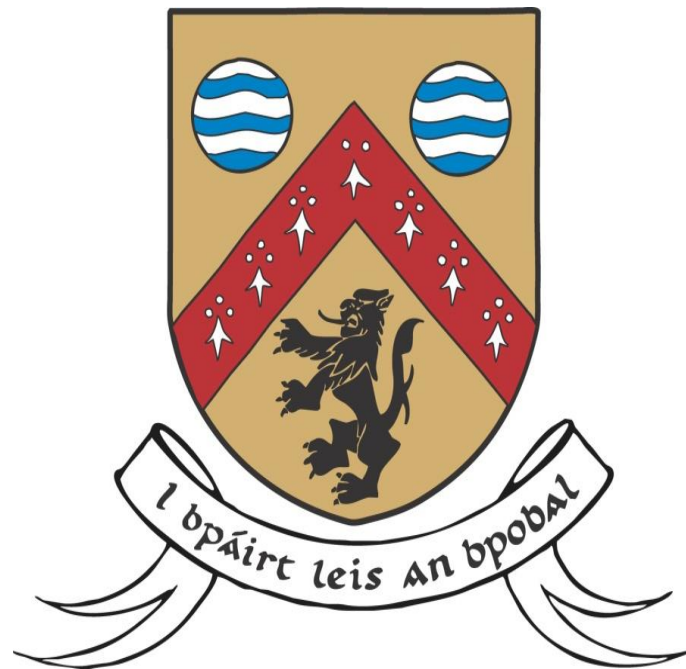


**LAOIS COUNTY COUNCIL**

**COMHAIRLE CHONTAE LAOISE**



**MONTHLY MANAGEMENT REPORT  
FEBRUARY 2022  
TUARASCÁIL BHAINISTÍOCHTA  
FEABHRA 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 February 2022 is as follows:-

### Finance, & Allocations Notified

The Annual Financial Statement for 2021 is currently being prepared and will be finalised in March 2022. A report for the year end 31/12/2021 will then be made available

#### Allocations Notified

|  |          |
|--|----------|
| Creativity in Older Age Project (Always Human)     | €43,308  |
| Bike Week 2022                                     | €22,500  |
| Sports capital grant -Portlaoise leisure Centre    | €300,000 |
| Sports capital grant- Portarlington leisure Centre | €143,145 |

### Housing & Regeneration

#### HOUSING DELIVERY

##### 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 Q2 2022  |
| Pattison Estate, Mountmellick            | 10            | LCC (Construction) | On site – expected delivery Q2 2022  |
| Gleann na Glaise, Ballyroan              | 10            | LCC (Construction) | On Site – expected delivery Q2 2022  |
| Sean Doire, Durrow                       | 22            | LCC (Construction) | On Site – expected delivery Q2 2022  |
| Coolroe, Ballybrittas                    | 1             | LCC (Construction) | Rural construct – on site and to be delivered in Q1 2022                                     |
| Featherbed Lane, Borris-In-Ossory (Ph 2) | 5             | LCC (Turnkey)      | On Site – expected delivery Q2 2022  |
| Bruach Na Habhainn, Killeen              | 4             | LCC (Turnkey)      | On site – Delivery Q2 2022   |
| The Orchard, Ballylynan                  | 5             | LCC (Turnkey)      | On Site – Phase 1 (2 units) delivery Q1 2022<br>On Site – Phase 1 (3 units) delivery Q4 2022 |
| Market Square, Portarlington             | 18            | LCC (Turnkey)      | On site – delivery Q2 2023   |

|  |            |                     |  |
|--|------------|---------------------|--|
| Church Avenue, Stradbally              | 31         | LCC (Turnkey)       | Phase 1 on site for delivery Q1 2023; Phase 2 to be delivered Q4 2023.   |
| Oak Park Halting Site                  | 4          | LCC                 | TAU funded scheme – delivery estimated at end of 2022.   |
| Harpurs Lane Portlaoise                | 44         | Respond             | On site – expected delivery Q1 2023  |
| Clonrooske Abbey, Portlaoise           | 32         | Cluid Housing       | On site – to be delivered in phases by June 2022. All 32 units now built to roof level, internal fixing and finishes required to all 32 units. |
| The Maltings & Roselawn, Portlaoise    | 55         | Cluid Housing       | Phase 1 under construction – Estimated delivery Q3 2022  |
| Holdbrook, Portlaoise                  | 10         | Cluid Housing       | Phase 2 – delivery Q4 2022   |
| Droughill Lawns, Portarlinton          | 26         | Oaklee Housing      | On site – expected delivery end of April   |
| The Springs, Kilminchy, Portlaoise     | 43         | Cluid Housing       | 2 Phases – on site; Phase 1 delivery estimated Q2 2022   |
| Goldencroft, Portlaoise (Old CBS site) | 67         | Cluid Housing       | 3 Phases – on site; 1 <sup>st</sup> Phase Q4 2022  |
| Ballymorris Green, Portarlinton        | 12         | Cluid Housing       | Currently on site - Phase 1 delivery delayed due to availability of sub-contractors – estimated at Q3 2022                                     |
| South Dublin Road, Kilminchy           | 36         | Cooperative Housing | On site – commenced early January 2022.  |
| <b>TOTAL</b>                           | <b>441</b> |                     |  |

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

| Location/Scheme             | No of Houses | To be constructed by | Comment   |
|-----------------------------|--------------|----------------------|---|
| Harbour Court, Mountmellick | 6            | LCC (Construction)   | Stage 4 Approved – Contractor due on site in Q1 2022.                                       |
| St. Kieran’s Errill         | 14           | LCC (Construction)   | Stage 3 Approved – Tender evaluation ongoing; Stage 4 application will be made in February. |
| Mooreville, Rathdowney      | 7            | LCC (Construction)   | Stage 3 Approved  |
| Carraig Glas, Stradbally    | 26           | LCC (Construction)   | Stage 2 Approved  |
| Clonrooske, Portlaoise      | 11           | LCC (Construction)   | Stage 1 Approved  |
| Iona, Portlaoise            | 9            | LCC (Construction)   | Stage 1 Approved  |

|  |            |                       |   |
|--|------------|-----------------------|---|
| Doonane  | 12         | LCC<br>(Construction) | Stage 1 Approved  |
| Derry Road, Durrow                                 | 22         | LCC<br>(Construction) | 18 dwellings plus 4 serviced sites proposed<br>Stage 1 Approved   |
| Ballyadams   | 1          | LCC<br>(Construction) | Stage 1 Approved – Tender underway for engagement of Design Team  |
| Stradbally Road, Portlaoise                        | 87         | TBC                   | Masterplan for entire lands to be finalised<br>Tender underway for engagement of Design Team; options being explored for tenure and delivery of scheme      |
| Bracklone St, Portarlinton                         | 12         | LCC<br>(Construction) | Stage 1 To Be Submitted   |
| Rushall Mountrath                                  | 2          | LCC<br>(Construction) | Stage 1 To Be Submitted   |
| Main St, Ballinakill                               | 3          | LCC<br>(Construction) | Stage 1 To Be Submitted   |
| Moanbaun, Mountrath                                | 9          | LCC<br>(Construction) | Stage 1 To Be Submitted   |
| The Meadows (old Midland Dairies site), Portlaoise | 49         | Cluid Housing         | Funding Approved  |
| Convent Lands, Portlaoise                          | 51         | Sophia Housing        | Stage 2 Approved. Design Team currently preparing Stage 3 application, to be submitted to DHGLH in mid-March.   |
| County Hotel, Portlaoise                           | 10         | Cluid Housing         | Site investigations still ongoing. Will proceed to Part 8 as soon as they are complete. Contractor being procured to clean up of the front of the property. |
| Hepburn Court                                      | 54         | Cluid Housing         | Proposed layout presented to elected members at in-committee meeting in advance of Part 8 preparation.  |
| <b>TOTAL</b>                                       | <b>385</b> |                       |   |

### AFFORDABLE HOUSING

Expressions of Interest were invited via advertisement and LCC website in December 2021 in respect of:

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

A survey of potential purchasers of affordable houses published on 3<sup>rd</sup> February, closing date 1<sup>st</sup> April. The survey will inform our research and ultimately our decision on prospective buyer affordability and potential location of scheme(s).

### VACANT HOMES

Expressions of Interest recently invited via advertisement and LCC website for vacant/derelict properties.

|   |      |
|---|------|
| Properties identified/reported as vacant at 17 <sup>th</sup> February 2022        | 289  |
| Of the above, properties to be examined further re suitability for social housing | 51   |
| Of the above, properties being investigated as possible development sites         | 37   |
| No further action taken   | 126* |

\*Properties found to be occupied on inspection and/or deemed to be unsuitable for social housing.

### CPO

|   |    |
|---|----|
| Vacant Properties acquired by CPO now in LA ownership | 13 |
| Notices of Intention to take possession issued        | 2  |
| Properties currently undergoing CPO                   | 5  |

### Repair & Leasing

|                                  |    |
|----------------------------------|----|
| Applications received to date    | 35 |
| Applications approved to proceed | 5  |
| Applications under consideration | 2  |
| Leases commenced                 | 1  |

### HOUSING STOCK

#### Housing Re-Lets

| Month              | LA Keys Surrendered | Properties Acquired | Works Completed |
|--------------------|---------------------|---------------------|-----------------|
| January 22         | 10                  | 0                   | 3               |
| <b>TOTAL (YTD)</b> | <b>10</b>           | <b>0</b>            | <b>3</b>        |

NOTE: There are currently 36 vacant units from our existing stock and a further 11 units that the Council acquired recently. Works are either ongoing on these properties or specifications are being prepared for works to be carried out.

## Housing Maintenance

| Month              | Work Orders Raised | Work Orders Closed | Work Orders Open |
|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|------------------|
| January 22         | 424                | 294                | 130              |
| <b>TOTAL (YTD)</b> | <b>424</b>         | <b>294</b>         | <b>130</b>       |

### Midlands Retrofit Programme:

| Address                       | Properties | Units Commenced | Units Completed                | Update  |
|-------------------------------|------------|-----------------|--------------------------------|---|
| Mountain View Sq., Portlaoise | 24         | 24              | 0                              | Air tightness test complete 14/01/2022.<br>M&E Works starting on 14/02/2022   |
| Hillview Drive, Portlaoise    | 18         | 18              | 0                              | Installation works to start on site 1/03/2022   |
| Quigley Pk, Rathdowney        | 20         | 20              | 0                              | Works started, 1 house  |
| Radharc Alainn, Arles         | 18         | 18              | 0                              | Air-tightness Test to be completed 14-02-2022   |
| Derrymore, Portarlington      | 26         | 26              | 6 (Just Doors to be installed) | 12 houses nearly complete, heating in place. Door installations to be completed by 3 <sup>rd</sup> March 2022 for these houses, delays with supply. |
| Kirwan Park, Mountmellick     | 51         | 51              | 0                              | Air-tightness Test to be completed 07-03-2022   |
| <b>Total Properties</b>       | <b>157</b> | <b>106</b>      | <b>6</b>                       |   |

### Energy Efficiency/Retrofitting Programme:

Upon the evaluation of tender, it is noted that the costs are higher than anticipated which has been considered by the Housing Delivery Team. The additional Costs require supplementary funding which is not available from the Dept at this time.

In order to proceed with the Retrofit programme, we are retendering the works for retrofit only and will advise on this once completed.

| Address                   | Properties | Units Commenced | Units Completed | Update   |
|---------------------------|------------|-----------------|-----------------|--|
| O'Moore Place, Portlaoise | 29         | 0               | 0               | Surveys completed and tender evaluation is on-going. |
| <b>Total Properties</b>   | <b>29</b>  | <b>0</b>        | <b>0</b>        |  |

## HOUSING NEED

### Homeless Presentations

| Time Period   | Homeless Presentations | Emergency Homeless |
|---|------------------------|--------------------|
| 19 <sup>th</sup> Jan 2022 – 15 <sup>th</sup> Feb 2022 | 28                     | 5                  |
| Year to Date  | 45                     | 13                 |

### Homeless Accommodation

| Individuals Accessing..... | Emergency Accommodation as of 15 <sup>th</sup> Feb, 2022 | Transition Accommodation as of 15 <sup>th</sup> Feb, 2022 |
|----------------------------|--|---|
| Adults                     | 20   | 0   |
| Children                   | 11   | 0   |

### Social Housing List at 15<sup>th</sup> January 2022

|  |            |
|--|------------|
| <b>TOTAL No of Social Housing Applicants</b> | 1,730      |
| <b>Applicants in receipt of HAP</b>          | 922        |
| <b>Net Need</b>                              | <b>808</b> |

### Housing Allocations at 15<sup>th</sup> January 2022

| Method of Delivery                          | Allocations to 15 <sup>th</sup> Jan 2022 | Numbers allocated Year-to-date 2022 |
|---|--|-------------------------------------|
| First allocation of New Build/Acquired unit | 0  | 0                                   |
| Relet / Refurbished Stock Allocation        | 5  | 12                                  |
| Nomination to AHB housing                   | 6  | 7                                   |
| <b>TOTAL Y-T-D</b>                          | <b>11</b>                                | <b>19</b>                           |

### Housing Assistance Payment

|   |     |
|---|-----|
| No of Active HAP Tenancies at 21 <sup>st</sup> January 2022 | 922 |
|---|-----|

### LOANS & GRANTS

| <b>*Local Authority Home Loan: 4<sup>th</sup> January 2022 – 15<sup>th</sup> February 2022</b> |   |
|--|---|
| No of Loan Approvals   | 1 |
| No of Applications refused   | 0 |

\*Rebuilding Ireland Home Loan Scheme now closed. All applications **received** on or after the 04<sup>th</sup> January 2022 will be in respect of the new Local Authority Home Loan.

## Grants

| Allocation 2022<br>(LCC Revenue Budget) | No of Applications Received in 2022 | No of Approved Applications at works stage | Comment   |
|---|-------------------------------------|--|---|
| €1,260,000                              | 17                                  | 54<br>(€361,150)                           | 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 15<sup>th</sup> February 2022

| Allocation 2022 | Expenditure / Commitments to date | No. of applicants benefitting | No of new applications Received in 2022 | Comment   |
|-----------------|-----------------------------------|-------------------------------|---|---|
| TBC             | €196,230.32                       | 22                            | 4                                       | Small works on 22 properties currently underway; will be completed by end of Q1 2022. |

Queries in relation to Housing Grants should be emailed to [housinggrants@laoiscoco.ie](mailto:housinggrants@laoiscoco.ie)

## LEASING

### RAS/Leasing Statistics at 17<sup>th</sup> February 2022

|  |    |
|--|----|
| Active RAS tenancies   | 86 |
| Active short-term leasing tenancies (Social Housing Leasing Scheme)        | 31 |
| Active Repair & Leasing Scheme tenancy                                     | 1  |
| Active long-term leasing tenancies with private landlords/investors        | 10 |
| Active long-term Mortgage to Rent leasing tenancies with a private company | 18 |

## GPRIVATE RENTED

### Private Rental Standards - Housing Inspections

|  |       |
|--|-------|
| No of private rented inspections carried out 01/01/2202 - 17/02/2022 | 114   |
| Target for private rented inspections in 2022                        | 1,181 |



## HOUSING DELIVERY ACTION PLAN

Further to the publication of “Affordable Housing Act 2021”, “Housing Circular 28/2021 on Affordable Housing Act 2021 - Amendments to Part V of the Planning and Development Act 2000”, and “Housing for All; a New Housing Plan for Ireland” in September 2021, Laois County Council has prepared a Housing Delivery Action Plan in relation to the provision of social and affordable housing in Laois for the period 2022-2026, a copy of which was previously circulated to the elected members. This sets out the annual new build social housing delivery targets under *Housing for All* over the next 5 years as outlined by the Dept of Housing, Local Government and Heritage on 20<sup>th</sup> September 2021.

### Annual Social Housing Delivery Targets 2022-2026

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

## Planning, Development and Heritage

### LAOIS DRAFT COUNTY DEVELOPMENT PLAN 2021-2027

The plan was adopted at a Special Council meeting on the 25<sup>th</sup> January 2022, coming into effect on the 8th March 2022.

### 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<br>01/01/2022 – 10/2/2022 | Valid applications from 01/01/2021 –<br>10/02/2021 |
|------|---|--|
|      | 59  | 62   |

#### 2022 PERFORMANCE

|  |    |
|--|----|
| Number of valid applications received: | 59 |
| Number of decisions made               | 71 |

|  |   |
|--|---|
| Number of applications granted:  | 65 (Decisions to Grant)                     |
| Number of applications refused:  | 6 (Decisions to Refuse)<br>10% refusal rate |
| Invalid applications returned to applicant:  | 13 (2022 Invalid Applications)<br>22%       |
| Files scanned up to -  | 14 <sup>th</sup> February 2022              |
| Referrals to Area Offices (working days):  | within 14 days achieved                     |
| <b>Pre planning</b>  |   |
| No of requests to date   | 36  |
| No of meetings held to date<br><b>Upto and including the 10<sup>th</sup> February 2022</b> | 18  |
| Wait time  | 3-4 weeks                                   |

## ENFORCEMENT UPDATE

| Current year<br><u>Service Review</u>  | 2022      |  | 2021     |  |
|--|-----------|--|----------|--|
|  | Jan       |  | Jan      |  |
| Total number of new cases subject to complaints that were investigated                     | 9         |  | 3        |  |
| Number of Warning Letters served   | 31        |  | 12       |  |
| Number of Enforcement Notices served   | 1         |  | 9        |  |
| No Of cases referred for legal proceedings   | 0         |  | 0        |  |
| Number of cases in Court(incl adjournments)  | 6         |  | 4        |  |
| Number of cases Resolved in Court  | 0         |  | 0        |  |
| Number of Files Closed   | 14        |  | 4        |  |
| Number of cases on system  | 174       |  | 168      |  |
| Enforcement Costs recouped   | € 250.00  |  | € 399.22 |  |
| Number of Valid Retention Applications Received relating to Enforcement Action             | 3         |  | 2        |  |
| Fees received through Valid Retention Applications Received relating to Enforcement Action | €2,738.20 |  | €376.00  |  |
| Legal fees paid  | €352.40   |  | €597.74  |  |

## HERITAGE

### 1. MRTTT Just Transition Project Conservation and Pollination

*Works:* Work on the conservation plans is ongoing and they are due for publication in March.

Ivy trimming was carried out at Clopook and two Offaly sites and structural engineers will now visit the sites 1 March to assess the status of masonry.

Specifications will be prepared for masonry conservation as soon as Conservation Plans are approved and we hope to go to tender for three sites this year.

*Training:* Ecologist tender received for community training, appointment due shortly

*Communications:* Film company Crannog Media has started recording the project, with community meetings held

### 2. Laois Heritage Plan Projects

Heritage Council application for funding was made to the Heritage Council, decision awaited.

### 3. National Biodiversity Action Plan

Wetland Survey Phase I desk survey is complete by Wetland Surveys Ireland and work on Phase II Field Survey will commence shortly.

Public event to publicise the project in Mountrath, 10<sup>th</sup> March.

As additional funding is available this year it is proposed to apply for additional money to carry out Portlaoise Biodiversity Planting (led by Portlaoise MD) and to survey additional wetland sites.

### 4. Conservation of Churches and Graveyards in 2022

Condition reports for **Ballylinan** and **Clonkeen** churches underway, in preparation for Community Monuments fund application.

Grass and rank vegetation has been cut at **Ridge Graveyard**. A plan for future management (and a budget) will need to be agreed with the MD.

Emergency works at **Killeshin** graveyard wall, longer term action now under discussion.

### 5. Creative Ireland

#### 5.1. *Heritage and Landscape Training “Know your Locality”*

Online training course in local heritage (with Creative Ireland funding) to be held March 2022. The course booked out within 48 hours and a waiting list is in operation

#### 5.2. *Laois Festival of flight*

Laois Festival of Flight will involve performance of the Col Fitzmaurice Piece with Music Generation and Martin Tourish, historical talks, schools workshops and display of the Portlaoise Plane.

### 5.3 Mountmellick Mural

Provisional approval has been given to work with Birdwatch Ireland on a Swift Mural in Mountmellick

## 6. Community Action Projects

Heritage Council Community Heritage Grants were submitted with support from the Heritage Officer, decisions awaited.

## 7. Town and Village Renewal and Regeneration Projects

### 7.1. Timahoe TVRS

Lotts Architecture working on specifications and hope to get final approval and go to tender for works by Feb. Works due to be complete by June 2022.

### 7.2. Stradbally TVRS

Design team for Stradbally Bridge element of the TVRS has been appointed. Meetings have been held with the community on other elements of the project and discussions with Community Section are ongoing.

## 8. Commemorations

Decade of Centenaries

The Heritage Officer continues to work with the County Librarian on the Decade of Commemorations, including plans for commemoration of the centenary of the Air Corps and Col Fitzmaurice in 2022.

## 9. Community Monuments Fund

Applications for the **Community Monuments Fund** for 2022 have been received - closing date for public was **15<sup>th</sup> February** 2022. Applications with assessments to be transmitted to Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage by **1<sup>st</sup> March**.

## 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.

### 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 as follows :

- Fit out is currently under way in Portarlinton and Portlaoise in various building along the Main Street and the Link Road;

- Consultation is under way with property owners in Abbeyleix .
- Survey and Consultation to commence on Mountmellick.

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 4 areas in rural Laois.

1. Vicarstown Community Centre
2. Emo “Old School” Community Centre
3. Oisín House Rossmore, Killeslin
4. Donaghmore workhouse and Agricultural Museum

An additional two have been added with Shanganamore Community Centre Barrowhouse live in January 2022, and Ballyroan Community Centre going live by end of Q2 2022.

Under the TVRS in 2021 , these Broadband Connection Points (or BCPs) were supported by the Dept of Rural Development with additional furniture, safety equipment etc to ensure the locations were compliant with Public Health Guidelines and available for the general public to use.

These are public locations which have been selected to receive high-speed connectivity in the first year of the National Broadband Plan and are available to work or study within. These are part of the Connected Communities initiative.

## **Local Enterprise & Economic Development**

### **Local Enterprise Office (LEO):**

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

#### **Jan – Feb 2022**

- €82,872 approved in grant aid to 4 Laois businesses
- 144 owners/managers/employees participated in LEO training programmes
- 32 potential entrepreneurs participated in Start Your Own Business Courses
- 39 Laois businesses availed of mentoring in finance, marketing, exporting, HR & health & safety
- 6 Trading Online Voucher approvals to the value of €5,780
- 9 Laois companies currently taking part in a Green for Micro programme
- 6 Laois companies currently taking part in LEAN programmes
- 27 Laois companies currently taking part in the Client Stimulus Programme

## Roads, Transportation & Smarter Travel

### DTTaS Funding;

TII funding allocation has been received for National roads within the county in the following amounts;

| <b>Laois County Council</b>                             |                    |
|---|--------------------|
| <b>Restoration Improvement</b>                          | €6,549,000         |
| <b>Restoration Maintenance</b>                          | €1,010,500         |
| <b>Supplementary Restoration Maintenance</b>            | €794,000           |
| <b>Discretionary Grant</b>                              | €1,880,000         |
| <b>Bridge Rehabilitation</b>                            | €530,000           |
| <b>Specific Imp. Grants</b>                             | €300,000           |
| <b>Safety Improvement Works</b>                         | €294,000           |
| <b>Speed Limits (Rural Speed Limit Signage)</b>         | €13,160            |
| <b>Cycle Signs</b>                                      | €28,000            |
| <b>Training Grant</b>                                   | €32,000            |
| <b>Drainage Works</b>                                   | €472,884           |
| <b>Former National Roads</b>                            | €680,000           |
| <b>PSCI: Survey Support</b>                             | €17,000            |
| <b>Community Improvement Scheme</b>                     | €389,950           |
| <b>Active Travel</b>                                    | €148,002           |
| <b>Climate Change Adaptation &amp; Resilience Works</b> | €311,000           |
| <b>Total Allocation</b>                                 | <b>€13,449,496</b> |

| <b>2022 Climate Change Adaptation and Resilience Works</b> |   |   |                   |
|--|---|---|-------------------|
| <b>Road Number</b>   | <b>Scheme Title</b>                               | <b>Scheme Description</b>   | <b>Allocation</b> |
| L-6695-21  | Clonboyne Portlaoise                              | Replacement of 50m of existing pipeline and installation of new drainage in the vicinity of the main Dublin to Cork/Limerick Rail line. | €70,000           |
| L-2694-0   | Clonadacasey Portlaoise                           | Roadside drainage and new pipeline open drain   | €10,000           |
| R945   | Mountmellick Road Portlaoise                      | Clean drain and culvert   | €46,000           |
| L-2694-0   | Clonadacasey Portlaoise (close to Old Oak School) | Roadside drainage and new pipeline across field to open drain   | €45,000           |
| L1005  | The Cut Road, Clonaslee                           | Culverting of Open Stream where road embankment has collapsed. Raise level of pavement to control and manage surface water.             | €60,000           |

|                         |                            |   |                 |
|-------------------------|----------------------------|---|-----------------|
| L-3777-54               | Clontycoe                  | drainage Upgrade existing road side culvert on road side drain in upland area   | €5,000          |
| R424                    | Mountmellick - Ballyfin Rd | The works will involve raising the level of the road to mitigate flooding and reduce road closure frequency. Fluvial Flooding | €60,000         |
| L-3173                  | Tierhogar                  | Drainage Works  | €15,000         |
| <b>Total Allocation</b> |                            |   | <b>€311,000</b> |

| 2022 Specific Improvement Grant |  |                 |
|---------------------------------|--|-----------------|
| Scheme Name                     |  | Allocation      |
| Poorman's Bridge                |  | €300,000        |
| <b>Total Allocation</b>         |  | <b>€300,000</b> |

| 2022 Bridge Rehabilitation Works on Regional and Local Roads |             |  |                 |
|--|-------------|--|-----------------|
| Local Authority  | Road Number | Scheme Description   | Allocation      |
| Laois  |             | Bridge St Bridge, Portlaoise   | €70,000         |
| Laois  | L-7950      | Inch/Curraclone Bridge   | €85,000         |
| Laois  | R422        | Tinnahinch Bridge  | €40,000         |
| Laois  | R-430       | Sallys Bridge  | €25,000         |
| Laois  | R440        | Rushin Bridge, Mountrath   | €50,000         |
| Laois  | R-430       | Boleybeg Bridge, Spink (total project estimate is €80k, 50% funding from Disc. Maint. Reg. Rds)) | €40,000         |
| Laois  | L-5638      | Wooden Bridge, Ballacolla  | €80,000         |
| Laois  | L-2014      | Skerry Rosenallis  | €50,000         |
| Laois  | L-1659-0    | New Bridge, Cloncough, Shanhoie over River Nore (on Western/Central Area Boundary)               | €60,000         |
| Laois  | L-5593      | Turfarney, Rathdowney  | €30,000         |
| <b>Total Allocation</b>                                      |             |  | <b>€530,000</b> |

| 2022 Former National Roads |             |                                    |                 |
|----------------------------|-------------|------------------------------------|-----------------|
| Local Authority            | Road Number | Scheme Description                 | Allocation      |
| Laois                      | R445        | Mountrath Town Structural inlay    | €250,000        |
| Laois                      | R445        | Borris-in-Ossory Roundabouts Inlay | €180,000        |
| Laois                      | R445        | Borris-in-Ossory Moneymore Overlay | €250,000        |
| <b>Total Allocation</b>    |             |                                    | <b>€680,000</b> |

| 2022 Safety Improvement Works on Regional and Local Roads |                     |   |                 |
|---|---------------------|---|-----------------|
| Local Authority   | Road Number         | Scheme Description  | Allocation      |
| Laois   | R-430               | (E) Newtown/Doonane   | €30,000         |
| Laois   | R-422-56            | T junction & entrance at Lauragh / Knightstown                        | €28,000         |
| Laois   | L3171/L31711        | E) Killenard  | €30,000         |
| Laois   | R-430-169           | Ballypickas Cross   | €28,000         |
| Laois   | R422                | Tinnahinch Bridge   | €30,000         |
| Laois   | R-430               | Foster Cross Abbeyleix  | €28,000         |
| Laois   | R-427-25            | Nolans Cross Roads Pass/Ballyheyland                                  | €30,000         |
| Laois   | L-2117-0 & L-6118-0 | Kyletalesha Portlaoise  | €25,000         |
| Laois   | R-425-119           | Rathleague in the vicinity of Summerhill Lane and Portlaoise GAA Club | €30,000         |
| Laois   | R-425-48            | Ralph's Grove Ballyroan T Junction (Delaney's Lane)                   | €20,000         |
| Laois   | R-425-119           | Sheffield Cross   | €15,000         |
| <b>Total Allocation</b>                                   |                     |   | <b>€294,000</b> |

### **River Drainage Maintenance**

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

## Environment & Environmental Protection

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

Normal services continue at the Kyletalesha Landfill Facility. Landfill monitoring and aftercare maintenance on-going.

### **2. Portarlinton Civic Amenity Site:**

This facility is operated and managed under contract with Bord Na Mona Recycling.

### **3. Historic Unregulated Waste Disposal Sites:**

The Environmental Site Assessments for the 3 unregulated waste disposal sites (Aghanure, Killabban & Rathdowney Road, Durrow) are completed and funding has been received from the Department.

Certificate of Authorisation Applications are currently being prepared for each of the above historic landfills for submission to the EPA. Funding has been provided by the Department (€15,000) in 2022 for these applications.

Further applications for funding from the Department are being prepared for other Section 22 registered historic unregulated waste disposal sites.

### **4. Recommended Minimum Criteria for Environmental Inspections (RMCEI)**

The 2021 RMCEI return was submitted to the EPA on the 14<sup>th</sup> February 2022.



The 2022 RMCEI Plan will be ready for submission to the EPA on the 28<sup>th</sup> February 2022.

**5. Bring Banks:**

A total of 1,877.09 tonnes of collected recyclable material was collected in 2021.

| Jan 2022 | Feb 2022 |
|----------|----------|
| 163.77   | 92.17    |

**Table 1 – 2022 Bring Banks Tonnages**

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

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

**(a) Clean Up Laois Week 2022 - 18<sup>th</sup> to 22<sup>nd</sup> April 2022.**

After a two-year break, the Spring Clean-Up Week returns to Co. Laois. Laois County Council and their sponsors Bord na Mona are asking local communities to spring into action and join the fight against litter. Groups, communities, neighbours, friends are requested to register with the Environment Section. The collected litter will be gathered by Bord na Mona during the week commencing 25<sup>th</sup> April.

**(b) Waste Enforcement & Complaints**

Table 1 below details the number and types of complaints received to date in 2022 by the Environment Section. Complaints for 2021 are also shown for comparison purposes.

| Complaint Type | Litter | Abandoned Cars | Waste Enforcement incl. C&D | Management & Infrastructure (Bring Banks) | Air | Water | Noise | Vet | Total |
|----------------|--------|----------------|-----------------------------|---|-----|-------|-------|-----|-------|
| 2021           | 184    | 35             | 680                         | 11  | 56  | 67    | 32    | 25  | 1,090 |
| 2022           | 26     | 5              | 101                         | 2   | 4   | 10    | 6     | 6   | 160   |

**Table 2 - Environmental Complaint Register**

- 2022 – 9 fixed penalty notices issued in 2022, for breaches of Litter Pollution Act.

**7. 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.



Field in Knockmay being cleaned up again, three times in less than twelve months.

## 8. Anti-Dog Fouling Campaign



- Laois County Council continue to provide support to residents and Tidy Towns Groups with the provision of mutt mitt dispensers and bags at numerous popular walking locations around Laois.
- Anti-dog fouling messages continued to be posted to social media, reminding members of the public to do the right thing, by cleaning up after their dog.

## 9. Environmental Protection

### a) Protect the Water Quality Status in all Water Bodies

Presentation to be given to the Council at the February meeting on the Draft River Basin Management Plan for Ireland 2022 – 2027.

There is a meeting scheduled in March with LAWPRO to review Laois County Council's natural waters functions and to review available resources.

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

### b) Air & Noise:

In conjunction with the EPA, an NO<sub>2</sub> (Nitrogen Dioxide) monitoring survey is being carried out in the towns of Abbeyleix, Durrow and Cullahill to quantify prevailing air quality. The last of the diffusion tubes were collected by the EPA and Laois County Council in mid-February. The EPA has indicated that a final report will issue in late April 2022.

All noise and air complaints are being investigated.

## 10. Burning of Agricultural Waste

Minister for Environment, Climate and Communications, Eamon Ryan has signed S.I. No. 51 of 2022 Waste Management (Prohibition of Waste Disposal by Burning) (Amendment) Regulations 2022 on 9<sup>th</sup> February 2022, which allows farmers to burn, as a last resort, prescribed wastes from agricultural practices. This exemption is in place until 31<sup>st</sup> December 2022.

It is important to note the restrictions under the Wildlife Act, 1976, which prohibit cutting or burning of any **living vegetation** in the period between 1<sup>st</sup> March and 31<sup>st</sup> August each year, as this is the bird nesting season.

### Emergency Planning, Fire Services & Flood Relief

In 2022 ( to date) Laois County Fire & Rescue Service attended 52 emergency incidents consisting of 19 fires, 21 special service incidents & 12 false alarms.

#### Turnout by Station\*:

|                |                    |                 |                  |
|----------------|--------------------|-----------------|------------------|
| Portlaoise – 7 | Portarlington - 10 | Stradbally – 11 | Mountmellick – 8 |
| Abbeyleix - 9  | Mountrath – 4      | Durrow – 4      | Rathdowney – 8   |

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

#### Storms Dudley, Eunice & Franklin

- All 8 fire stations were committed at various times during the recent 3 named storms, responding to flooding & trees down throughout the county, alongside “normal” operational activities.

#### Fire Services Capital Programme

- Planning & design is continuing for the Mountmellick Fire Station upgrade, a, €150,000 project, which consists of a fire service drill tower & new concrete yard to the rear of the fire station. It has not been possible to obtain the services of an engineering consultant locally & therefore this appointment was advertised on E-Tenders. The tender process is now closed. 2 responses were received & following an assessment of the 2 responses, Tobin Consulting Engineers have been appointed as consultants & PSDP for the upgrade work. Detailed design work is expected to commence in February 2022.
- 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.
- In 2021 Elected Members were advised of an allocation of €140,000 for the acquisition of a new Water Tanker to support Fire Services operations in County Laois. The tanker chassis has been delivered to HPMP Fire, who are now in the process of building the body. Delays due to supply issues have resulted in the build being delayed and delivery has now been put back until Q1 2022.

## **Risk Based Management - Nearest Available Resource Project**

- The Section 149A Agreement under the Local Government Acts 2001 – 2014 has been agreed between Laois County Council and Kildare and Carlow County Councils and has been signed by the respective Chief Executives. Section 149A Agreements were signed between Laois County Council & Offaly County Council in January 2022, with the agreements coming into effect from 1<sup>st</sup> January 2022.

### **WATER SERVICES AND RURAL WATER**

#### **Public Water and Wastewater Capital**

The following capital works have been approved by Irish Water:-

**Durrow** – Further progress was made in Durrow with the bringing into service of a borewell at Fermoy WTP. Provision of a storage/blend tank and booster pump set also being discussed with Irish Water.

**Portlaoise Water Supply Improvement Scheme** - borewell PW09 at Coolbanagher has been developed and is currently on standby to be used as required. Irish Water now progressing with developing well PW07 and well PW08. A draft planned maintenance programme has been submitted to IW for funding approval.

**Disinfection/PH control programme** – Civil works progressing in Derryguile, Kyle, Five Wells and Lough WTP. MEICA works progressed at Knocks, Derryguile, Lough, Kyle and Ballyroan WTP. SAT now complete at the Knocks and Ballyroan WTP. Upgrade works progressing at Derrymoyle and Kilminchy WTP during 2022.

**Containerised unit program** –Augfeerish, Abbeyleix water treatment plant has been identified, by the EPA, as a high cryptosporidium risk supply and placed on its remedial action list (R.A.L.), due to the nature of the somewhat exposed spring source - despite the fact that, following extensive monitoring, cryptosporidium or its indicators have never been detected in this supply. To address this risk, Irish Water in conjunction with Laois County Council engaged Coffey's to carry out dis-infection upgrade works, which included installation of a UV treatment plant (under the IW containerised program). Following completion of these works, the EPA conducted a subsequent EPA audit on 25<sup>th</sup> January, 2022, and are now satisfied with the risk mitigation measures in place and are recommending the removal of this plant from the R.A.L.

**Castletown WwTP-Inlet Works Storm and Sludge Programme:** new storm tank now in place with M + E and remaining civil works to be completed over the coming weeks. Storm tank installation is underway.

#### **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 has recently commenced.

#### **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. A Contractor has been appointed and work is in progress for a Wastewater Community Connection at Goodwin Estate, Rosenallis. Details of the next Rural Water Programme from the Department are expected to be issued within the next 2-3 weeks.

**Well Grants** – 7 no. applications have been received in 2022 and all are being progressed.

**Laboratory** - In accordance with the EPA approved programme, as an essential service Lab staff continue to conduct testing and sampling throughout in accordance with Covid-19 safe systems of work plans/risk assessments. Work to maintain the existing customer base and seek and secure new business from neighbouring Local Authorities, LAWPRO and LCC's Environment Section in accordance with market opportunities is ongoing.

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

### **CORPORATE**

The 2022/2023 Register of Electors which comes into force on the 15<sup>th</sup> February was published on the 1<sup>st</sup> February and has been distributed in the usual manner.

### **COMMUNITY**

#### **Laois Public Participation Network**

To assist PPN Member Groups with preparing their grant applications, Laois PPN are providing a FREE online workshop to PPN Members - Grant Writing Tips & Tricks on Thursday 24<sup>th</sup> February to be delivered by trainer Emma Murtagh of The Wheel.

Laois PPN welcomed Diane Seale as the new PPN Support Worker who commenced in February.

#### **Laois Community and Voluntary Awards**

The 2021 Community and Voluntary Awards were streamed on-line via Laois Co Co facebook page and social media platforms on the evening of Friday 11<sup>th</sup> February. All 52 nominees were acknowledged in 8 separate videos acquiring over 14,000 views, in addition to excellent coverage in the Leinster Express. Presentation of prizes to winners and runners up will take place at an event in March in the Council Chamber.

#### **Laois Comhairle na nÓg**

Comhairle na nÓg are currently meeting fortnightly to work on their project on Mental Health. One member is now a member of the National Youth Assembly of Ireland. This is a great achievement as there are only 30 members selected from all over Ireland. Two members are representing Laois Comhairle on the national panel where select members from all over Ireland will get the opportunity to plan and organise youth events for 2022.

#### **Age Friendly**

Preparation of a new Age Friendly Strategy 2022-2027 is underway.

Retired Consultant Mr. Peter Naughton informed the Age Friendly Alliance of the recent success of the Laois Defibrillator Project, outlining that *“In the past year, 4 people in Laois*

*have been successfully resuscitated with the aid of our defibrillators, the last two in Ballyroan and Rathineska respectively.”*

The Laois Defibrillator Project was supported by the Age Friendly Alliance, Healthy Ireland, Elected Members, the Lions Club and Laois Sports Partnership.

## **CLIMATE ACTION**

**Building Capacity Training** was completed by 10 members of the Laois County Council cross-departmental Climate Action Team (CAT). As a result of this training the CAT will now develop a communications strategy for the climate action activities and achievements of Laois County Council for both internal staff and the wider public, on an ongoing basis.

**School Sustainable Travel Study of Portlaoise** was presented to Town Team Sub Travel Group by Travel Officers from An Taisce and funded by LEADER. The study commenced in October 2020 to establish a baseline of modes of school travel in Portlaoise so that we can measure impact of improved cycling infrastructure and also find out what are the barriers to walking or cycling to school. A combination of a School Travel Census and online survey of parents of school children in Portlaoise were carried out over the duration of the project. An Taisce Travel Officers also conducted Walkability and Cyclability Audits of routes to all school in Portlaoise and have worked with LCC GIS Officer to map any issues identified. They also conducted Community Fora with Secondary School Pupils in all four Post Primary Schools in Portlaoise to discuss perceived benefits and barriers to cycling in young people and presented at the Comhairle na nOg AGM on the subject.

**A Gap to Target Analysis of energy use of Laois County Council** was conducted by Consulteco, the interim Project Support Manager appointed by SEAI. The Gap to Target model emissions pathways to 2030 and model the impact of additional decarbonisation initiatives. Laois County Council should be able to achieve 2030 Energy Efficiency Target of 50% (given that we have achieved 46.8% efficiency improvement to date) ; however further substantial work will be needed to meet the Carbon Emission Target of 30% and the Gap to Target Analysis Tool will be used to develop an investment Strategy to meet 2030 targets.

## **SPORT & LEISURE UPDATE**

### **Leisure Centres**

Works at Portlaoise Leisure Centre continue to progress well, and the facility will open to the public on 28th February. Portarlinton Leisure Centre is continuing to deliver a full timetable of public sessions, swimming lessons, exercise classes and pitch bookings. Some upgrading works at Portlaoise Leisure Centre are expected to continue for the coming months but will not interfere with business operations.

Funding of €300k for the continued upgrading of Portlaoise Leisure Centre which will include improved accessibility works including doors, flooring and enhanced gym equipment provision was awarded in Feb 2022. Laois County Council also secured funding of €143,145 for the upgrading of changing facilities at Portarlinton Leisure Centre which includes retiling of the floors – providing an additional source of funding, in addition to the €300,000 already allocated under LSSIF to address tiling and drainage issues.

### **Playgrounds Developments**

Ballinakill playground is now completed and LCC and will be officially opened on Friday March 11<sup>th</sup>. Laois County Council ran a naming competition for the playground which will be called 'Páirc na Coille'.

### **Bike Week 2022**

A grant of €22,500 was awarded to Laois County Council for the delivery of Bike Week Programme commencing May 15<sup>th</sup> 2022.

### **Healthy Ireland – Creating Playful Spaces**

The first consultation phase with residents took place in Oak Glen-Stradbally, Bruach/Cois na hAbhann- Portlaoise and Old Forge Crescent – Mountrath with 80% of residents participating. The designs will be completed in March and assistance will be provided to the residents to access funding to realise their plans over a 1-3-year period.

### **Sports Capital Grant Scheme**

Sports Capital grants for local projects awarded in February 2022 with Laois receiving an allocation of €3,317,114 together with €663,272 for regional projects. The Sport and Leisure Department directly assisted 77% of all successful applications in 2021 either through on-line workshops or direct one to one sessions. Previous support and interactions with other successful Groups has increased their competency to now complete applications without assistance.

## **ARTS & CULTURE**

### **Culture Night Conversations Event**

Ahead of Culture Night 2022, the Arts Council will host one of a series of nationwide meetings at the Dunamais Arts Centre on Monday 7<sup>th</sup> March at 11am - 1pm, to share the findings from its research report and the post event analysis from 2021.

### **Re/CENTRING/ Faoin Spéir**

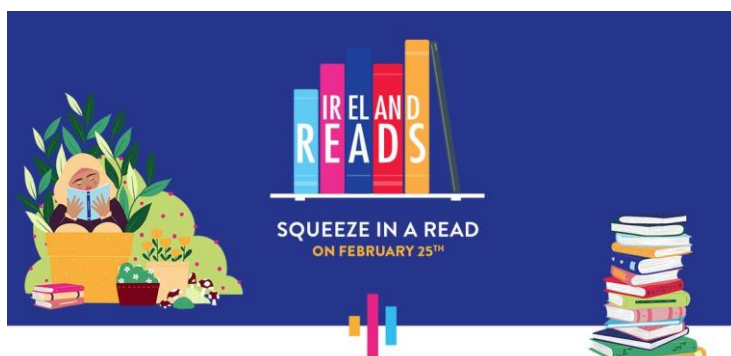
The first of the 2022 re:CENTRING Laois funded programmes took place on Sunday 20<sup>th</sup> February at Mountmellick Arts Centre, led by Dunamais Arts Centre in partnership with Laois County Council Arts Office - it included performances by Martin Tourish, Triona Marshall Harpist, The Harpettes and The Music Generation Laos Trad Orchestra.

### **Laois Youth Theatre**

Plans are progressing, in partnership with Dunamais Arts Centre, to re-establish the Laois Youth Theatre Programme in Laois. Open Sessions to invite young people to join take place in early March. A former member of Portlaoise Youth Theatre with Theatre qualifications is taking on the role of facilitator for the Youth Theatre on a trial basis.

## LIBRARY SERVICE

### 1. IRELAND READS



Ireland Reads day is taking place on Friday, 25<sup>th</sup> February. The aim of “Ireland Reads “ is to get the country engaged in a national day of reading for the greater wellbeing of all of its citizens . Laois County Library Services will be hosting online book recommendations and videos on our facebook page and promoting reading in all forms . We are also asking everyone to “take the pledge” and pledge some time online at <https://www.irelandreads.ie/> to squeeze in a read . Key partners nationally include Marian Keyes, Daniel Mulhall (US Ambassador) , Liz Nugent, Joe Duffy and Rick O Shea .

The Library Services is delighted to be restarting the outreach events and programmes across the county - for example:

The Artists Way Book Club takes place on Wednesday afternoons in **Stradbally Library**. Club members will read a chapter a week and have weekly check-ins to encourage and support each other on their creative journey. Contact [nboyce@laoiscoco.ie](mailto:nboyce@laoiscoco.ie) for more information and to book a place.

The Knitting Club is returning to **Stradbally Library** on Tuesday evenings from 6:30pm to 8:00pm! For more information, email [stradballylibrary@laoiscoco.ie](mailto:stradballylibrary@laoiscoco.ie) or call 057 8641673.



# Mindfulness and Poetry

Join us for an evening of mindfulness devoted to silence and words.

with Orlaith O'Sullivan

Wednesday March 23rd 7-9 p.m

Email [mountmellicklibrary@laoiscoco.ie](mailto:mountmellicklibrary@laoiscoco.ie)



## Creative Writing Classes

Portlaoise Library

**FREE**

Six-week course in Short Fiction Writing  
Fridays, 11.30am - 1pm  
Starts 4th March

☎ 05786 22333

✉ [portlaoiselibrary@laoiscoco.ie](mailto:portlaoiselibrary@laoiscoco.ie)



Laois County Library Service



'Don't tell me the moon is shining;  
show me the glint  
of light on broken  
glass.'



**French Classes**  
at  
**Laois Libraries**

LAOIS LIBRARIES ARE DELIGHTED TO WELCOME BACK TUTOR AURÉLIE LE MOINE FOR WEEKLY FRENCH CLASSES AT PORTLAOISE LIBRARY.

TAKING PLACE OVER SIX WEEKS, COMMENCING ON SATURDAY THE 5TH MARCH AT 10.30AM. PLACES ARE LIMITED SO BOOKING IS ESSENTIAL

To register call 057 8622333 or email [portlaoiselibrary@laoiscoco.ie](mailto:portlaoiselibrary@laoiscoco.ie)

Logos: Europe Direct Portlaoise, Aurelie Languages, Laois County Library Service, and a stylized Eiffel Tower.

#### Chief Executive's Orders

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

**John Mulholland**  
Chief Executive

February 24<sup>th</sup> 2022