garrans).



Before



After



7. River Douglas – 2.5km Vegetation Clearance (Gales Bridge to Ballynagar)

Before



After



Drummond Drains; Maintenance works on 1km drain complete in August

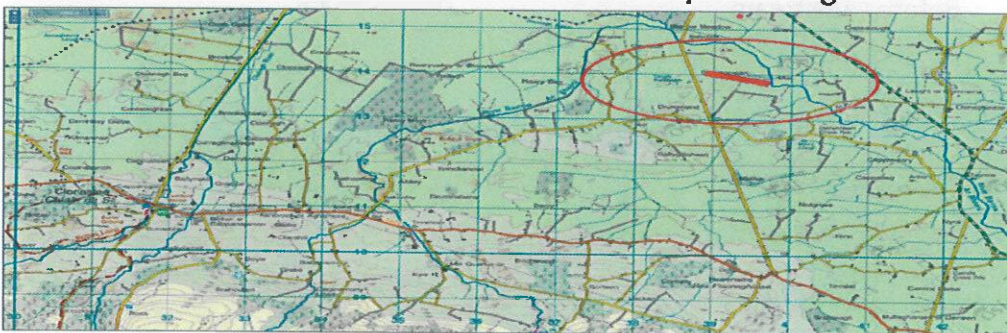
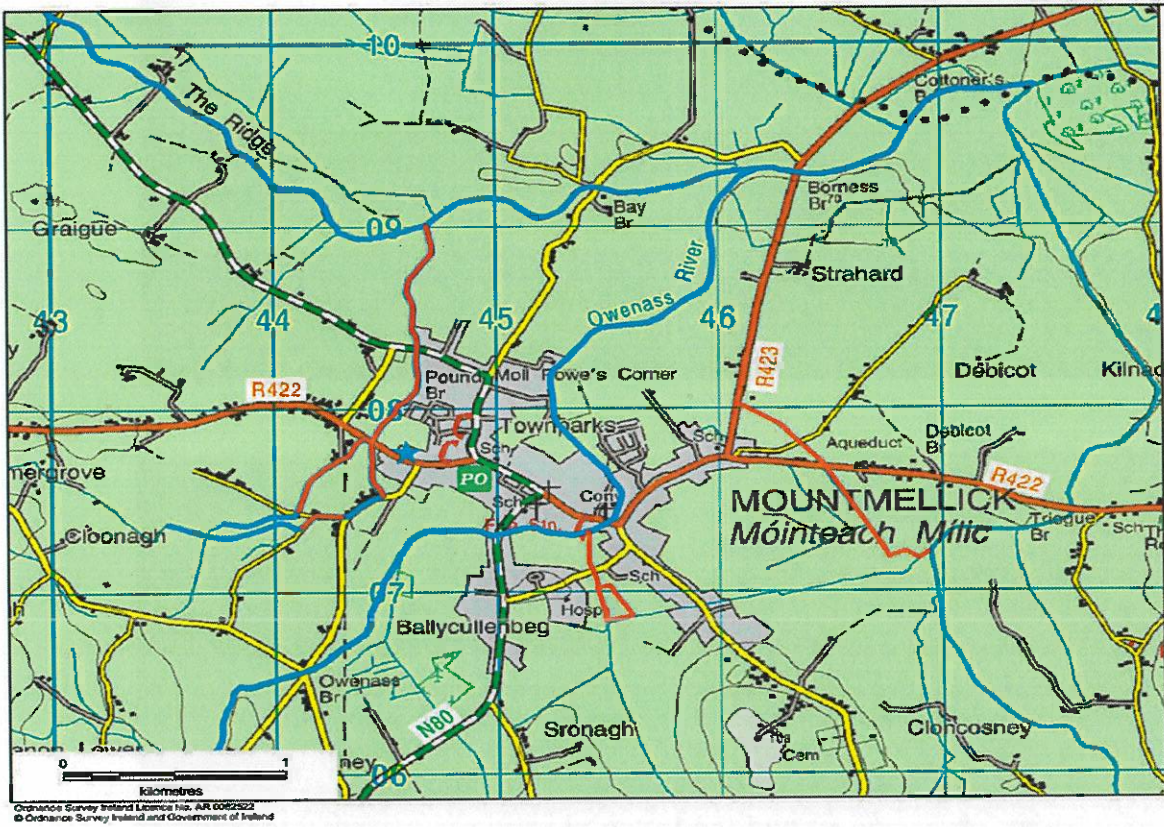


Figure 1.1 Location of Drummond Drain, Co. Laois.

8. Mountmellick Drains - Maintenance works on drainage network in Mountmellick town environs complete in August.



Before

After



9. Donaghmore River Emergency Works – emergency cleaning works completed.

Before – upstream

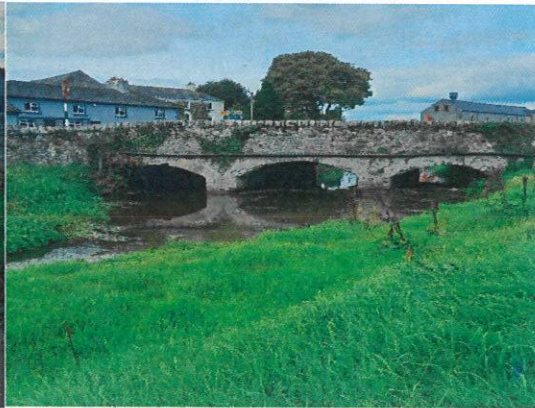
Downstream



After – upstream



Downstream



10. Mountrath - (a) relocation of sewer & (b) provision of bypass culvert at Shannon Street.

Sewer relocation

Before



After



Shannon Street – By - Pass Culvert



**Planning Drainage Maintenance Works for 2023 and beyond:
An Bord Pleanála;**

Location	Works proposed	Status (approved / submitted or FI / to be submitted)	Date of submission or planned submission to ABP	Date of Decision from ABP
Ballymanus Bridge	Removal of silt islands in Stradbally River just upstream of canal aquaduct;	Approved	June 2021	December 2021
Inch Bridge	Structural Repairs to Bridge Abutments and Floor	Approved Further information was requested (archaeological dive)	June 2021 Further information was requested (archaeological dive)	May 2022
Mountrath	Overflow Culvert	Approved	Feb 2021	October 2021
Stradbally Bridge (Main Street, Stradbally)	Vacuum removal of silt deposits from Stradbally River	Awaiting decision	June 2022	Awaiting decision
River Barrow; Flynn's Bridge, Rearyvalley.	Bridge works in stream	Submission to ABP being finalised	Spring 2023	
Castletown Weir	In river works to existing structure	Submission to ABP being finalised	Summer 2023	
River Nore Basin (Delour)		Submission to ABP being finalised	Summer 2023	
Erkina River	Blockage clearance and vegetation removal	AA Screening report being finalised	Spring 2023	
Wooden Bridge, Ballacolla	Works to existing structure	Design being finalised, AA screening after final design	Summer 2023	
Glendowns Lake, Portlaoise	Silt removal	Submission to ABP being finalised	Spring 2023	
Triogue Part 1 & Part 2	Blockage Clearance (primarily silt & some vegetation removal)	Submission to ABP being finalised	Spring 2023	
Part 3			Winter 2022	

	Blockage Clearance Screening Report			
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LCC Planning Department:

Number of AA Screenings submitted to LCC Planning	No. of AA Screenings Approved	Awaiting determination
10	9	1

ENVIRONMENT & ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

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

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

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

2. Bring Banks:

Tonnages of collected recyclable material in 2022.

Year	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Total Tonnage
2022	163.77	114.28	162.18	120.57	133.64	149.84	132.44	172.27	57.17	120.65	89.73	1471.49
2021	196.89	140.31	177.84	173.60	143.65	170.08	153.40	139.77	160.03	115.17	130.24	1877.08
2020	138.37	86.81	121.35	205.29	195.24	190.74	177.39	160.14	146.11	141.37	144.68	1884.32
2019	138.80	113.96	86.93	108.42	122.60	86.79	129.25	105.45	86.87	112.86	100.25	1315.15

2022 November figure is to the 18th November 2022.

Table 2 – Bring Bank Tonnages

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

3. Waste Management, Complaints & Litter Management:

a) Illegal Dumping

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

Year	2019	2020	2021	2022
Tonnage	367	238	530	642

Table 3 – Illegal Dumping Tonnages

b) Waste Enforcement & Complaints

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

Nature	Number
Waste Management/Enforcement	524
Litter	120
Water	45
Veterinary	31
Air	36
Noise	33
Waste Infrastructure	9
Total	798

Table 4 – Environmental Complaint Register

c) Litter Fines

To date 46 litter fines have been issued (43–litter & 3–dog fouling).

d) 2022 Anti-Dumping Initiatives (ADIs)

The 2022 ADIs included for:

- 6 mobile solar-powered audio devices - These devices are setup at black-spot illegal dumping areas in the county.
- Mattress & Bulky Goods Amnesties - Collected totals: Mattresses – 1617; Bulky Goods – 43 Tonnes.

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.
- On-going assessment of planning applications regarding water quality protection.
- On-going inspections of domestic wastewater treatment systems
- Included in Funded Pilot Programme to deliver increased number of farm inspections.

Farm Inspection Update

- The purpose of the farm inspections is to improve the water quality in the “at-risk” river catchments identified as catchments under pressure from agricultural activities.
- Farm surveys are being carried out in the Douglas and Barrow River Catchments.
- The Environment Section provided an information evening with the I.F.I.

- Farm surveys include an inspection of the farmyard and its nearest watercourses and a follow up desk top study in relation to the farmlands.
- 50 Farms have been visited to date with 31 full on-farm inspections completed.

b) Air & Noise:

- Investigation of complaints on a priority basis.

6. Waste Management (Storage, Presentation & Segregation of Household and Commercial Waste) Bye-Laws

Waste Enforcement Officers carried out 512 household waste inspections in different housing schemes in Portlaoise, Portarlinton, Mountrath, Mountmellick, Ballylinan, Crettyard and Clonaslee.

The Waste Bye-Laws places an obligation on households to participate in a waste collection service or to ensure their waste is delivered directly to an authorised facility.

Of the 512 households surveyed, 470 households demonstrated compliance with the Waste Bye-Laws. Notwithstanding numerous requests, 42 households have not demonstrated compliance.

The household surveys were carried out in March 2022 and ample time has been given to these 42 households to demonstrate compliance. These 42 households will be issued with a Fixed Penalty Notice (€75).

7. Air Pollution Act 1987 (Solid Fuels) Regulations, 2022

These Regulations came into effect on the 31st October 2022. The Regulations govern the sale and distribution of solid fuel, used for space heating or water heating in domestic or licenced premises (public houses, hotels etc.)

The Regulations apply across a range of fuels, to ensure that the most polluting solid fuels will no longer be available for sale on the Irish market. The Regulations apply to all solid fuels used for domestic and licensed premises heating purposes: coal and coal-based products, turf, peat briquettes, wood and manufactured solid fuels including manufactured biomass products.

The Regulations prohibit retailers and merchants from selling unapproved fuels. Fuels sold must be approved fuels labelled with the words 'contents comply with the Air Pollution Act Regulations' and must detail the EPA Registration Number of the fuel producer.

Local Authorities are required to enforce the Regulations and to check that retailers/merchants are complying with the Regulations.

The new Regulations do not have any impact on turf cutting rights. The new Regulations do not prohibit or restrict the cutting, burning and gifting of turf by those who hold traditional turf cutting rights. However, the Regulations prohibit the sale of turf via the internet or other media channels and from retail premises or public places. If a person currently sources turf from family, friends or neighbours, outside of these channels, this can continue.

Emergency Planning, Fire Services & Flood Relief

In 2022 (to 8th November) Laois County Fire & Rescue Service attended 593 emergency incidents consisting of 233 fires, 267 special service incidents & 93 false alarms.

Turnout by Station*:

Portlaoise – 244	Portarlington - 99	Stradbally – 116	Mountmellick – 88
Abbeyleix - 75	Mountrath – 60	Durrow – 77	Rathdowney – 46

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

New Fire Station in Stradbally

Following approval of Part 8 proposals in February 2022, for a new Fire Station in Stradbally, Laois County Council has recently received 'approval in principle for the construction of a new Fire Station at Stradbally.' Laois County Council will now prepare a design brief for the project with a view to the appointment of a design team to oversee the detailed design, tendering and delivery of the new Fire Station.

Other NDFEM capital funded projects

A new Class B fire appliance funded by NDFEM is nearing completion in the manufacturers, delivery is currently expected in towards the end of November, this vehicle is due to go into service in Portarlington.

Civil Defence Facilities

A Part 8 Consultation process for the provision of a new Civil Defence Facility at Mountrath Road, Portlaoise will commence in early December 2022.

WATER SERVICES AND RURAL WATER

Portlaoise Water Supply Improvement Scheme – Following submissions from Laois County Council, Irish Water is progressing the introduction of Borewells PW07 and PW08 at Coolbanagher. IW/NOD currently agreeing design with the ESB. This intervention will provide for increased supply to the network, enhanced resilience for periods of drought and enable a planned maintenance programme for all Borewells to be introduced, funding for which is available under Capital Maintenance.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Mountmellick and Portarlinton DAP – Catchment Appreciation Meeting took place between IW/LCC/Jacobs on the 31/8/2022. Site visit by Jacobs to both Mountmellick and Portarlinton took place on the 15th and 16th of November.

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

Taking in Charge

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

Multi Annual Rural Water Programme.

Projects under the current programme, 2019 – 2021, are being completed and claims paid and recouped. The Department has advised that details of the next Rural Water Programme will be issued during Q4.

Claim for Rural Water Liaison Officer and Admin Overhead Costs is being finalised and will be submitted this week.

Measure, A8 (Waste Water Collection and Treatment Needs for Villages and Settlements without access to Public Waste Water Services) – Application and Feasibility Studies for Vicarstown and Cullohill submitted to the Department on the 15th of September. Department responded with two queries. They queried whether the core area of each village meet the minimum requirement of having an existing 150 PE (domestic only). Neither Cullohill or Vicarstown meet this requirement. A response was issued arguing that when the total PE is considered (schools, business etc) Vicarstown is 94 and Cullohill 177 PE. They also asked for cost estimates for pumping the wastewater from these locations to the nearest public sewerage scheme. These estimates were provided and they are higher than the cost of building treatment plants in Vicarstown and Cullohill.

Well Grants – 63 no. applications have been received in 2022 and all are being progressed.

Laois County Council continues to assist IPAS with the temporary accommodation of Ukrainian arrivals to our county. There are currently 261 persons accommodated in hotels, guesthouses and hostel accommodation. Many others have also come into the county by their own means, some residing in privately sourced arrangements or in pledged accommodation settings. While there is constant movement into and out of the county, most recent data indicates there are currently an estimated 742 displaced Ukrainian citizens in County Laois.

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

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

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

A site in Rathdowney is currently undergoing Site Investigations to establish its suitability for a modular homes development. This is being managed by the Office of Public Works.

Private accommodation via Red Cross and other pledges has to date accommodated 54 persons (16 households). The matching of Ukrainian nationals to shared pledged accommodation in County Laois is currently on-going. The Council will also manage the allocation of any pledged vacant properties emerging from the new national call at end of November.

Laois Ukrainian Community Response Forum

Laois County Council continues to lead the “Laois Ukrainian Community Response Forum”. The forum convened its most recent meeting on Wednesday 9th November 2022 at which a number of tasks and local actions were agreed. All efforts are being supported by An Garda Síochána, Dept of Social Protection, the HSE, Civil Defence, the Local Development Company, LOETB, TUSLA and various local voluntary groups, and local communities. To date the forum has convened on 10 occasions. At present the forum consists of 44 members representing 23 members groups/agencies. The membership of the Forum is currently under review.

The Council presented at the Laois Integration Network Seminar on 16th November entitled ‘Laois A place of Sanctuary and Welcome’, outlining the local response effort to the Ukrainian crisis. The meeting was attended by a Ukrainian Bishop who presented a Certificate of Recognition to a number of local agencies, as a gesture of the appreciation of the Ukrainian community for the welcome and supports afforded to them. Three separate Certificates were awarded to Laois County Council, Laois Civil Defence and Laois Libraries.

Corporate Civic Receptions

The following Civic Receptions were held during October/November:

- Laois Under 16 Camogie Squad in recognition of winning the Leinster and All Ireland U16 Championships on the 3rd November 2022
- Zach Tuohy in recognition of his national and international sporting achievements on the 10th November 2022 and
- Laois Ladies Football Team in recognition of winning the All Ireland Intermediate Championship 2022 on the 25th November 2022

Register of Electors

The Electoral Reform Act 2022 was signed into law by the President on the 25th July 2022. Certain provisions have been commenced with effect from the 13th October 2022 including Part 3 – Franchise and the Registration of Electors which sets out the legislative framework for the modernisation of the electoral registration process, including the move to a rolling or continuous register and the standardisation and simplification of the registration process. Electors can now apply to the Registration Authority to be included on the Rolling Register or to update their details at any time using a single on line application via www.checktheregister.ie or alternatively through a paper form. Full details in relation to same are available from Corporate Affairs, the Council's website or from www.checktheregister.ie

Laois PPN

Laois PPN hosted the National PPN Conference on Friday the 21st and Saturday the 22nd of October, 2022 in collaboration with Laois County Council and supported by the DRCD. This was the first time Laois had hosted the conference and the first in person conference to take place since the pandemic. The conference was held in the Midlands Park Hotel, Portlaoise and attended by 100s of delegates from all 31 PPNs, representing 18,000 groups nationally. The National PPN Conference 2022 featured a variety of workshops that focused on the success of the PPN's, excursions to 7 PPN member groups, showcasing the fantastic work of Community Groups in Laois and highlighted how Laois is a great place to live, work and visit.

The National PPN Conference received positive feedback from Minister Joe O'Brien T.D. who addressed the conference, from delegates representing all 31 PPNs and from the DRCD.

Laois Comhairle na nÓg

Laois Comhairle na nÓg hosted their AGM on Tuesday 25th of October in the Midlands Park Hotel, Portlaoise. It was attended by all 10 secondary schools in Laois, St Francis School Portlaoise, Family Resource Centre in both Portlaoise and Mountmellick, Vicarstown Youth Club and Youthreach Portlaoise. The Guest Speaker was James MacInerney, Makeup Artist who was very successful on the BBC show 'Glow Up'. He spoke about his achievements to date and the importance of positive mental health.

The 3 main aims of the AGM were to promote Comhairle na nÓg, explain what Comhairle na nÓg does and to choose a topic that is currently an issue for young people in Co. Laois. The topic chosen was - Discrimination in Laois.

Age Friendly Programme

An initial draft of the new Age Friendly Strategy has been prepared and was considered by the Age Friendly Alliance. Feedback and comments are still welcome, after which a further draft will be prepared for approval by the Alliance.

An ICE (in case of emergency) card initiative was launched on Tuesday, 22nd November. The primary purpose of this multifunctional card is to have vital personal details stored on your person in case of an emergency , especially in cases where someone is unresponsive. It will give first responders some key information about the person.

The other functions of the card are to provide contact numbers for emergency services and also to promote the Local Hub Community Info App. Laois Gardai have signed up and will put some content onto this Local Hub Community Info App - crime prevention, security etc.

Age Friendly Laois attended the Digital Innovation event in Bloom HQ on 16th November, which had a segment on technology for the Older Person. The developer of the LocalHub app was one of the guest speakers who promoted his app, the ICE Card and the Age Friendly element of the community app at the event.

The HSE Integrated Care program for older people is currently looking for input from older people in the community . Age Friendly Laois are working with them to generate numbers for these in-person surveys.

Laois Connects Initiative

The Laois Connects mental health initiative took place during the month of October. Events included Activator Poles, Scooch, Prime Time of Life, Art Workshops including Creativity in Older Age and Q & A sessions with authors. These are only a sample of the events offered through the month which catered for all demographics. As part of the event, Midlands 103 interviewed Michelle McCormick , who is the local co-ordinator for GROW mental health. The interview was inspiring and is well worth a listen on their listen back feature.

A program of Active Parks events also took place. There were a number of talks delivered by prominent sports stars to school communities across the county. Bernard O Shea, comedian from Durrow and James Lowe, Ireland Rugby International pre-recorded some video clips on the theme of mental health. The program providers for the month contributed greatly to its success.

Laois Community and Voluntary Awards

The 2022 Community and Voluntary Awards took place on Friday 28th October in the Midlands Park Hotel, in association Laois Public Participation Network and sponsored by People First Credit Union. Making a welcome return to an in-person event, the awards ceremony was attended by nominees, local politicians, TDs, Minister of State Sean Fleming and sponsors. The night itself was a great success with very positive feedback from patrons.

Category	Result	Nominee
Arts Culture & Heritage	Winner	Port Art Collective
	Runner Up	Laois Heritage Society
Sports Award	Winner	SVT Canoeing & Kayaking Club
	Runner Up	St Abbans Fit 4 Life
Best Kept Residential Area	Winner	Kiln Lane Residents Association
	Runner Up	Clonaslee Tidy Towns
Health & Wellbeing	Winner	Portlaoise Men's Shed
	Runner Up	SOSAD
Social Inclusion	Winner	Laois Integration Network
	Runner Up	Laois Down Syndrome
Junior Volunteer of the Year	Winner	Bridget Reidy Dundon
	Runner Up	Carly Fagan
Unsung Hero	Winner	Liz Clear



Laois Joint Policing Committee

Laois County Joint Policing Committee public meeting was held on 21 November, 2022.

Rural Regeneration and Development Fund

Laois County Council has been allocated funding of €1,456,983 under the Rural Regeneration and Development Fund (RRDF) in respect of the Durrow Community Enterprise Hub. The centre will be primarily a hub for co-working and remote workers and to promote arts, heritage and cultural activities. It will also support existing and new organisations by providing accessible meeting and events space. The proposed development will offer flexible, multifunctional use spaces, over two stories including reception, toilet and kitchen accommodation. The building has been designed to maximise solar gain and will incorporate Solar PV panels across the south facing apex roof. External car parking will also be provided including electric vehicle charging points and bicycle stands.

CLIMATE ACTION

Tree Management Policy

Consultants have been appointed to produce a Tree Management Policy for County Laois. The Consultants will visit Laois County Council on Tuesday 22nd November 2022 to meet with relevant stakeholders including the Planning, Roads, Environment, Property and Housing Sections and area engineers from the Municipal Districts.

SPORT & LEISURE UPDATE

Active Parks - Healthy Ireland Programme

The delivery of the Active Parks programme continues in 4 locations throughout Co Laois. These are outdoor activity sessions promoting use of public amenity areas and approx. 18 sessions are being delivered monthly with additional sessions delivered during Laois Connects.

Awarding of Tenders for Disability Works – Portlaoise Leisure Centre

A tender has been awarded to carry out disability upgrades to toilets, changing area and installation of automatic door opening devices funded under a Disability Participation and Awareness Fund.

Portarlington Leisure Centre Tiling - Tender for Professional Services (LSSIF)

The tender for professional services has been advertised on e-tenders.

Official opening of CLÁR projects in Camross and Vicarstown

The official opening of the Canal Side Recreation Area in Vicarstown and pitch facilities in Camross took place on October 30th and 31st.

ARTS & CULTURE

Creative Ireland The Creative Ireland Laois strategy 2023-2027, is being drafted at present. A very well attended and fruitful consultation on the new strategy took place in the Abbeyleix Manor Hotel on 26th October. Postal and email consultations have also been received.

‘Activations’ is a research and capacity development programme for artists in Laois to ensure that creativity in older age is harnessed and supported. As pillars of positive ageing, practitioners from visual arts, spoken word, dance, film, writing, sculpture, poetry, architecture, photography, music, digital art, theatre, print making, street art, installation, decorative arts, and crafts, etc, are welcome. This took place on 7th November at the Laois Arthouse.



Laois Screen Sector Networking day 23 October

The inaugural Laois Screen Sector Networking event took place in the Dunamaise Arts centre on the 23rd October. It was chaired by Arthur Lappin, Film Producer, and drew interest from all areas of the film industry, both within and outside of the county. The Film bursary 2023 was launched.

The Light Within, 2022

A week of filming occurred countywide in November, on this Quaker story which was the 2022 recipient of the Laois Film Bursary. Director and writer Denis Mc Ardle and Producer David Butler along with dozens of professionals joined the team to make this short film over the course of one week. It was a very exciting occasion and gave local drama enthusiasts the opportunity to audition for parts as extras and experience the event first-hand. The film will be screened in spring 2023 and should draw great interest nationally in Laois as a film location and a place with an immense pool of film sector talent readily available for work.

Leaves festival 9-12 November

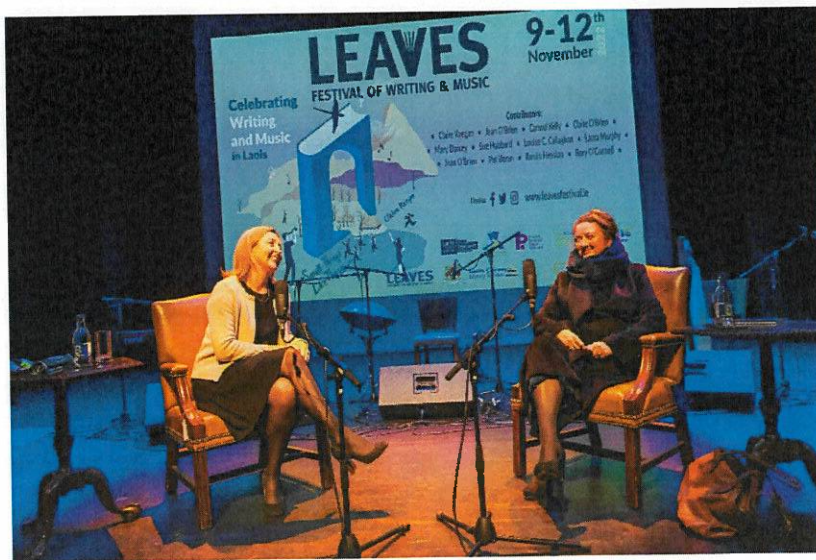
The Leaves Festival 2022 brought the best of Irish writing and music to Co Laois this November and it was felt to be a great success. The festival welcomed Booker Prize shortlisted Claire Keegan as its 1st festival length writer in residence. Her Booker Prize shortlisted novel *Small Things Like These* has had an extraordinary public reception since publication and Claire will join us for a public event with novelist & broadcaster Edel Coffey as well as a series of workshops and talks for students, in libraries, the prison and in the Dunamaise Arts Centre. *Small Things Like These* was also the October One County One Book for Laois. There were two screenings of the award-winning film *An Cailín Ciúin* based on Claire Keegan's story Foster.

There was also a celebration of 40 years of Salmon Publishing with a music and poetry event. Co Laois native's poet Pat Boran, chef Rory O'Connell (in conversation with Katy McGuinness) and a Spoken Word afternoon event by Laura Murphy. All were hosted in the Dunamaise. Music was from Harpanno & Alannah Murray & The Message.

Library events included Ronán Hession in conversation with broadcaster Clare O'Brien. The launch of *World of Words*, a collection of short stories by new Irish writers that is the culmination of a creative writing journey that started almost a year ago in the aftermath of lockdown. Published by Laois and Offaly Education and Training Board - A talk for parents on rediscovering the Magic of Reading What Poems Look Like for Children with Dr. Becky Long

Laois Music Centre Official Opening and 2-year celebration of the LSM 21-23 October

A weekend of events took place marking the opening of the Laois Music Centre and the 21st year celebration of the Laois School of Music. It was a hugely historic event and delightful to see the Music Centre in such comfortable surroundings at the old Scoil Mhuire site as well as concerts in St Paul's Church of Ireland over the weekend celebrating current students, alumni who are carving out professional careers in music as well as the talented music educators and of course the students.



Claire Keegan in conversation with Edel Coffey

LIBRARY SERVICES

Home Energy Saving Kits -Library lending scheme supported by Laois County Council Environment Department and Europe Direct Portlaoise - Laois Libraries

The Home Energy Saving Kits were officially launched by Cathaoirleach Cllr Thomasina Connell at 12 noon on Wednesday , 12th October in Portlaoise Library. Each toolkit contains five tool and six practical exercises to help the public save energy at home and is available to borrow free of charge from a number of library branches in Laois Libraries.

The scheme has been developed by Dublin's energy agency Codema. Codema acts as energy agency to the four Dublin Local Authorities and aims to improve energy efficiency and reduce carbon emissions in the Dublin region.

The kits are accompanied by a step-by-step user manual and demonstration video, along with a Guide to Home Energy Savings which contains a range of tips to save energy across all areas of the home.

All of these resources are available on www.codema.ie/thinkenergy and more information on the Home Energy Saving Kits is available at www.codema.ie/energysavingkit



One County One Book and Laois Leaves Festival of Literature and Music

Laois County Library Services were delighted to collaborate and participate with The Arts section on this years Leaves Festival .



The “ One County One Book “ initiative for the months of October and November featuring award winning author Claire Keegan’s book “Small things like this”. Copies of the book were loaned to local schools, general users and branch library book clubs . TY classes from local schools in Portlaoise and Mountmellick got a chance to meet the author in person and discuss the book and themes which was a fantastic opportunity for all involved . In Mountmellick Library the local bookclub were also part of a one off adult writing class with Claire Keegan.

Other Leaves Events

Ronan Hession reading and discussion with Claire O Brien in Portlaoise Library

Thanks to everyone who attended and facilitated the launch of the LOETB Creative Writing course authored short story collection *Scribblers to Scribes* in Portlaoise Library. Ten local authors read extracts from their work which was the culmination of an writing Initiative of LOETB , tutor Ryan Dunne and Laois County Library Services .

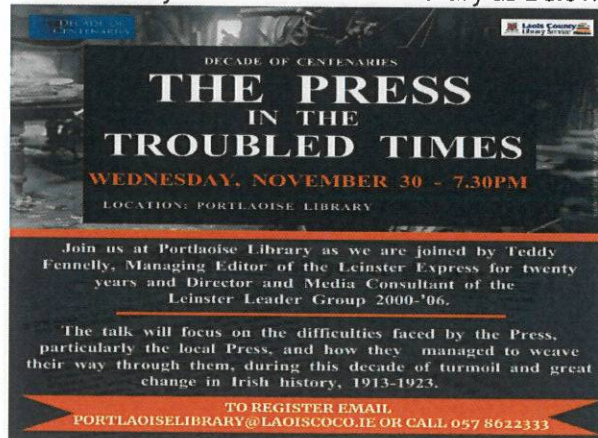
Upcoming Events

Annual Soapbox Public Speaking Competition.

The topic for this year’s annual Europe Direct Soapbox Public Speaking Competition is "Is Europe Listening to its Young People?" To be in with a chance to win a great prize and represent the region in the national competition, all you have to do is record a three minute video for or against the soapbox topic, "Is Europe Listening to its Young People?".

Prizes are awarded for age 16 and under AND for age 17 and over.

Local history Talk in Portlaoise Library as below



Christmas Wreath Making in Portlaoise Library



Chief Executive's Orders

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


John Mulholland
Chief Executive

November 23rd 2022