



Chief Executive Report January 2024

Longford County Council

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January Highlights

New Artistic Director appointed for Longford Lights Festival

Caroline Conway, a lead artist in the 2023 festival, takes the helm for the 2024 event which will take place over three evenings in Connolly Barracks, Longford from 23-25 February.



Longford County Council Arts Bursary opens for applicants

The Arts Bursary Awards are designed to help artists of all disciplines to develop their artistic practice. The deadline for applications is Friday, March 2024.



Pathways to Funding: Community Sessions

Over 125 community representatives recently attended our Pathways to Funding: Community Grant Information Sessions. These sessions were held in Longford, Ballymahon and Granard libraries.



2024 Sports Bursary open for applications from local athletes

Awarded to aspiring and ambitious individual performers, who are competing and succeeding at the highest sporting levels. Applications may be submitted up until Monday, 4 March.



Community Development

Longford Local Community Development Committee

The Department of Rural and Community Development has notified Longford Local Community Development Committee (LCDC) that it has been approved as the Local Action Group (LAG) to deliver the 2023-2027 LEADER programme in Longford with its implementation partner Longford Community Resources CLG and lead financial partner Longford County Council. Preparations will continue to commence implementation of the LEADER programme in Longford

Local Economic and Community Plan (LECP)

The Longford Local Economic and Community Plan (LECP) 2023-2029 was adopted by Longford Co. Council at its meeting on 13 December 2023.

A hard copy of the LECP is now available in each library in the county. It is also available to view on the [Longford County Council website](#).

Sláintecare Healthy Communities

Mc Eoin Park

Longford County Council Housing section has cleared the derelict buildings and rubbish from the recreation area in Mc Eoin Park. Funding is available through Sláintecare Healthy Communities to carry out

some capital works to help bring the space back into use for the community.

Some of the works include erection of a new fencing and an entrance gate, installation of a new ESB connection and lightening, and repairs on the surface of the multi use games area (MUGA). This work will be carried out through Longford County Council Community section.



Additional small scale capital play or sports elements could be added. Work is ongoing with the local community to support activities and care for this space.

LGBTI+ Funding

The Community section has secured Dormant Accounts funding of €21,562.90 allocated by the Department of Rural and Community Development (DRCD) to support LGBTI+ projects in county Longford.

The funding will be used to implement actions in the National LGBTI+ Strategy, with particular reference to Action 6.3 - Take measures to ensure that existing community infrastructure

Community Development

is inclusive and welcoming to LGBTI+ people and consider the provision of pop-up LGBTI+ services.

Longford Comhairle na nÓg

Longford Comhairle na nÓg worked with Longford Westmeath Child and Young Persons Services Committee, local youth groups and Westmeath Comhairle to host a Youth Event event on Friday 1 December in the Longford Arms Hotel. This event provided an opportunity for the young people of Longford and Westmeath to share their projects and initiatives with service providers while also providing an opportunity for service providers to meet with and listen to young people in the region.



Community Grant Support Scheme 2024

On 3 January 2024, Longford County Council invited online applications from community groups for funding under the Community Grant Support Scheme. Full details were made available on the Council's website and through the Public Participation Network (PPN).

This grant scheme supports activities or projects focused on any of the following areas:

- Active elderly
- The arts
- Community development
- Environment
- Events
- Heritage
- Inter-cultural
- Recreation

Pathways to Funding Community Grant Schemes

In collaboration with the LCDC and PPN, Longford County Council organised Pathways to Funding Community Grant Schemes.

These information sessions were hosted in each of the Municipal Districts. Presentations delivering information and advice were provided on a wide range of available funding streams. People were able to meet those who administer the schemes and explore opportunities to support projects in their area.

The presentation from Ballymahon was also live streamed on social media and information is now available on the Council's website.

Community Development

CLÁR 2023

The Department of Rural and Community Development (DRCD) recently announced the successful community projects under CLÁR 2023 Measure 1. This follows the announcement of the sports projects under this measure in December 2023.

Longford's 15 projects submitted to the DRCD for funding were successful with a total funding allocation of €457,409.

Applicants and local representatives have been notified and community development staff will be in touch with the successful groups to commence their projects when formal correspondence and documentation from the Department is received.

Organisation	Project Description	Amount
Granard Community Centre	Kitchen and heating upgrade and roof repair to Community Centre	€50,000
St Mary's Hall, Lanesborough	Community Hall Upgrade works – heating, painting, windows & doors, toilet facilities	€43,611
St Mary's Community Campus	Upgrade Fire alarm system	€8,434
Latin School Community Centre	The replacement of a boundary wall at the front of the centre to include piers and a new entrance. Upgrading of the heating system in the main building and kitchen area	€42,483
Colmcille Community Centre	Upgrade works to include energy efficiency upgrades to Community Centre	€48,340
St Colmcille NS, Aughnaccliffe	Installation of a sensory garden for people with autism	€40,500
Scoil Samhthainn, Ballinalee	Astro turf pitch on school grounds	€50,000
Lanesborough Primary School Walkway	Construction of a tarmacadam walkway around the perimeter of the school football pitch	€31,287
Cnoc Mhuire, Granard	Walkway around school pitch	€24,750

Community Development

Organisation	Project Description	Amount
Jim McGann Park, Kenagh GAA	Upgrading the lighting system around the walking track, repair of sections of the walking track and installation of a new pathway to the spectator stand to include handrails and a ramp for disabled access	€30,791
Dromard GAA	Outdoor Installation of outdoor exercise equipment on existing concrete slabs along the side of the walking track	€11,778
Rathcline GAA	Development of a wheelchair accessible spectator stand on the club grounds, with access to the disability parking area	€10,800
Killoe Emmet Park GAA	Upgrade of spectator stand	€19,810
Cashel GAA Club	Repurposing of a store-room building connected to the spectator stand and purchasing of equipment to create a community gym facility	€29,164
St Columbas GFC Mullinalaghta	Upgrading of existing flood lighting with energy-efficient led lighting	€15,661

Longford Local Community Safety Partnership (LCSP)

Longford LCSP has been allocated €50,000 by the Department of Justice for a small grants scheme to support the implementation of the Community Safety Partnership. Eligible projects will include activity based or training projects to improve safety or family friendly/pro social events.

A total of 31 expressions of interest being received by the deadline of 8 December. Of these, 23 were deemed in line with the Plan and have been invited to submit a full application.

Healthy Longford

Expressions of Interest (EOI) have been invited from Healthy Longford for funding of up to €2,000 with a deadline of Friday 26 January.

A total of 22 EOIs were received from community groups. Decisions will be made based on community partners who have aligned their EOI to the Healthy Ireland-A Framework for Improved Health and Wellbeing 2013-2025, Healthy Ireland Strategic Action Plan 2021-2025 and Healthy Ireland Outcomes Framework Indicator Set.

Successful groups will be invited to submit a full application for funding.

Tourism

Holiday World 2024

Longford Tourism are attending Holiday World Dublin in the RDS for three days on 26-28 January 2024.

The Holiday World Show is firmly established as Ireland's largest and best attended annual public exhibition, the event is a rich global marketplace for deals and destinations, featuring exhibitors from close to home and from all four corners of the world and presenting just about every style of vacation experience, alongside an array of travel-themed entertainment, complimented by competitions, attractions and special show-only offers.

Longford Tourism will be promoting County Longford as a tourism destination at this event. All maps, booklet, videos will be available to the public over the weekend and a new pocket size calendar for 2024 has been designed and will be available to the public also.

Festival Funding

This fund is partially funded by Fáilte Ireland. It is advertised twice a year for festivals from January to June and from July to December. Round 1 was advertised in November 2023 and Round 2 will be advertised in April 2024.

The aim of the scheme is to support festivals/events driving both domestic and international tourism and to support community/voluntary groups organising a diverse range of projects and events. A maximum of €3,000 per organisation can be received in any one year with a maximum of three events funded.

Four festivals will be funded in Round 1 of this scheme in 2024:

- Longford Lights
- Maria Edgeworth Festival
- Brian Boru
- Granard Booktown

For details on eligibility and how you can apply, see www.longford.ie.



The Battle of Ballinamuck 225th Commemoration supported by the Fáilte Ireland Regional Festival & Participative Events Fund in 2023

Longford Local Sports Partnership

MenoWell Longford

January saw over 100 women begin the second MenoWell programme in Longford.

'MenoWell Longford' is a six-week online evidence-based exercise, nutrition, and health education programme promoting wellness for women in all stages of adult life, with a special focus on perimenopause and post-menopause.



Women aged 30+ years living in Longford. Are you looking for help and support on menopause?

FREE MenoWell

A 6-week online evidence-based exercise, nutrition, and health education programme promoting wellness for women in all stages of life, with a special focus on perimenopause and post-menopause.

WHAT IS INCLUDED?

- 2 LIVE ONLINE WOMEN-SPECIFIC MULTIMODAL EXERCISE CLASSES PER WEEK
- 1 LIVE ONLINE EVIDENCE-BASED HEALTH EDUCATION WORKSHOP PER WEEK FOR WOMEN AGED 30 YEARS+
- AN ON-DEMAND LIBRARY OF SPECIFIC EXERCISE VIDEOS AND NUTRITION RECIPES AS WELL AS RECORDED HEALTH EDUCATION WORKSHOPS

STARTING WEDNESDAY 24TH JANUARY 2024 AT 8PM FOR 6 WEEKS

FOR WOMEN AGED 30+ YEARS LIVING IN COUNTY LONGFORD

If you have any questions, please contact Kiera (085 849 7737) or Ruth (083 374 8262) or email programmes@edufit.ie

Dr Diane Cooper from EduFIT delivered the first health education workshop to MenoWell Longford participants. The topic of the week was 'Muscle Matters in Menopause'. This highlighted just how important it is to do resistance training (also known as strength training).

The 'MenoWell Longford' programme is designed and delivered by EduFIT in partnership with Laois Sports Partnership and funded by Longford Sports Partnership and Sport Ireland.

Walking Programme with the EDI Centre

Longford Sports Partnership are actively addressing the needs of the unemployed and under-employed through an ongoing walking program in collaboration with the EDI Centre.

This program is structured to promote physical well-being by offering a platform for regular physical activity to individuals facing unemployment challenges. The initiative aims to create a supportive environment, encouraging participants to enhance their overall health and well-being through positive and constructive engagement.

Soccer Programmes

The twelve-week soccer program in Edgeworthstown is positively impacting the lives of 15 Roma men and 15 Traveller men. Through soccer, we aim to cultivate teamwork, discipline, and camaraderie, fostering a supportive environment conducive to personal and professional development.

In addition, we are pleased to announce the initiation of a soccer program in Longford Town catering to the needs of 10-15 Traveller men. This initiative is designed to enhance physical fitness, promote social cohesion, and encourage community engagement among the participants.

Longford Local Sports Partnership

MoveWell Programme

The MoveWell Programme is designed for adults with chronic conditions and older adults to exercise in their community. All classes take place in local libraries throughout Longford for eight weeks in duration.

These classes commenced Monday 15 January and will continue until Monday 4 March 2024. There will be five eight week blocks per year.

The two classes in the current programme are StepWell (Falls Prevention) and BeatWell (Cardio step class).

All classes are now full with 150 people enrolled to exercise.



Human Resources

Learning and Development

Longford County Council held a number of training courses during the months of December and January:

- Data Protection training
- Safe Pass
- Performance Management and Development System (PMDS) reviewer and reviewee training
- Flood Risk Management
- Access to Information on the Environment (AIE) training
- Chainsaw Operator (New Entrant)
- Winter Service Operator training
- Abrasive Wheels training

Employee Appreciation Day

On 5 December 2023, Longford County Council held an Employee Appreciation Day thanking all employees for their continued service while focusing on sustaining motivation.

At the event, a number of awards were presented and employees recognised for their achievements, such as:

- Long Service Recognition Awards
- Health and Safety Awards
- Employees who completed third level qualification as part of the Open Learning Scheme
- Employees who completed the Mental Health Champion training course



Human Resources



Christmas get-together for retired employees

A Christmas get together was held for all retired employees of Longford County Council on 12 December 2023 in the Atrium of Áras an Chontae, which gave past and present employees the opportunity to meet and maintain friendships built across so many years.



Information Technology

Technology Infrastructure

The ServiceDesk dealt with 1,115 queries in December and January.

Regular patching of client and server systems continued.

Digital Divide initiative for outdoor staff in progress.

IT support was provided for statutory and Teams hybrid meetings.

DMARC Project commenced.

New OGP laptop and peripherals framework implemented

Security Operations Centre pilot project and Security Information and Event Management project onboarding in progress, in collaboration with the Local Government Management Agency (LGMA).

Security awareness training delivered to all staff.

New network setup and build-out commenced.

Other ongoing technology infrastructure work includes:

- Procurement for annual renewals and hardware replacements/ upgrades
- Mobile phone administration and support
- Support for community CCTV project
- Irish Water transition work progressed with operational data transfer project

Digital Services

The countywide rollout of the Longford Text Alert app and website is ongoing. It sends local people crime prevention text alerts and community notices. Longford Text Alert had an information stand at the Longford Community Safety and Wellbeing Expo.

The Blended Working application is entering its second year and continues to be used by employees.

Customer Relationship Management (CRM) software rollout continues for management of email queries including Meetings Administrator, Media Enquiries, Roads and Human Resources mailboxes migrated along with Ballymahon, Drumlish, Edgeworthstown, Granard and Longford library mailboxes.

A soft launch has commenced unveiling the brand Longford Works through the organisations social media platforms to engage and connect with the audience before an official launch.

Successful Longford Post Primary Tech Champions 2023 event took place in December with three schools and nearly 30 students recognised for their technology work.

The Science, Technology, Engineering, Maths (STEM) Passport for Inclusion initiative has launched. This innovative project is jointly led by Maynooth University, Microsoft Ireland, Science Foundation Ireland (SFI), and the Department of Education.

Information Technology

Town WIFI

The free Town WIFI in Longford, Ballymahon and Drumlish had 2,533 new guests and 1,836 returning guests.

Broadband Connection Points (BCP)

In December and January there have been 31 new guests and 403 returning guests.

Geographic Information Systems (GIS) works completed

- Residential Zoned Land Tax draft map data preparation and upload
- Mobile app development for road drainage and draft road programme.
- Data processing and analysis for the Noise Action Plan
- SQL database migration and consolidation
- GIS in house training

Housing

Capital Housing Update

The Social Housing targets set by the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage under the Housing for All plan of 74 units was achieved by Longford County Council in 2023.

Project	No of Houses	Status
Cranleymore Abbeylara	3	Stage 3 approved. Japanese knotweed herbicide treatment carried out. Second treatment due in April. To be screened and removed in May. Once removed will advertise for main contract.
St Rita's Park Road	12	Stage 2 approval received. Part 8 Planning approved for Phase 1 (6 houses). Japanese knotweed herbicide treatment carried out. Second treatment due in April. To be screened and removed in May. When costs known will submit stage 3. Once JK removed will advertise for main contract. Phase 2 draft plans being prepared.
24 Congress Terrace	2	Substantially Completed in Dec 2023. Awaiting Irish Water connection.
Woodland Path, Keenagh	4	Completed in Dec 2023.
Radharc na Muileann, Lanesborough	20	Stage 1 approved. Stage 2 to be submitted shortly. In discussions with Roads and Planning. Awaiting additional information from consultants.
Drynán, Ballymahon	13	Stage 1 approved. Stage 2 to be submitted shortly. In discussions with Roads and Planning. Awaiting additional information from consultants.
Clough Dillons Keenagh	4	Stage 1 approved. Legal issues to be sorted before can proceed.
Cnoc na Gréine, Granard	6	Stage 1 approved. Stage 2 to be submitted shortly. In discussions with Roads and Planning. Awaiting additional information from consultants.

Housing

Project	No of Houses	Status
2 Woodview, Newtownforbes	2	Completed Q4 2023.
Lamagh, Newtownforbes	6	Stage 2 approved. Road Safety Audit and Noise impact survey carried out. Awaiting Environmental Impact Assessment, Appropriate Assessment Screening and Architectural Heritage Impact Assessment reports. Will then submit for Part 8 planning Q1 2024.
2 Legion Terrace	4	On site, for completion March/April 2024
Richmond Street	23	On site. 18 no. substantially complete. Remaining 5 no. due for completion Q2 2024.
Corneddan, Ballinalee	1	Combined stage 1 and Stage 2 approval received 27 June 2023. Part 8 planning advertised 25 Aug 2023. Part 8 planning approval received. Consultants preparing updated plans and costs for stage 3 submission.
Hourican's Hotel, Granard	4 + incl. parking	Demolition complete. Housing Agency preparing feasibility study for apartments/ town houses and parking. Survey complete, Road safety audit carried out. Awaiting report. Management plan for Japanese knotweed to be prepared. Reviewing options.
Aghaboy, Killoe (Ennybegs)	4	Site purchased with planning permission for 4 no. houses. Surveyed. To prepare preliminary drawings and advertise for consultants.
Casey Court, Keenagh	2	Potential for 2 houses in large corner plot. Surveyed. Cost report received from QS. Drawings to be prepared for stage 1 submission.
Farrell's Ballinalee	4	Turnkey approved. Not started, awaiting contracts.

Housing

Project	No of Houses	Status
Forthill, Aughnacliffe	13	Turnkey approved. 6 no. completed in 2023. Remaining 7 no. to be completed by end of Q1 2024
Longford Road, Ballinalee	14	Turnkey approved.
Abhainn Glas, Edgeworthstown	4	Turnkey approved. Completed Q4 2023.
Cluain Rí, Ballymahon	16	Turnkey approved. On site. 12 completed to date, remaining 4 units to be completed by end of Q1 2024.
Silver Birches, Stonepark	12	Turnkey approved 21 June 2023. Project completed in Dec 2023.
Market Square	2	Turkey approved 27 June 2023. On site. Due for completion Q1 2024.
Colmcille Terrace, Granard Phase 1	19	Stage 4 approved 27 April 2023. On site. 4 no. completed in Q4 2023, remainder Q3 2024.
Colmcille Terrace, Granard Phase 2	7	Under negotiations to purchase.

Vacant Homes Unit

The Vacant Homes Unit remains steadfast in its commitment to Longford’s community revitalization through ongoing initiatives, adhering to the national Vacant Homes Action Plan introduced in July 2022.

CPO and Derelict Sites

The team continues its efforts in the Compulsory Purchase Order (CPO) Activation Program, aiming to swiftly identify and activate vacant and derelict

properties.

Six properties are currently in progress for social housing rehabilitation through this initiative. Four of these units are progressing well through the initiative.

Additionally, proactive measures are being taken to update the Derelict Sites Register (DSR). Notably this year, the imposition of the Derelict Sites Levy on properties listed as derelict in the register aims to incentivize property owners to address dereliction and take necessary actions.

Housing

Vacant Property Refurbishment Grant (Croí Conaithe)

The Vacant Property Refurbishment Grant scheme continues to support the revitalization of properties, offering €50,000 for vacant properties and €70,000 for derelict ones. The scheme extends support to qualifying islands, with increased grant rates.

As of the latest update, the scheme has garnered 108 applications. There have been five withdrawals, three refusals, while three grants have been successfully disbursed. Additionally, there are 19 applications currently in the process of revision, aiming for approval in principle, and 36 applications awaiting further information.

Applications and Assessments

Applications

553 new social housing support applications have been accepted up to the end of 2023.

Currently there are 678 approved housing applicants on our waiting list.

A further 143 are within the assessment process.

New Tenancies

Year end 2023:

- 148 new local authority tenancies have commenced
- 14 applicants have commenced tenancies with Approved Housing

Bodies

- Eleven new Rental Accommodation Scheme (RAS)/leased tenancies have commenced

Works Programme 2023

The 2023 Voids Programme has now concluded. Longford County Council received funding of €1,883,274 for 54 no. approved properties from the Department. This Funding was made available for council properties, with the emphasis of focusing on undertaking minimum refurbishment works to comply with required letting standards.

A total of 56 adaptation projects were undertaken in 2023 to meet the needs of our tenants, for which funding of €532,777 was provided by the Department under the Disabled Persons Grant Scheme.

Summary of Social Housing Assessments (SSHA) 2023

The SSHA was completed at the end of November 2023. Details will be published by the Local Government Management Agency in 2024.

Rent Review

A review of almost 2,400 local authority and leasing tenants is nearing completion. Many tenants will see an increase in their rent due to increased incomes. Old Age Pensioner fixed rent remains at €35.

Housing

Climate Action

In 2023, under the Midlands Retrofit Programme works were completed in three Council estates:

- 19 no. in Glebe View, Ballinalee
- 4 no. on Athlone Road, Longford
- 9 no. in Radharc an Fiache

Funding was also submitted for 20 no. houses from our housing stock, which included three new acquisitions and houses being refurbished through our Preletting Repairs Programme.

Roads

National Road Schemes

Overlay works on a 5km section of the N55 between Carrickboy and Crossea at Meeltanagh are ongoing. The Contractor is Lagan Asphalt and the value of the Contract is approximately €2.5 million.

Current works involve planing of the existing road surface and placing of regulation and binder layers. This work is being carried out under lane closures and will be in progress for a further two weeks.

Placing of the wearing course will require a road closure. The N55 will be closed for three weeks for the wearing course works. Accommodation works will be progressed after the wearing course works are complete under lane closures.

The 2024 Transport Infrastructure Ireland (TII) allocations for national roads are expected to be announced in February.

Municipal District Works

Works on footpaths, drainage, pothole repair and general road maintenance continued in each Municipal District during December and January.

Area Technical Staff are currently preparing the Road Programme for 2024 as well as preparing the necessary Health and Safety Plans.

Annual Procurement Tenders for plant and materials are currently being prepared.

The 2024 allocations for regional and local roads are expected to be announced in February.

Bridge Rehabilitation Works

Due to the dangerous condition of Lissameen Bridge, located about 6km northwest of Edgeworthstown on the L-1065, the Ballinalee to Edgeworthstown road remained closed from the end of September until mid-January.



The bridge had partially collapsed and needed to be rehabilitated. Although the road was closed, local access was maintained either side of the bridge.

The structure consists of a single-span masonry arch bridge over a small tributary of the River Camlin and instream works were necessary to carry out repairs.

Longford County Council in consultation with Inland Fisheries Ireland (IFI) prepared a derogation application to the Department of Environment, Climate and Communications to permit instream works during the closed period (1 October to May 31).

The derogation was granted at the end

Roads

of November and emergency repair works commenced in early December. The works carried out by Triur Construction Limited were completed in mid-January and the road was re-opened.

Training

The Local Authority Services National Training Group (LASNTG) coordinates the delivery and development of training to the best international standards to staff involved in the provision of services including roads.

The Roads Health and Safety Training Plan for 2024 was submitted for approval in November 2023 and we await confirmation of the Longford County Council allocation, which is usually around €34,000 per annum.

The following training/courses were completed in December and January:

- Safe Pass
- Chainsaw Operator (New Entrant)
- Driver CPC Module 3
- Bridges Survey and Maintenance Inspection Course
- Abrasive Wheels
- Winter Service Operator Refresher

Traffic and Paid Parking

Longford County Council's Traffic section has responsibility for enforcement of illegal parking, non-display of valid parking ticket, parking permit or motor tax disc, or failure to

pay the appropriate parking fees in enforceable parking areas.

Two Traffic Wardens are currently assigned to Longford Town to carry out these enforcement duties.

Table below details all fines issues by the Traffic section in 2023:

Offence	Fines Issued Q4 2023	2023 Total
Parking fines	174	790
Non-display of tax	96	540
Breach of Parking Regs. 1997	94	540
TOTAL	364	1,870

Climate Action

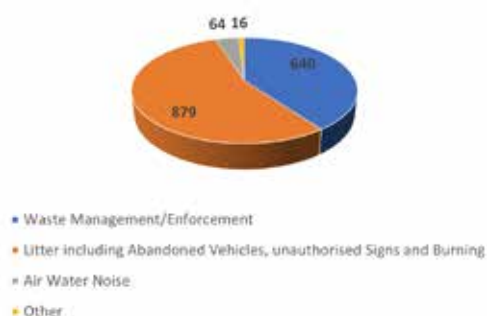
The Roads Department in collaboration with the Longford County Council Climate Action Team have commenced a fleet review with a view to achieving reduced energy usage.

Environment

Litter and Waste

In 2023, Longford County Council processed a total of 1,599 complaints relating to waste, litter, abandoned vehicles, burning, air, water and noise. The level of litter and waste complaints is high for a small county. Most complaints relate to the illegal dumping of household waste, particularly in and around urban areas.

Total Number of Complaints received 1599



To support our communities in dealing with illegal dumping, the Environment section of Longford County Council collected 84 tonnes of waste during 2023 – this is the equivalent of 24 3.5 tonne trucks.

Online Environmental Complaints Form

The Environment section has developed and introduced an online form to simplify the process for members of the public to report environmental complaints. This digitisation contributes to Longford County Council's commitment to openness, transparency and enhanced public engagement.

The form is available via Longford County Council's website at the

following Link: [Online Environmental Complaint Form](#).

Brown bin promotion

Longford County Council's Environment section is preparing a promotional online campaign to encourage all households to request a brown bin service.

Since 1 January 2024, all Irish waste collection companies must provide and arrange collection of brown bins. The brown bin service is for food waste, food-soiled paper products, grass clippings and light garden waste.

Brown bin material is sent for composting or anaerobic digestion. Anaerobic digestion processes food waste into a bio-gas, which in turn is used to generate electricity.



Environment

Deposit Return Scheme (Re-turn)

The national Deposit Return Scheme will go live on 1 February 2024.

When you buy a drink in a plastic bottle, aluminium or steel with the Re-turn logo, you will pay a small deposit in addition to the price of the drink. When you return your empty, undamaged container to any retail outlet that sells drinks with the Re-turn logo, they must accept your empty, undamaged containers and refund your deposit in cash or against other purchases.

The Re-turn scheme is supporting individuals and communities to take effective action to tackle climate change. It is a circular economy initiative, encouraging us to move away from the 'take make and dispose' culture to one of returning valuable materials, and keeping them in the economy for as long as possible.

Domestic Wastewater Treatment Systems - Septic Tank Grant Increase

From 1 January 2024, the grants available for Domestic Wastewater Treatment Systems (WWTS - commonly known as septic tanks) increased from €5,000 to €12,000.

This grant is only available where an existing system fails a wastewater treatment system inspection. The local programme of inspections is allocated in accordance with the National



Environment

Inspection Plan - with the focus being on areas where there is significant risk to groundwater, surface water or human health. There is no open application process and there is no facility for property owners to apply to have a WWTS Inspection.

Multi-Agency Vehicle Check Points



In December 2023, Longford County Council's Waste Enforcement Officers participated in multi-agency vehicle check points to detect and prevent illegal waste activities in Longford.

This was done as part of a range of initiatives to prevent and detect illegal dumping. Multi-agency vehicle check points are set up in collaboration with An Garda Síochána and in consultation with other participating agencies.

Dog Control Services

Longford County Council recently implemented a Dog Rehoming section on the Longford County Council website, with an online application form for members of the public who

are interested in giving a dog a forever home.

Longford County Council is currently running social media campaigns to promote Dog Rehoming and also an awareness campaign in relation to sheep worrying in rural areas.

More information can be found on the Council's Facebook, X, Instagram and TikTok accounts.

Climate Action

Climate Action Plan

Longford County Council's Draft Climate Action Plan was opened up for public consultation up to 29 December 2023.

A Chief Executive report on the results of the public consultation has been prepared and will be presented to the members of the Council for adoption at the February Meeting.

Community Climate Action Fund

The Community Climate Action Fund opened for applications on 8 December, with a closing date of 29 February 2024.

Our Community Climate Action Officer has engaged extensively with Councillors, staff and the public to encourage successful submissions.

Electric Vehicle (EV) Chargers

Longford County Council have arranged the installation of an EV

Environment

charger at the Dog Pound to support the provision of an electric van which has been provided by the Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland (SEAI) to the Council on a three month trial. The vehicle is being used by the Community Warden.

Longford County Council is awaiting delivery of an electric van for Dog Warden services.

Work is continuing with the installation of EV chargers around the county, with installations completed in Ballymahon, Lanesborough and Longford Town (Ballymahon Street Carpark).

We are working towards having these chargers in operation before the end of Q1 2024. Work is due to commence shortly on installation of EV charges in

Granard and Longford Town (Shopping Centre Carpark).

Biodiversity

The Climate Action Team of Longford County Council has commenced work on establishing a Biodiversity Forum. The Biodiversity Forum will consist of relevant stakeholders, local representatives and staff as a prelude to developing Longford County Council's Biodiversity Plan.



Civil Defence



Duties

Civil Defence provided medical response cover at five events during December and January.

These included:

- Shane Brennan 5K Run
- Ardagh Challenge 10 Mile and 5K Run
- Irish Blood Transfusion Board blood bank clinic (x3)

Training and Operations

Five volunteers successfully completed their First Aid Responder (FAR) course.

A statutory inspection of the vehicle fleet was carried out.

A winter ready plan was prepared.

Emergency supplies were delivered to

Ukrainian families.

Emergency Medical Technicians (EMT) completed their upskilling training programme.

Weekly training resumed in January for all volunteers.

Four volunteers completed Manual Handling training.

Four new recruits are undergoing Garda vetting and induction training.

Climate Action

Roads

The Roads Department in collaboration with the Longford County Council Climate Action Team have commenced a fleet review with a view to achieving reduced energy usage.

- St Marys Street, Drumlish
- Lanesborough carpark

Work will commence in Tesco carpark, Longford, and Granard carpark early next year.

Housing

Under the Midland Retrofit Programme, 32 units were completed up to the end of November 2023.

Under the Voids programme works, 34 properties completed this year have met the criteria for the Energy Efficiency programme and have been submitted funding.

Community Climate Action Programme

Longford County Council will soon be accepting applications under the Community Climate Action Programme for projects which can help shape and build low carbon communities. Projects should seek to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, increase the production of renewable energy, and improve energy efficiency. Also welcome are nature-based projects that enhance biodiversity and support climate resilience.

Environment

Draft Climate Action Plan

The public consultation for Longford County Council's Draft Climate Action Plan started on the 10 November 2023. The Plan is currently available on Longford County Council's website, where details can be found on how to make a submission. Closing date for receipt of submissions is 29 December 2023.

Installation of EV charging stations

The installation of EV charging stations has commenced with works underway at:

- Ballymahon Street carpark, Longford
- Riverside carpark, Ballymahon

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People • Place • Opportunity

Management Report for January 2024 prepared in accordance with Sec 136 (2) of the Local Government Act 2001, as inserted by Section 51 the Local Government Reform Act 2014. The report outlines key aspects of our service delivery and performance in January 2024 in securing the objectives set out in the Council's Corporate Plan.

Signed: 
Paddy Mahon
Chief Executive

