



LONGFORD
COUNTY COUNCIL
Annual Report 2012

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INTRODUCTION



Sean Farrell, Mayor



Tim Caffrey, County Manager

We are very pleased to present the Annual Report of Longford County Council for 2012. The Annual Report provides an opportunity to outline the activities and the Council's performance during the year.

This year's Annual Report is presented in the context of another financially challenging year, with drastic reductions in funding for the National and Regional Roads Programmes, further reductions in funding from Central Government and a continuing difficult economic environment, presenting challenges for Longford County Council to deliver and maintain services with fewer staff and greatly reduced income.

Notwithstanding challenges faced, we are pleased that during the year, progress continued to be made in advancing and completing a number of important infrastructural projects including:

- » The opening of the new Longford N5 Bypass in August 2012.
- » Progression of Lanesboro Fire Station to Tender Stage.
- » Construction work on provision of 5 new Wastewater Treatment Plants for the villages of Ardagh, Aughnacliffe and Ballinalee and upgrades to existing plants in Drumlish and Newtownforbes.
- » Substantial completion of the Water Conservation Stage 3 Watermains Rehabilitation Project Phase 1 Project.
- » Completion of construction works on Annagh and Glenoghill Group Water Schemes.
- » Ongoing improvement and maintenance works to local and regional roads under the Restoration programme.
- » Supporting Abbeyshrule in winning the National Tidy Towns Competition and the European Entente Florale Award.

Civic Receptions were held during the year in conjunction with the Titanic Centenary Commemoration and to acknowledge Longford's success in the National Ploughing Championships. Following the October monthly meeting which was held in Abbeyshrule, a civic reception also took place in honour of the Abbeyshrule Tidy Towns Committee.

The achievements outlined in this Annual Report could not have been accomplished without the commitment and co-operation of the Elected Members, Chairpersons and Members of the Strategic Policy Committees, the Corporate Policy Committee, Area Committees, Management and Employees and we would like to acknowledge their contribution and work during the year.

Sean Farrell, Mayor

Tim Caffrey, County Manager

MEMBERS OF LONGFORD COUNTY COUNCIL



BALLYMAHON MEMBERS



Larry Bannon



Paddy Belton



Mick Cahill



BALLYMAHON



Barney Steele



Sean Farrell



Mark Casey

DRUMLISH MEMBERS



John Duffy



Gerry Brady



DRUMLISH



Luie McEntire



Martin Mulleady

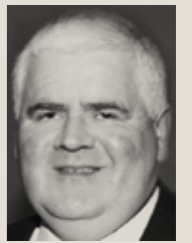
GRANARD MEMBERS



GRANARD



Micheál Carrigy



P.J. Reilly



Frank Kilbride



Thomas Victory

LONGFORD MEMBERS



LONGFORD



John Browne



Denis Glennon



Mae Sexton



Padraig Loughrey



Paul Connell



Peggy Nolan



Victor Kiernan



Cllr. John Duffy,
Chairperson of Transportation SPC



Cllr. Paddy Belton, Chairperson of Water
Services & Environmental SPC



Mr. Jack Kilgallen
Director of Services

INFRASTRUCTURE, ENVIRONMENTAL & EMERGENCY SERVICES

ROAD SAFETY, ROADS & TRANSPORT

Core Objective: “Ensure that infrastructural transportation policies and investments assist and enhance the economic and social development of County Longford and preserve and improve the physical attractiveness of the county and its background environment”.

Longford is strategically located near the centre of Ireland and is traversed by National Primary Routes N4 and N5 and National Secondary Routes N55 and N63. These routes give rise to significant traffic flows throughout the county.

Fundamental to the proper development of County Longford is a requirement that the road network meets current and projected traffic volume and safety requirements. Strengthening economic activity requires the support of a good quality road network. It is recognised that for Longford to benefit effectively from this growth in industry, agriculture and tourism and the attractions of its lakes, rivers and scenic beauty, the road network and particularly our regional and county roads must be of an appropriate standard, inviting and safe for visitor and locals alike.

Except for a limited number of public roads under the authority of Longford Town Council, Longford County Council is responsible for the provision, improvement and maintenance of the public road network within the county. Currently the breakdown of roads under the authority of the County Council is as follows:

CLASSIFICATION	NATIONAL PRIMARY	REGIONAL	LOCAL	TOTAL
North Area (km)	36.004	59.910	712.512	808.426
Mid Area (km)	41.816	45.365	249.739	336.920
South Area (km)	25.319	50.201	377.404	452.924
Total Kilometres	103.139	155.476	1339.655	1598.270

During 2012, 54.423Km of Local & Regional roads were improved and maintained under the Restoration Programme. Specific Improvement Grant works were carried out at Stonepark, Mullagh Bridge, Derrycolumb Bridge and Aughtnaclyffe Bridge.

Finances available to the Council in 2012 were as follows:

1. NATIONAL ROADS (NATIONAL ROADS AUTHORITY GRANTS)

Major Planning & Closeout	€4,450,000
Other Improvement Works	€ 940,000
Safety Measures	€ 74,000
Bridges	€ 600,000
Maintenance	€432,312
Total:	€6,496,312

2. NON-NATIONAL ROADS (DEPT. OF ENVIRONMENT, COMMUNITY & LOCAL GOVERNMENT GRANTS)

Specific Improvement Works	€450,000
Restoration Improvement Works	€2,750,762
Restoration Maintenance Works	€988,000
Discretionary Maintenance Works	€908,780
Low-cost Safety Improvement Works	€105,100
Local Improvement Schemes	-
Winter Maintenance	€122,885
Training Programme	€24,000
Total:	€5,349,527

3. NON-NATIONAL ROADS (COUNCIL CONTRIBUTION)	€844,591
Total Budget:	€6,194,118

N5 LONGFORD TOWN BYPASS

After years of planning and 16 months of construction, The N5 Longford Bypass opened on Friday 3rd August 2012. The main Contractor was Wills Bros. Ltd. from Foxford, Co. Mayo. The bypass is 2.6km long and road users will now save up to 25 minutes on journeys by using the bypass. The project which was completed 2 months ahead of schedule had a construction cost of approximately €8 million.

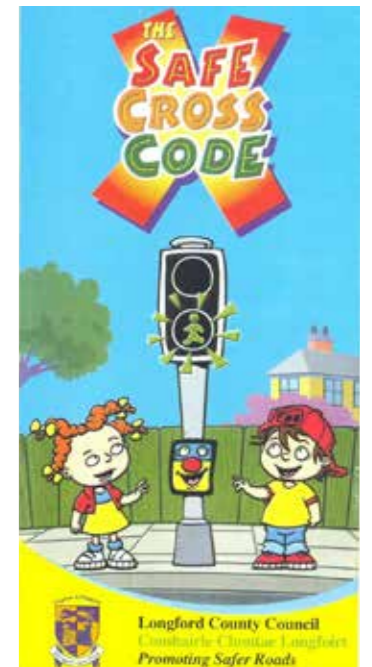
The new road brings improved safety for motorists and removes tailbacks and congestion from Longford Town.



ROAD SAFETY PROMOTION & SCHOOL WARDEN SERVICE

The Road Safety role of local authorities is wide and ranges from Road Construction to Safety Promotion to School Warden Schemes. The Local Authority now has an expanded role in promoting road safety by developing more initiatives at local level such as:

- » Longford Road Safety Working Together Committee which meets on a quarterly basis. Agencies involved are the National Roads Authority, Road Safety Authority, Health Service Executive, Longford County Council Sports Co-Ordinator, An Garda Síochána, Longford County Council Road Safety Officer, Longford County Childcare Member, Councillor Mark Casey and Members of Longford Fire Services.
- » In conjunction with the Sports Facilitator and Green Schools a Safer Cycle Initiative was introduced to a number of National and Secondary Schools throughout the county in the months of May, June and September 2012. Cycle training was provided in St. Mary's National School, Drumligh, St. Joseph's National School, Longford, Scoil Mhuire National School, Newtownforbes, Templemichael College, Longford and Lanesboro Community School.
- » Co-ordination with the Road Safety Authority – advertising, promotions, and media campaigns.
- » StreetSmart is a new initiative from the Road Safety Authority which aims to bring issues of road safety to life for young school children. StreetSmart was launched in St. Mary's National School, Drumligh in April 2012.
- » Promotion of "Safe Cross Code".
- » Promotion of Beep Beep Day at all Childcare Facilities in County Longford in October 2012.
- » Promotion of Road Safety in Secondary Schools through the "Drive for Life Programme" from January 2012 to December 2012.
- » The Junior School Warden Service is designed to provide safe crossing facilities for children in the vicinity of primary schools in provincial towns and villages. The Roscommon/Longford/Westmeath Regional Final was held at St. Etchen's National School Kinnegad, Co. Westmeath this year and 15 schools participated in the event. Scoil Mhuire National School, Newtownforbes won the Regional School Warden Competition 2012. Longford County Council has three Schemes in operation at Scoil Mhuire National School, Newtownforbes, Melview National School and St. Mary's National School, Drumligh. An adult warden is provided at Lanesboro National School.
- » Longford County Council, Health Service Executive and An Garda Síochána launched a Road Safety Initiative "Keep you and your Family Safe on the Roads". This launch took place in September 2012 and leaflets were distributed to all Creches and Primary Schools in the county.
- » Under-age Colouring Competition in Longford Leader in conjunction with the HSE.
- » Promotion with iRadio "I is the Limited" Anti Speed Campaign.
- » Road Safety awareness was promoted in National Schools throughout the county.



NATIONAL BIKE WEEK

In conjunction with the Sports Co-ordinator and the Environmental Awareness Officer the National Bike Week was launched and ran from 16th to 24th June 2012. Longford County Council celebrated the initiative with a Bike to School Day and a Bike to Work Day.

Primary schools throughout the county were invited to Bike to School on Wednesday, 20th June and a total of 80 pupils participated from three local primary schools. Children received cycle packs including reflective clothing and lights as part of the day.

For the third year running staff from Longford County Council took part in a Bike to Work Day on Wednesday, 20th June 2012. Offering an alternative form of commuting to work, staff from the Council and other local businesses took part in a lunchtime spin around the bypass reporting the initiative as "a great idea".

WATER SERVICES

Core Objective: “To provide, improve and maintain the necessary water and wastewater infrastructure throughout the County to ensure an adequate supply of good quality water and to maximise the protection of the environment in order to promote the social and economic development of the county.”

WATER SERVICES INFRASTRUCTURE OPERATIONS

In County Longford there are 1230kms of water main supplied by five Regional Water Schemes namely: Ballymahon, Lough Gowna, Lanesboro/Newtowncashel, Longford Central and Granard. It is estimated that more than 87% of the counties population receives a piped water supply treated by Longford County Council Water Treatment Plants.

Drinking Water Quality is monitored by the Health Services Executive on an agency basis for Longford County Council in accordance with the current Regulations, which include Drinking Water Regulations, 2007-S.I. No. 278 and the Water Services Act, 2007. Under the Drinking Water Regulations, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is the supervising authority for Public Water Supplies. Local Authorities must report any non-compliance to the EPA immediately and may be directed to develop and implement Action Plans under direction from the EPA. In addition Longford County Council is the supervising authority for Group Water Schemes (GWS) and Small Private Supplies (SPS). These requirements have greatly increased the responsibility level and regulatory role for Longford County Council.

There are eleven Public Sewerage Schemes in the county: Ballymahon, Kenagh, Lanesboro, Longford, Newtownforbes, Drumlish, Granard, Edgeworthstown, Legan, Abbeyshrule, and Clondra. A further 3 schemes commenced construction in 2012 at Ballinalee, Ardagh and Aughnacliffe. Discharges from the Treatment Plants are sampled and monitored by Longford County Council. Under the Waste Water Discharge (Authorisation) Regulations 2007, all Water Services Authorities' sewerage discharges require licences or Certificates of Authorisation (COA) depending on their size from the EPA. These licences and COA requirements have placed a very significant compliance responsibility on Longford County Council.

WATER SERVICES CAPITAL INVESTMENT PROGRAMME

Longford County Council continued to progress the Water Services Investment Programme (WSIP) 2010 – 2013. The following are main achievements of this programme in 2012.

Granard/Ballymahon Regional Water Supply Scheme

Works on upgrading the network and treatment plants at Granard and Ballymahon Schemes commenced in mid 2011. Substantial completion of the main works was achieved in 2012 and following Bord Pleanala approval an upgrade to the intake works at Lough Kinale, Granard will be completed in 2013.

Longford Central Regional Water Supply Scheme: Contract 3 – Pipelines & Reservoirs

The Contract provides for the construction of a 5,000m³ reservoir at Prucklish, a 750m³ reservoir at Lisnanagh, a new 5km main between Lough Forbes WTP and Prucklish Reservoir, a 4.8km main between Prucklish Reservoir and Drumlish and a 2.4km main between Glannagh and Lisnanagh Reservoir.

Longford Towns & Villages Sewerage - Wastewater Treatment Plant: DBO Contract

This Contract provides for the design, supply, construction, installation, testing and commissioning of new Wastewater Treatment Plants for the villages of Ardagh, Aughnacliffe and Ballinalee and upgrade existing Plants in Drumlish and Newtownforbes. Construction Work on the provision of the 5 new plants through a Design Build Operate (DBO) Contract commenced in 2012 with substantial completion expected by the end of 2013. In addition Lanesborough Waste Water project has been included as part of the Roscommon County Council 16 Village DBO Sewerage Scheme which has an expected completion by early 2013.

Water Conservation Stage 3 Watermains Rehabilitation Project Phase 1

This Water Mains Rehabilitation contract commenced in Longford Town in early 2011 and was substantially completed in 2012. These works have assisted in significantly reducing the unaccounted for water (UFW) within the Longford Town network. Further pipelines rehab programmes are planned for other areas of the county following completion of the Longford Town Project.

LONGFORD SEWERAGE SCHEME

It is expected that the Preliminary Report for the Longford Town Sewerage Scheme which will provide for the assessment of wastewater collection, treatment and disposal needs for Longford town's requirements over the next 20 years will be progressed in 2013 following the commencement of the procurement process for consultants in 2012.

WATER CONSERVATION

The 2012 local authority Unaccounted for Water (UFW) service indicator although at a relatively high figure of 47.6% shows an improvement of 1.1% on the 2011 figure. A monthly profile of the UFW for 2011/12 as outlined in Figure No. 1 shows a consistent improving trend. This improving UFW trend has had the added benefit of allowed the total overall production of water to be reduced by 5% in 2012.

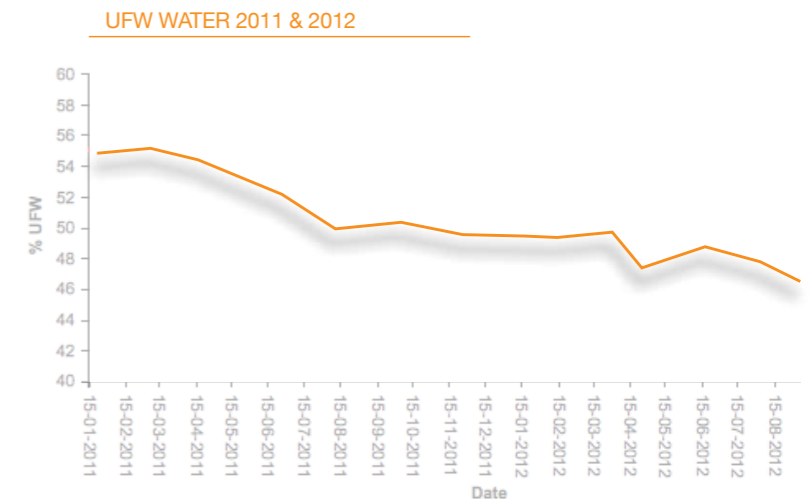


Figure No. 1

RURAL WATER PROGRAMME

GROUP WATER/SEWERAGE SCHEMES

In March 2012, the DoECLG advised Longford County Council of a Block Grant Allocation of €164,000 for the year 2012 for New Group Water Schemes and Takeover of Group Water Schemes.

Construction works were completed on two New Group Water Schemes in 2012, namely, Annagh GWS and Glenoghill GWS.

Works were carried out on the following Schemes to progress the Local Authority taking over the Scheme:- Stonepark GWS, Gaigne GWS, Esker/Cloncowley GWS, Freehalman/Clonahard GWS, Cartron GWS, Cloonmacart GWS, Clonellan GWS, Ballagh GWS, Bunlaghy/Shannagh GWS, Drumhaldry Hill GWS, Lisduff/Trillick GWS, Legan GWS, Rathvaldron GWS and Moydow/Keel GWS.

The Longford Rural Water Monitoring Committee met twice during 2012 to review progress on the implementation of the Rural Water Programme. The Committee was advised on the current work programme and commitments under the various measures. The take-over of Group Water Schemes, in particular, orphaned schemes was discussed as was the proposals for increased grants for new Group Sewerage Schemes.

Longford County Council formally approved the takeover of 2 no. group water schemes at its meeting of 18th January 2012.

Longford County Council received further notifications of Block Grant Allocations during 2012 and by 31st December 2012, a total of €224,275 was paid by the DoECLG for New Group Water Schemes and Takeover of Group Water Schemes.

The Council submitted proposals to the DoECLG for Block Grant funding for 2013 totalling €1.9 million under the Rural Water Programme in respect of new Group Sewerage Schemes, as well as Group Water Scheme upgrades and proposals for taking group water schemes in charge.

SMALL PUBLIC WATER AND SEWERAGE SCHEMES

In March 2012, Longford County Council was advised that the Block Grant Allocation under the Rural Water Programme Small Schemes measure was €226,000.

Substantial works were carried out in 2012 under this measure. Work was completed on the construction of new Waste Water Treatment Plants in Legan and Keenagh. Works were carried out on the Keenagh Waste Water Network to identify locations where surface water was entering the Network and decommissioning works were carried out on the old plants at Legan and Keenagh.

Upgrade works were carried out on Ballinamuck Sewerage Treatment Plant, Longford RWWS, Ballymahon WWTP, Longford WWS and Townspark Pumpstation to reduce energy costs and improve treated effluent quality.

Works were carried out on Glannagh Pumphouse, Lough Forbes, Abbeyshrute, Smear & Lanesboro WTP's to improve efficiency and to comply with HSA & EPA requirements. Work continues at Newtowncashel spring well supply in order to lift the present boil water notice.

Longford County Council received notification of further Block Grant Allocations during 2012 and by 31st December 2012, a total of €675,172 was paid by DoECLG for Small Schemes.

The Council submitted proposals to the Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government for Block Grant funding for 2013 totalling €2.2 million in respect of Small Public Water & Sewerage Schemes.

GROUP WATER SCHEME SUBSIDIES AND INDIVIDUAL WELL GRANTS

Longford County Council processed five applications for subsidies towards the operational costs of group water schemes. The total amount paid out was €20,233.99.

Nine applications were received for grants for individual water supplies. Approval was given for seven applications and two applications were refused. Grant payments totalling €17,765.73 were made to nine individuals.

ENVIRONMENT

This section covers a diverse range of functions and services. The principal areas are:

**POLLUTION CONTROL AND WATER QUALITY
MANAGEMENT**
LITTER MANAGEMENT AND STREET CLEANING
WASTE MANAGEMENT AND REGULATION
ENVIRONMENTAL AWARENESS
BURIAL GROUNDS
VETERINARY SERVICES AND FOOD SAFETY
DOG CONTROL
FIRE AND EMERGENCY SERVICES
CIVIL DEFENCE



POLLUTION CONTROL AND WATER QUALITY MANAGEMENT

Pollution control legislation covers areas such as water pollution, air pollution and noise nuisance. Specific activities undertaken in relation to pollution control include investigation of water pollution incidents, licensing of discharges to waters and the implementation of a monitoring programme for rivers, lakes and closed landfills.

RIVER BASIN MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS

The EU Water Framework Directive was transposed into Irish law by the European Community (Water Policy) Regulations, 2003 under which a number of River Basin Districts were established. Longford is involved in both the North Western River Basin District and the Shannon International River Basin District.

An overall objective has been set which is intended to result in a progressive improvement of water quality over the period to 2015. The aim is that by 2015 the quality of all waterways will at a minimum have to be categorised as being good. Monitoring programmes have been developed to categorise the current quality of water in rivers and lakes. Over time it will be possible to measure improvements that occur in water quality. River Basin Management Plans were drawn up for both the River Basin Districts with which Longford has an involvement and these plans were adopted by Longford County Council in 2010.

ENVIRONMENTAL LABORATORY

The County Council Environment Laboratory is located at Park Road, Longford. The principal areas of activity are:

- » Water Pollution monitoring and control
- » Monitoring discharges from Council Wastewater Treatment plants
- » Landfill monitoring
- » Monitoring industrial effluent discharges
- » Water Quality Monitoring in rivers and lakes

LITTER MANAGEMENT

Enforcement of the Litter Pollution Act, 1997 – 2009 is one of the key mechanisms in tackling the litter pollution problem in County Longford. Litter Control is conducted primarily by the Council's Litter Wardens assisted by the Longford Town Council's Litter/ Traffic Wardens.

The Council works closely with local Tidy Towns Committees and acknowledges the great work being done by them throughout the county. Abbeyshrule village winning both national and international recognition last year shows how much can be achieved through joint effort.

The Council continues to prosecute litter offenders and to seek full cost recovery where cases proceed to court.

STREET SWEEPING

The Council continued its regular programme of street sweeping and servicing of litter bins in the county's towns and villages in accordance with the County Longford Litter Management Plan. The budget for this service in 2012 was €300,000.

WASTE MANAGEMENT

WASTE MANAGEMENT PLAN 2005–2010

The Midlands Waste Management Plan 2005-2010, as adopted, sets out a framework for the sustainable management of waste within five Local Authority areas (Offaly, Laois, Longford, Westmeath and North Tipperary). In addition, local authorities must take account of the National Hazardous Waste Management Plan in the implementation and revision of regional and local Waste Management Plans.

PROVISION OF FACILITIES

There are currently 26 bring bank sites in County Longford. Green, brown and clear glasses as well as aluminium cans are accepted at all sites. During 2012, safety considerations regarding overhead power lines led to the closure of one site and necessitated the relocation of some other facilities. Collection tonnages remained steady throughout 2012 with 639 tonnes of glass and 15 tonnes of aluminium cans collected for re-processing.

ENFORCEMENT

Local authorities have a wide range of statutory functions under national and European waste legislation. The work of the local authority waste enforcement team includes investigating illegal dumping incidents, taking prosecutions and enforcement measures, enforcing producer responsibility regulations for a wide range of wastes (incl. Electrical and Electronic Equipment, Batteries, End-of-life Vehicles, Tyres, Packaging, Food Waste, Farm Plastic and Construction & Demolition Wastes). During 2012, 1,467 waste and litter complaints were investigated of which 1,359 were resolved during the year. In excess of 1,600 routine litter patrols/investigations were carried out.

In addition, local authorities permit and regulate waste facilities, ensure the authorised collection and transport of wastes in their functional areas, appraise planning applications in relation to waste management proposals, oversee the management of wastes in the construction and business sectors and administer waste compliance schemes (e.g. Packaging). Environmental inspections must be carried out in accordance with the local authority's annual inspection plan and a mandatory reporting regime to the EPA is in place for all environmental inspections and the environmental inspection plan. Local authorities also have significant reporting obligations and must compile and verify an annual inventory of all waste data for their functional areas for submission to the EPA each year.

Local authorities must comply with the European Communities (Access to Information on the Environment) Regulations, 2007. Subject to certain exceptions, information relating to the environment held by, or for, a public authority must be made available on request to any person. Advice and guidance on waste management is provided to members of the public upon request.

A considerable proportion of the work done in waste enforcement sections of local authorities assists the Government in avoiding significant financial sanctions by the EU.

Longford County Council's "Enforcement Policy on Illegal Waste Activity" can be viewed on the Council's website at www.longfordcoco.ie

The Council operates a "Litter Complaints Hotline". Anyone observing the illegal dumping of waste may report the matter, in confidence, by calling 1850 434 450.

ENVIRONMENTAL AWARENESS

This aspect of the department's work includes:

- » National Spring Clean
- » National Tree Week
- » Large Goods and Hazardous Waste Collections
- » Green Schools
- » Green Christmas



NATIONAL SPRING CLEAN

Thirty eight groups and schools took part in National Spring Clean 2012 in County Longford. Approximately 2.74 tonnes of litter and waste was collected. Litter pickers, gloves, bibs and colour-coded bags were provided for the community clean-ups.

NATIONAL TREE WEEK

March 4th to 10th was designated National Tree Week during which the Council, Coillte and the Tree Council of Ireland offered Community Groups, Schools and other organisations in the county the opportunity to obtain young trees for their school or community free of charge. Over 400 free saplings were given out during this week.

LARGE GOODS/HAZARDOUS WASTE COLLECTIONS

Three general large goods collections and one waste paint collection were held in 2012. General and recyclable waste amounted to 3.78 tonnes while 1.224 tonnes of waste paint were collected.

GREEN SCHOOLS

Longford was once again very successful in increasing activity in Green Schools. The participation of schools in the programme increased with 99% of national schools and 100% secondary schools registered at the end of 2012. During 2012 five new schools were awarded the Green Flag and 14 more schools renewed their flags. This brings the total number of schools with Green Flags in County Longford to 34.

GREEN CHRISTMAS

The Council provides a central drop-off point in Longford where householders can deposit their trees for shredding free of charge.

ANTI-LITTER AWARENESS GRANTS

This scheme continued in 2012 with a grant of €18,000 received from the Department of the Environment. Additional funding of €10,000 was received from the Tourism Grant aimed at cleaning up litter black spots and improving the infrastructure of tourist amenities around the county.

The Anti-Litter and Anti-Graffiti Awareness Grants are used to support clean-up initiatives, fund advertising campaigns and school recycling projects and provide materials support to local community clean-up initiatives.

LOCAL AGENDA 21 ENVIRONMENTAL PARTNERSHIP FUND

The Council received an initial allocation of €5,500 under this scheme and also secured additional funding of €1,700 later in the year. The Council provides matching funds to support innovative, community-based environmental projects.

BURIAL GROUNDS

Routine cemetery maintenance is largely carried out by Rural Social Scheme staff and local cemetery committee volunteers. Longford County Council makes a direct contribution to Longford Community Resources Ltd, who oversee the Rural Social Scheme. The Council also operates a cemetery support scheme under which local groups undertaking cemetery maintenance receive a grant from the Local Authority.

VETERINARY SERVICES, FOOD SAFETY AND ANIMAL CONTROL

The Veterinary Section of Longford County Council services a contract between the Council and the Food Safety Authority of Ireland with regard to food safety and veterinary public health issues.

The small slaughterhouses and low throughput meat manufacturing establishments in the county are statutorily supervised with a view to ensuring that there is full compliance with food safety legislation.

Locally produced cattle and sheep, pigs, goats and poultry were processed in small local slaughterhouses in County Longford in 2012. Each animal that was slaughtered was ante-mortem and post-mortem inspected by a Veterinary Inspector. A sampling programme which is intended to detect harmful substances such as chemicals and hormones in meat is carried out.

The Local Authority Veterinary Service ensures that animal health and welfare is maintained in accordance with legislative provisions.

During 2012, the low throughput meat manufacturing establishments and slaughterhouses in County Longford continued to work to EU approved standards. The meat products produced in the county are under Official Veterinary controls and are of high quality. The Local Authority Veterinary Service regulates and at the same time affords appropriate flexibility to low throughput premises. While there are changes occurring on an ongoing basis within premises, the level of activity is being maintained and new entrants are encouraged to consult with our service and to become involved in the sector.

The year 2012 also saw plans for an increase in poultry slaughtering in Local Authority supervised abattoirs in the county. This will help the sector to increase the amount of processing in County Longford and is in keeping with our Corporate Plan for promoting enterprise and development in this important area of commercial activity. Longford previously ensured inclusion for its local abattoirs in the LEADER supported branding and marketing pilot programme for locally produced beef and lamb in the North-West.

Continuing Professional Development and training in food safety and animal health and welfare continued in 2012 and the Veterinary Service initiated an Internal Audit System.

Activities relating to the disposal of Animal By-Product continued to be an important area of work in 2012.

Meetings of the Regional Zoonosis Committee provide the forum for formal liaison between Longford County Council Veterinary Public Health Service and other agencies e.g. Department of Agriculture and HSE.

DOG CONTROL

Longford County Council provides a full-time Dog Control Service in County Longford. The Council employs a Dog Warden and operates a Dog Shelter at Little Water Street in Longford town. Fees are charged for the accommodation of impounded animals. The Service dealt with 497 cases of unwanted/stray dogs in 2012, an increase of 30 cases on the previous year. Of these, 46 were re-homed, 53 were reclaimed by their owners, 312 were transferred to dog welfare groups and 78 were put to sleep. There were 43 dogs, classified as restricted breeds, impounded by Longford County Council in 2012. In many cases, the dogs which were re-homed were selected by their new owners with the aid of the Council's "Save a Dog" web page which can be accessed at www.longfordcoco.ie and is linked to Facebook.

Longford County Council had a very significant reduction in the number of dogs put to sleep in Longford Dog Pound in 2012. This is as a result of the strategic plan implemented by the Dog Control Service assisted by other stakeholders and volunteers.

In order to combat the problem of unwanted dogs, Longford County Council continues to advocate responsible animal ownership through education and awareness and operates a scheme for subsidised neutering for dogs and it has also formed a strategic alliance with Dogs Trust. Inspections of Dog Breeding Establishments commenced in 2012 under the Dog Breeding Establishment Act.

In 2012, 1,881 individual Dog Licences were issued. Longford County Council continued to promote the need for owners of dogs to purchase a Dog Licence. Currently a Dog Licence costs €20 and can be purchased from any Post Office. Purchasing a Dog Licence is an important aspect of responsible dog ownership. Since January 2012, dog owners may purchase a "Lifetime of Dog" licence at a one-off cost of €140. These are available only from the Environment Section of Longford County Council.

HORSE CONTROL

Longford County Council dealt with 23 cases of horses found stray and wandering in 2012. Draft bye-laws were prepared during the year and made available for public consultation from November 9th to December 10th inclusive. The bye-laws are intended to regularise detention and disposal requirements as per Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine, as well as controlling access and activities of horses in public places.

OVERVIEW OF ENERGY USAGE

As a local authority which provides services across a broad spectrum of activities, Longford County Council is a significant energy consumer. Some of the more significant activities which involve the consumption of energy are the operation of the Council's Public Water Supplies and Waste Water Treatment Systems, the provision of public lighting and the operation of the Council's various offices. The operation of the Longford Leisure Centre and the Public Library network also involve the use of large amounts of electricity and other fuels. The operation of the Fire Service and the operation of the Council's vehicle fleet also results in the use of large volumes of fuels and oils.

ACTIONS UNDERTAKEN

In 2012, Longford County Council undertook a range of initiatives to improve energy performance in relation to its activities. An Energy Management Committee was established which includes representatives from all Departments within the Council. The provision of training for the committee members commenced. A number of audits were undertaken at various locations in order to establish baseline figures for energy consumption. In a number of cases, steps were taken which have resulted in a reduction in the amount of energy being consumed.

The range of activities that the Council is involved in and the complex nature of billing systems and recording systems makes it difficult to quantify consumption and the savings that have been achieved to date. Efforts are being made to improve the methods of recording data which it is hoped will result in it being possible to provide appropriate data in respect of energy consumption in the future.

FIRE & EMERGENCY SERVICES

The Fire and Rescue Service has stations in Ballymahon, Edgeworthstown, Granard, Lanesboro and Longford.

These stations are manned by 48 retained fire-fighters who respond to both fire and rescue incidents. The Fire Department was active in promoting fire safety throughout the year.

The Fire Department assessed Fire Safety Certificates, Planning Applications and Court Licence Application Referrals. Fire Safety Inspections of commercial premises were also carried out.

The new Lanesboro fire station went out to tender in 2012. We are currently awaiting approval from the Department of Environment, Community and Local Government to proceed to award this contract. If approval to construct is sanctioned, the project will proceed in 2013.

Minister Phil Hogan, Department of Environment, Community and Local Government officially opened the new Edgeworthstown Fire Station in March 2012.

In March, members of the Longford Town Fire Brigade took part in the Fourth Rescue Organisation Ireland National Challenge Competition and finished in 3rd place in the overall competition.

Longford Fire Service was sanctioned approval for a new Class B appliance as part of a shared procurement process with Kildare and Wicklow Fire Services. This appliance will be located in Edgeworthstown Fire Station. The Tendering Process has been completed and this vehicle will be delivered in March 2013.

CIVIL DEFENCE

Civil Defence is part of a global organisation with the primary role of saving lives and the alleviation of suffering in time of war while its peacetime role is to assist at natural disasters and man-made accidents. At local level, Civil Defence is responsible for the recruitment and training of volunteers and the provision of training centres in the community.

The main activities, programmes, events and developments during 2012 were:

- » A number of First Aid courses were run during the year including BLS/AED (Basic Life Support/Automated External Defibrillation), CFR (Cardiac First Response), CFR Advanced, OFA (Occupational First Aid), EFR (Emergency First Response) and Basic Community First Aid Courses for members of the public, new recruits and existing members.
- » 12 people passed a National Water Awareness Course which took place in Dublin in March.
- » 4 members passed the new People Moving/Manual Course in October.
- » 5 members qualified to Emergency First Responder level in the CD College, Roscrea in October.
- » 3 Radio, Search, First Aid and Rescue Exercises were held during May and July in preparation for the Regional Exercise.
- » The Longford team won the Regional Exercise in September, hosted by Westmeath Civil Defence and included teams from Dublin, Kildare, Offaly and Sligo.
- » The Civil Defence boat crew took part in the annual training seminar in Sligo in connection with avian flu. Further boat training was carried out locally.
- » Radio and Search Training continued with members of the Warden Service.
- » Civil Defence assistance was provided at over 40 local community and sporting events.
- » Work commenced to convert one of our vehicles to a Control/Welfare Unit.

EDGEWORTHSTOWN FIRE STATION





Cllr. Barney Steele,
Chairperson of Economic Development SPC



Mr. Frank Sheridan,
Director of Services

ECONOMIC & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT, CORPORATE, CULTURAL & RECREATIONAL SERVICES, HUMAN RESOURCES, PLANNING & BUILDING CONTROL

ECONOMIC AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

ECONOMIC ENVIRONMENT

The economy of Longford continues to experience incessant challenges as the impact of the National and Global Economic Recession continues unabated. The construction sector is completely flat and consumer spending continues to decline as reduced earnings and increased taxation further reduce disposable income. The diverse nature of the local industrial sector has proven robust however the important retail sector declined to serious levels as income levels continue to decline. Longford County Council maintains a proactive policy of supporting businesses and co-operates with the states industrial development agencies particularly the Longford County Enterprise Board to consolidate existing enterprises and support and promote new industrial developments.

LONGFORD COUNTY DEVELOPMENT BOARD

There are 26 members on the County Development Board (CDB) drawn from four Sectors:

SECTOR	MEMBERS
Local Government (7 Members)	Cllr. John Duffy (Chairperson)
	Mayor Sean Farrell, Cllr. Paddy Belton and Cllr. Micheal Carrigy,
	Cllr. Barney Steele (Longford County Council)
	Cllr. Denis Hughes (Longford Town Council)
Local Development (6 Members)	Mr. T. Caffrey (Longford County Manager)
	Mr. Adrian Greene, Mr. Pat O'Rourke (Longford Community Resources Ltd).
	Ms Tilla Schulte (Environment Pillar)
	Mr. Michael Nevin, Ms. Beatrice Cunningham (Longford County Enterprise Board)
	Ms. Alice Connell (Longford County Childcare Committee)
	Supt. Denis Shields (Garda Síochána)
State Agencies (8 Members)	Vacant (Fáilte Ireland)
	Ms. Breda O'Toole (IDA Ireland)
	Mark Atterbury (Enterprise Ireland)
	Ms. Grainne Nic Gabhainn (Health Service Executive)
	Mr. Michael Kearney (Department of Social Protection)
	Mr. Oliver Burke (Teagasc)
	Ms. Rosemary Killian-Johnston (County Longford VEC)
	Mr. George Shedwell (Irish Congress of Trade Unions)
Social Partners (5 Members)	Mr. Rory Duncan, Ms. Mary Lillis (Community & Voluntary Sector)
	Mr. James Brady (Farming Sector)
	Ms. Karen Clabby (Business Sector)

BOARD CHANGES IN 2012

Local Government - Mayor Sean Farrell replaced Cllr. Frank Kilbride, Cllr. Paddy Belton and Cllr. Micheal Carrigy, Cllr. Barney Steele replaced by Cllr.V. Kiernan, Cllr. Martin Mulleady and Cllr. Gerry Brady
State Agencies – Damien Brennan replaced Kevin Kidney (Failte Ireland), Breda O'Toole replaced Chris Forde (IDA)

Local Development – Ms Tilla Schulte Ostermann replaced Dr. Ruth Mc Grath

Social Partners – Ms. Mary Lillis replaced Brenda Quinn.

LONGFORD COUNTY DEVELOPMENT BOARD

Longford County Development Board (CDB) held three meetings in 2012, on the 6th February, 25th April and the 23rd November. The Board continues to engage agencies at all levels and is committed to the concept of 'interagency work'. A key role of the CDB is to bring about a more co-ordinated delivery of public and local development services at local level. To facilitate better co-ordination, the plans of the local development agencies were considered by the Social Inclusion Measures Working Group (SIMWG) and on their recommendation endorsed by the CDB. The SIMWG held two meetings in 2012, on the 24th April and the 17th December.

During 2012, the government released a publication entitled ‘Putting People First: An Action Plan for Effective Local Government’ and the Local Government/ Local Development Alignment final report issued on the 16th October 2012. The Action Plan makes particular reference to the phasing out of the City and County Development Boards consistent with the reduction in public service structures generally. The Action Plan states that many of the purposes for establishing the CDB’s are or will become mainstream elements of local government. New structures will be established such as the new Social Economic Committees and the new Local Enterprise Offices which it is envisaged will impact on CDB’s roles and functions and will reduce the rationale for CDB’s to continue.

INTERAGENCY CO-OPERATION IN THE DELIVERY OF SERVICES AND SUPPORTS TO THE TRAVELLER COMMUNITY

The Traveller Interagency Group operates as a subcommittee of the CDB. The purpose of the group is to provide a forum for discussion on priority issues related to Travellers and to identify co-operative lines of action to deal with these issues. Two meetings were held in 2012.

LONGFORD TOURISM STRATEGY

In 2012, County Longford Tourism Strategy and Action Plan 2012 – 2015 was launched in Backstage Theatre by Junior Minister of State at the Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport, Michael Ring. The Strategy identifies Longford as having a number of resources and assets which if brought together under specific themes and properly managed could optimise tourism revenue across a number of areas. Key to delivering this is the implementation of the action plan which outlines four key areas; product development, marketing development, people development, and structure and funding. The AGM of Longford Tourism took place on the 20th January 2012. Following this, a number of subcommittees charged with responsibility for these areas were established.



Longford Tourism Strategy Launch. From left to right James Kearney, Frances McPartland, Cllr James Keogh, Junior Minister, Michael Ring, Cllr Michael Carrigy, Noel McGeeney, Jude Flynn.

DIGITAL LOCAL AGENDA PROJECT

Longford Local Authority is a partner in a European Digital Local Agenda (DLA) project in conjunction with the Midland Regional Authority. The main objective of the project is to improve regional policies in the fields of DLA for developing new actions related to the application of the IS to public services. To do so, the project will foster a permanent exchange of experiences among partners and will establish a network to update and improve knowledge in IS and its applications in public administration. Longford Local Authority is currently working on developing a Tourism App for the county which they hope to launch in early 2013.

LONGFORD COMHAIRLE na nÓG

Longford Comhairle na nÓg is a County Development Board initiative. In 2012, the Community and Enterprise Department secured funding from the Office for the Minister for Children and Youth Affairs to enhance Comhairle na nÓg. The Comhairle is supported by Foróige and provides a forum for structured input into decision – making by young people in the development of local services and policies.

Longford Comhairle na nÓg Steering Committee meets on a quarterly basis and is chaired by the Local Authority. The main focus of the meetings is on developing members’ skills and on how to influence policy. There are currently 14 members on the Comhairle Steering Committee.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 2012

The Annual General Meeting took place on Thursday, 25th October 2012 in the Backstage Theatre, Longford. The overall day was a huge success with 89 young people attending from the post primary schools and youth groups around the county. The theme of the day was the importance of healthy eating and the following four workshops were held:

- » “Body Image”
- » “Healthy eating at exam time”
- » “Poster Art, raising awareness of healthy eating”
- » “Practical Workshops –Health and wellbeing of young people in today’s society”

Each workshop lasted twenty five minutes giving young people an opportunity to experience each workshop through a speed dating type process. The feedback from the young people was very positive. They particularly enjoyed the workshops relating to healthy eating and body image as well as the practical workshop with the Nutritionist, Anne Maher. A healthy eating seminar was held for the final hour where the nutritionist informed the young people on the benefits of healthy eating and how it impacts on our health.

On the day, eleven young people were elected onto the Comhairle na nÓg for 2012/13. This brings the total number of young people including those who are remaining on the committee for a second term to twenty one.



CGB Comhairle na nÓg Longfoirt: An Méara Sean Farrell, Laura Mc Phillips, Údarás Áitiúil an Longfoirt agus Jim Maher, Foróige, le comhaltaí Chomhairle na nÓg Longfoirt

MEETINGS OF COMHAIRLE NA NÓG

Longford Comhairle na nÓg held a number of meetings in 2012. In 2012, the Committee decided to focus on healthy nutrition for young people with a particular focus on the diets of young people and how the local secondary schools could meet the nutritional requirements students in their canteens. They undertook research in this area and are currently piloting a healthy eating policy in a secondary school in the county.

COMHAIRLE NA NÓG NATIONAL SHOWCASE EVENT

Dail na nÓg only takes place every two years and in 2012 the National Comhairle na nÓg Council organised a showcase day in Croke Park on the 9th November 2012. The day was attended by all 34 Comhairle na nÓg’s including Longford. The Longford group displayed and showcased the work that they had done over the past two years and met with many invited guests including the Minister for Children, Frances Fitzgerald and Marian Harkin, MEP. Longford Comhairle na nÓg representative Luke Casserly was master of ceremonies for the day and he continues to meet in Dublin for monthly meetings for the National Council of Comhairle na nÓg.



Comhaltai Chomhairle na nÓg an Longfoirt Gwen Curley agus John Farrell ag fáil Teastas Éachta ag imeacht taispeántais Chomhairle na nÓg Náisiúnta Páirc an Chrócaigh, 9 Samhain 2012

NATIONAL PRIDE OF PLACE COMPETITION 2012

Pride of Place is a competition which is directed towards recognising improvements by local communities to create civic pride in their area. The aim of the "Pride of Place" competition is to encourage best practice, innovation and leadership in providing vibrant sustainable communities that improve the quality of life for all. The nomination process to the All Island competition is undertaken through the Local Authorities. In 2012, Longford County Council nominated three entrants across a number of categories to represent County Longford: Rathmhuire and Dolmen Services, Ennybegs Hall Committee and the Temperance Hall Committee. Judging took place in June 2012. Each group was required to make a presentation highlighting the range of activities and projects they had undertaken.

At a gala awards ceremony in Thomond Park, Limerick on 3 November, Longford took one of the top prizes. Rathmhuire and Dolmen Services were awarded third place in Category 8, which is a single issue category under the theme of Active Elderly in the Community.



National Pride of Place Awards Ceremony: Left to right Tom Dowling, Chair of Pride of Place Committee: Christopher Moran, Chairman of Co-operation Ireland, Ronan Foley, CEO IPB, Cllr. Jerome Scanlon, Cathaoirleach Limerick Local Authority and Cllr. Gerry Mc Loughlin, Mayor of Limerick, Laura Mc Phillips, Longford Longford Local Authority, Jackie Greene and Lucy Callaghan Rathmhuire & Dolmen Services Co. Longford.

LONGFORD/WESTMEATH CHILDRENS SERVICES COMMITTEE

The Office of the Minister for Children and Youth Affairs (OMCYA) established the Children's Services Committees (CSC) in 2007 with the purpose of improving outcomes for children and families at local and community level. CSC's do this through interagency collaboration, joint planning and co-ordination of services. Longford Westmeath CSC was established to address children's well being and services through one co-ordinated interagency structure across two counties. During 2012, a number of meetings were held to implement the Children's and Young People's Plan for 2011-2013.

JOINT POLICING COMMITTEES

Joint Policing Committees (JPC's) were established in co-operation with An Garda Síochána in the three Longford Local Authorities in accordance with guidelines issued in September 2008. A Steering Group was established to co-ordinate the three committees. During 2012, Granard JPC held four meetings on the 14th February, 8th May, 10th July, and the 9th October. Longford Town Council JPC held four meetings on the 5th April, 6th June, 5th September and the 5th December. Longford County Council JPC held ONE meeting on the 28th September 2012.

CONNOLLY BARRACKS COMMITTEE

A subcommittee was established by Longford Local Authorities in response to the closure by the Department of Defence of Connolly Army Barracks. The joint sub-committee consists of the Mayors and representatives of Longford Town and County Council, the CEO of County Longford VEC and the Superintendent of Longford Gardai. In 2012 four meetings were held on the following dates - 6th March 2012, 26th April, 5th July, and the 27th July during which time Longford Local Authorities successfully acquired Connolly Barracks from the Department of Defence. During 2012, submissions were invited from individuals, community groups and associations regarding the future use and development of the site and buildings.

ACCESS PROJECT

In 2012, the Local Authority Access Officer Network in association with the Local Government Management Agency and the National Disability Authority invited Transition Year around the country to participate in a module promoting education and awareness around disability. One element of the module requires students to prepare a piece of visual imagery which reflects and is representative of their consideration of disability and accessibility in its broader interpretation. Longford County Council was proud to nominate Moyne Community School to represent County Longford in the competition, entitled 'Enabling Access Across Generations'. As finalist they were invited to attend an award ceremony on the 3rd December 2012 in City Hall where they received a plaque to celebrate their achievements in this new programme.



Access Project Awards Ceremony: Left to right, Laura Mc Phillips, Longford Local Authority, Louise Killian, Moyne Community School, Lord Mayor of Dublin, Naoise Ó Muirí, students from Moyne Community School, Caroline Horan, Chairperson Local Authority Access Officers Network.

LONGFORD COMMUNITY & VOLUNTARY FORUM

During 2011, the appointment of a Development Worker afforded County Longford Community & Voluntary Forum the capacity to undertake a complete review of its role and function in support of the community and voluntary sector within County Longford and in 2012 this position has been consolidated by the implementation of a number of features:

- » Outreach meetings throughout the county explaining role, responsibilities and potential of the forum in addressing and informing communities
- » Ongoing contacts between Development Worker and communities which has increased involvement and status of the Forum
- » Monthly Management and Steering Group meetings
- » Bi-monthly E. Bulletin
- » Website updates
- » Support and nominations of 27 delegates to 15 local decision making bodies i.e. County Development Boards, Longford Community Resources Ltd., Longford County Council Strategic Policy Committees, County Longford Heritage, County Longford and Midlands Regional Task Force, County Longford Childcare Committee, Citizen Information Centre, County Longford Youth Services, County Longford Volunteer Service, National Integrated Rural Transport Committee and Longford Sports Partnership Board
- » Support and nomination to a number of task groups i.e. 2013 Gathering Group, Extreme Weather group and IrelandXO project
- » Tailored Computer training to identified Steering Group members
- » Completion of a Code of Conduct and administration of associated documentation and procedures
- » Completion of Training Needs Analysis for new and existing Steering Group members.

Despite the loss of our Development Worker at the end of 2012 coupled with the financial challenges we face in 2013, it is planned to replace the Development Worker role on a reduced basis, while endeavouring to continue to provide and support the community and voluntary sector within County Longford. It is vital at this time to continue to build on and expand community contacts and participation which has been so successful over the last two years.

In support of the Gathering 2013, County Longford Community & Voluntary Forum in co-operation with the Heritage Officer, Archivist, Longford Historical Society and Longford County Council propose to roll out IrelandXO to every parish within County Longford.

The IrelandXO project is a community-based genealogical initiative. The project supports traditional genealogy, facilitating the research of the Diaspora's Irish ancestry and connection with the local community. The IrelandXO project offers an extraordinary opportunity for local parish communities to extend the numbers of people committed to their parish by inviting its own Diaspora worldwide to become involved in their place of origin. This pilot project is an opportunity to boost tourism and bring economic benefit to the area. It is envisaged that enterprising members of the returning Diaspora may eventually become investors in the area.

Other issues the Forum are representing the C&V Sector includes:

- » Alignment of Community Development Programme and Local Government
- » Village & Area Enhancement
- » Tourism Strategy
- » Water Services Amendment Bill 2011 & 2012
- » Social Enterprise projects
- » Community Composting
- » Allotment and Community Gardens
- » Fuel Poverty
- » Rural Schools and Garda Barracks cutbacks
- » Fracking

In County Longford Community & Voluntary Forum, it is our goal to concentrate our efforts in building full and effective community participation and utilising this to inform and harness communities to address local issues and also national issues that impinge on us all in these difficult times.

CORPORATE SERVICES

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION REQUESTS 2012

A total of 15 Freedom of Information (FOI) requests were received by Longford County Council during 2012 from a mixed source of business, clients, staff and other persons. This figure includes two requests for internal review.

During 2012, the Section 15 and Section 16 Freedom of Information Manuals for Longford Local Authorities were prepared and published in accordance with the provisions of FOI legislation.

ACCESS TO INFORMATION ON THE ENVIRONMENT REQUESTS 2012

A total of 3 Access to Information on the Environment (AIE) requests were received and processed in 2012.

FRANCHISE

A person must be at least 18 years of age on the day the Register comes into force (15th February) and must be ordinarily resident at the address at which he/she wishes to be registered on the 1st September preceding the coming into force of the Register. A person may be included on a Supplement to the Register if the person reaches 18 years of age on or before Polling Day and meets the requirements in relation to residence.

Every resident, irrespective of their nationality, who is 18 years or older is entitled to be included on the Register of Electors.

The numbers registered to vote on the 2012/2013 Register of Electors were as follows:

Local Electoral Areas	No. of Electors
Ballymahon	8,926
Drumlish	6,229
Granard	5,715
Longford	9,097
Total:	29,967

During 2012, two Supplements to the Register of Electors were prepared in advance of the Stability Treaty Referendum (May 2012) and the Children's Rights Referendum (November 2012).

OFFICIAL LANGUAGES ACT, 2003

In July 2008, Longford Local Authorities agreed a three year Irish Language Scheme under Section 11 of the Official Languages Act, 2003 with the Minister for Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht. The third year expiry date of the implementation of the Scheme was the 30th May 2011. A second Irish Language Scheme will be agreed on completion of a satisfactory audit by the Office of the Coimisinéir Teanga.

During 2012 progress was made in addressing outstanding matters identified at audit in October 2011 and the Office of An Coimisinéir Teanga has since declared it is satisfied that, in general, the Scheme is being implemented satisfactorily.

As agreed with the Coimisinéir Teanga's Office, 30% of the "static content" of the websites was translated into Irish and made available by the end of May 2012. Also, as agreed, thirty of the most commonly used application forms were identified, translated and made available to the public by the end of May 2012.

In addition, the Irish Language Development Officer continued to promote development of the Irish language in the local authorities. Her work included the following:

- » Ciorcal Comhrá - facilitation of an Irish Conversation Group/ Ciorcal Comhrá during lunchtime every fortnight during 2012 for staff from the various sections of the local authority. The idea is to enhance each person's ability to develop and improve their spoken Irish through reading, discussion and group conversation "as Gaeilge".
- » Provision of translations of correspondence and personal attention to Library clients who wished to conduct their business through Irish.
- » Organisation of a series of events to promote Irish Language and Culture in all the branch libraries in County Longford. Storytellers, quizzes and displays of Irish books were organized for Seachtain na Gaeilge. Irish language material was purchased.
- » Two sets of Irish classes were arranged for the public during the year. The classes were given by a local national school teacher.
- » The commencement in October 2012 of an evening course in Irish in Maynooth University in an effort to improve her own standard of post-degree Irish. The course involves attending a class in Maynooth every Monday evening for a duration of three hours over a twenty week period. At the end of this period (April 2013) she will sit an oral, aural and written exam. The course covers the material for level B2 of Teastas Eorpach na Gaeilge (European Certificate in Irish). Course levels for TEG run from Level A1 for Absolute Beginners to Level C1 for Advanced. The course was largely funded by Longford County Council.

The implementation of the Scheme will continue to be monitored and reviewed during 2013.

AUDIT COMMITTEE

The Audit Committee, consisting of five members, has an independent role in advising the Council on financial reporting processes, internal control, risk management and audit matters as part of a systematic review of the control environment and governance procedures of the Council. It is non-executive and is independent in the determination of its work programme and in the formulation of its recommendations.

Councillor Alan Mitchell submitted his resignation as an elected member of Longford County Council with effect from Tuesday, 13th March 2012 as he had been nominated for appointment as a Judge of the District Court. Councillor Gerry Brady replaced Councillor Alan Mitchell on the Audit Committee in May 2012.

Mr. John Browne submitted his resignation as an independent member of the Audit Committee as he was co-opted to Longford County Council on the 18th April 2012.

Ms. Evelyn Quinn, Accountant, replaced Mr. Browne on the Audit Committee in September 2012.

The Committee met four times during 2012. The Chairperson presented the 2011 Annual Report of the Audit Committee at the County Council meeting held in March 2012. The Audit Committee examined a number of issues within its remit and issued recommendations where appropriate. During the course of the year, the Local Government Auditor and senior staff of the Council presented reports to the Audit Committee as requested by the members.

CORPORATE RECEPTIONS



Civic Reception in the Rustic Inn, Abbeyshrule, on Wednesday, 17th October 2012 to honour Abbeyshrule Tidy Towns Committee on their outstanding achievements in 2012.



Mayoral Reception in the Council Chamber on Wednesday, 5th December 2012 to honour the members of the County Longford Ploughing Association on their success at the 2012 National Ploughing Championship.



Mayoral Reception in the '98 Hall, Ballinamuck, on Monday, 9th July 2012 to honour the Ballinamuck & Essert de Belfort Twinning Agreement.



Civic Reception held in Longford County Council, on Saturday, 14th April 2012 to honour the memory of the fourteen passengers from County Longford who were on board the Titanic.



Mayoral Reception in Longford County Council, on Tuesday, 29th May 2012 to honour Larry Cunningham, Derek Davis and Pat Jennings in recognition of their support to charitable organisations in County Longford over many years.

HEALTH AND SAFETY

The past year has seen many changes in the area of health and safety for the Local Authorities. The Health and Safety Technical Group appointed by the County and City Managers Association continued to drive the Major Change Programme for the delivery of safety management system support and performance management tools which will have an impact on every employee and all work activities within the Local Authority. One of these supports is the 64 Guidance National Local Authority Policies and Procedures. This suite of documents were finalised in December 2012 for issue to each Local Authority in January 2013. These Policies and Procedures are guidelines and once customised, adopted and implemented will support compliance with relevant legislation, codes of practice, standards and guidance.

Achieving workplace safety across a business as diverse as Longford Local Authorities is a challenge, managing health and safety can only be accomplished through the commitment of everyone. Longford Local Authorities is dedicated to providing a safe and healthy workplace through continuous improvement and including health and safety as an integral part of business.

REGULATORY INSPECTIONS

There was one correspondence managed with the Health and Safety Authority in 2012 in relation to Lough Kinale Water Treatment Plant. Once the Contract Works at the plant are completed, the Safety Statement will have to be reviewed. No prohibition or improvement notices were issued by the Health and Safety Authority during 2012. This is a positive reflection on the way in which health and safety is managed within the organisation.

SUMMARY OF ACCIDENT/INCIDENTS REPORTS FOR 2012

A total of 8 accidents and incidents reported during the year 2012. Three of the accidents were reportable to the Health and Safety Authority (more than three days lost from work). A total of 33.5 days were lost which is down significantly from 128 days in 2011.

There were 4 Incidents relating to Violence and Aggression to Administration Staff in Housing, Finance, Water and Roads. Training on how to deal with Violent and Aggressive people was provided.

The reporting of accidents and incidents is an important element of the safety management system and is used as a tool for identifying areas for continuous improvement.

SAFETY STATEMENT/RISK ASSESSMENTS

As part of the restructuring of the Safety Statements and Risk Assessments for Longford Local Authorities, all existing risk assessments were reviewed and new risk assessments completed for activities carried out across all sections within the organisation with the inclusion of a Risk Assessment Manual within the Safety Statement. Longford Local Authorities combined all the ancillary Safety Statements apart from the Fire Station Safety Statement into a single Safety Statement for all of its activities in 2012. The Fire Station Safety Statement will be reviewed in 2013.

SAFETY INSPECTIONS

In 2012, Longford Local Authorities implemented a new Safety Inspection Program identifying areas and frequency of Inspections to be undertaken. The Inspections are carried out by each Directorate and reported to the Management Team Safety Consultative Meeting Quarterly. The Inspection Program started in March and 248 inspections were carried out over the 9 months to December. The Inspections are a useful tool for determining compliance with Health and Safety Requirements within the organisation. Any non compliance identified is dealt with by Line Management in each section.

HEALTH AND SAFETY TRAINING

Training is a key element of promoting a positive safety culture and developing good safety procedures on the job. In 2012, 423 places on 76 health and Safety Training courses were filled by Longford Local Authorities Staff. The training courses held included IOSH Managing Safely in Construction, IOSH Supervising Safely in Construction, First Aid Refresher, Driver CPC, Chainsaw, Automated External Defibrillator, Slinger/Signaller, Roller, Signing, Lighting and Guarding, Confined Space and Fire Safety.

COMMUNICATION AND CONSULTATION

The Safety Monitoring Consultative Committee Meetings were held in each Directorate on a quarterly basis. Each Committee is chaired by the Director, and includes elected Safety Representatives, Line Managers and the Safety Officer. This forum allows for specific safety issues within each Directorate to be discussed. This is a valuable forum for addressing local issues and giving safety representatives an opportunity to raise safety issues on behalf of their work colleagues.

Health and Safety is the first item on the agenda at the monthly Management Team meeting. The Safety Officer attends this meeting and advises the Management Team of any safety issues within Longford Local Authorities.

Safety Management Team Meetings were held four times during the year to address issues raised at the Safety Monitoring Consultative Committee Meetings and monthly safety reports and updates were provided to the Management Team. On site communication sessions and toolbox talks within the Infrastructure Section were also held by the Health and Safety Officer and Line Managers. The intranet is used as a communication tool and will continue to be expanded in 2013 for the provision of Health and Safety Information.

The Monthly Safety Report is prepared monthly by the Safety Officer and circulated to all staff. This is an effective way of communicating topical issues in relation to Health and Safety to all staff.

CONTRACTORS

Longford Local Authorities continue to assess Contractors that work on their behalf in accordance with the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work (Construction) Regulations, 2006. Every Contractor completes a Health and Safety Questionnaire and this is assessed by Longford Local Authorities to determine their competency and compliance with Health and Safety requirements. The Contractor assessment procedure has been successfully running for the last number of years with over 300 assessments completed. The contractor assessment records are available on the Intranet.

NATIONAL DEVELOPMENTS IN HEALTH AND SAFETY

In December 2012, the LGMA announced that they would be issuing the 64 National Policies and Procedures to each Local Authority in early January for implementation. These Policies and Procedures are guidelines and once customised, adopted and implemented, the policies and procedures will support compliance with relevant legislation, codes of practice, standards and guidance. Longford Local Authorities intend setting up a program of implementation in 2013.

IPB engaged the services of Zurich Insurance in 2012 to carry out Statutory Inspection of Engineering Equipment on behalf of all 34 Local Authorities. The Safety, Health and Welfare at Work (General Application) Regulations 2007 were amended in 2012 to include the statutory inspection of compression vessels. Longford Local Authorities now has over 1200 items that require statutory inspections.

In November 2012, draft Safety, Health and Welfare at Work (Construction) Regulations 2013 were circulated for comment. These regulations amend the 2006 regulations and will become operative in June 2013. One of the main changes is the amendment is the definition of 'Client' to Include Domestic Homeowners.

In November 2012, The LGMA rolled out the new Health and Safety Legal Database. In 2013, employees of Longford Local Authority will have access to all Health and Safety Legislation compiled in a single database. The database can also be used as an audit tool to determine compliance with statutory requirements.

WORKPLACE FATALITIES IN IRELAND

In economically challenging times, it is vital to ensure health and safety continues to be a priority. Longford Local Authorities remains fully committed to managing health and safety and will continue to develop the Safety Management System to ensure a safe place of work for all its employees and members of the public.

LONGFORD ARTS OFFICE

The year 2012 has proven to be very productive for the County Arts Office on many fronts. In the area of Creative Writing/Literature a number of new voices emerged on the professional scene and a number of our established writers produced new work.

It is very difficult in the arts and cultural sector to produce quantitative indicators of progress because so much of our work is of a qualitative, abstract, developmental nature however, in the area of literature development the publication of the work of emerging and established authors is the best indication of the health of the art form.

We gave a whole new facelift to Ireland's oldest literary website www.virtualwriter.net and we programmed the largest number yet of literary book launches and readings.

The County Arts Office made a significant step forward in the area of the visual arts by the establishing of a Programming Partnership with the Atrium Gallery Backstage which should provide an important boost to existing and emerging artists in Longford.

The area of Photography is the single biggest growth area in terms of numbers participating in this region and in this art form we had a singularly significant success in the publication of the book *Bang...Bang She Shot Me* (an Introduction to Digital Art Photography) which is the outcome of our on going Longford Schools Photography Programme. Our photography website www.midlandcollegeofphotography.net also received an overhaul.

Music development is the priority of the County Arts office in 2013; however we also experienced some notable firsts in this area in 2012 such as our very enjoyable and successful Schools Residencies, in traditional music - provided by Fun Trad and in classical harp music - provided by the Windsong Harp Ensemble. We intend to use or established record in IT in arts innovation to develop our music programme next year and so we constructed a new dedicated Longford site www.longfordmusic.ie to be the primary asset in our music development into the future.

Given the significant amount of change and development in the arts in 2012 we decided that it was time to give a major overhaul to the Arts Office section of the County Council website www.longfordcoco.ie which we now hope provides the members, the staff, and the public with a clearer idea of the role and function of the County Council Arts Service.

CREATIVE WRITING / LITERATURE

Noel Monahan

Organised a night of celebration of the work and achievements of Noel Monahan Granard born poet and dramatist in the Backstage Theatre.

Longford Writers at the Irish Writers Centre

Organised a night of celebration of the achievements of Longford writers by the Irish Writers centre. This was the first time that the Irish Writers Centre ever celebrated creative writing in a county before.

Belinda MacEoin

Launched the first and award winning novel by Longford born author Belinda MacEoin in the Backstage Theatre.

Eurochild 2012

Hosted the launch of the national children's publication Eurochild 2012 over 200 children attended the launch which was held in Backstage Longford owing to the disproportionately large representation from Longford Students.

National Poetry Day

Hosted a Poetry Bingo Night of music and poetry by local poets in the Canal Studio Backstage to celebrate the national occasion.

Mary Melvin Geoghegan Launch

Organised the launch of Say It Like a Paragraph the third anthology of poetry by Longford writer Mary Melvin Geoghegan in the Canal Studio Backstage.

Re-structured our literary website www.virtualwriter.net

Drafted a Dedicated Creative Writing Development Strategy

Up-dated our Children's Creative Writing Strategy "From Beatrix...to Harry"

Provided on-going support to each of the counties Writers Groups

VISUAL ARTS

PAINTING

Programming Partnership with Atrium Gallery

The County Arts Office entered into a joint programming partnership with the Atrium Gallery to develop the gallery's exhibition programme with a view to providing greater opportunities for local artists to exhibit.

Provided support to Brush Strokes Art Group Lanesborough

Provided support for Ballymahon Arts Group

Provided support for Annaly Artists

PUBLIC ART

Completed the Centenary Square Emigration Commission

Commenced the N4 By-pass Commissioning Process

Commenced the General Sean MacEoin Commissioning Process

Completed the Edgeworthstown Fire Station Commission

Completed the Longford Town Public Art Placement Survey

Constructed a Longford Public Art Page on www.longfordcoco.ie

PHOTOGRAPHY

Re-structured the photography website: www.midlandcollegeofphotography.ie

Enabling the greater use of audio visual tools to assist in the creative and technical development of local photographers; providing a facility to display the output of the students participating in the Longford Schools Photography Programme; providing a platform for the exhibition of the work of local photographers and an information point for local camera clubs. The results of these efforts may be viewed at the above address.

Published Photography Book

Bang...Bang She Shot Me (An Introduction to Digital Art Photography) was the first book of its kind published in Ireland. It is an introductory guide to digital photography compiled on the basis of two years of the Longford Schools Photography Programme. All the photographs used were taken by the students participating on the course. The book was very successfully launched at the Canal Studio Backstage in October and we are currently in negotiation with Eason's bookshops to arrange national distribution.

Longford Schools Photography Programme

Organised a schools photography development programme in seven secondary schools throughout the county involving over one hundred students. Under the umbrella of the Schools Photography Programme the Arts Office also organised

The Longford Schools Photography Awards & Exhibition 2012

Midland College of Photography

Programmed various courses for the college of Photography which were attended by students from counties throughout the region.

Camera Clubs

The County Arts Office continued its support for the two existing camera clubs in the county Shannonside Camera Club (Lanesborough) and Longford Camera Club.

MUSIC

Windsong School of Music Development Programme

In recognition of the potential benefit of Windsong School of Music to classical music education in Longford the County Arts Office provided assistance in the drafting of a School Development Strategy for Windsong School of Music.

Classical Harp Schools Residency Programme

Following on the momentum towards increased music education in Longford schools, created by the Music Generation Programme the County Arts office developed two distinct schools music residencies in 2012. In the area of classical music we established the Windsong Classical Schools Residency Programme. The primary reasons for the Programme was to expose students to the beauty of the classical and Irish harp, to encourage them to begin to play the instruments and to attempt to evaluate the level of interest and activity in music education in Longford.

Edel and Alida Loftus visited national schools; St Joseph's Longford, St. Mel's Ardagh and Newtowncashel NS as well as Templemichael and Mercy Convent Ballymahon secondary schools on a weekly basis. A gratifying outcome of the residency was that we discovered that there is a considerable existing interest in the classical and Irish harp in Longford and this is something that we propose to develop in the future.

Fun Trad Schools Residency

Our objective was to encourage a greater interest in Irish traditional music among the younger generation and hopefully encourage some people to maybe take up an instrument.

We put together a residency called Fun Trad to tour the primary and secondary schools in the county over a number of months on a pilot basis.

The musicians involved are well known to lovers of trad music in the county. Pat Finnerty (pipes), Noel Sweeney (flute) and Olive Kilbane (fiddle) all enthusiastically undertook the county-wide tour.

They started by playing some music for the children, explain their backgrounds and how they got involved in traditional music and talked about their instrument.

They hoped to introduce children to a way of listening to different tunes and discussed about reels, jigs, hornpipes etc. There was also an emphasis on getting the children to participate to come and join in with the band at the end of an hour.

The clear outcome of this residency was the need for a considerable investment in the structured development in music education in our schools system.

www.longfordmusic.ie

Longford County Arts Office has long been in the vanguard of the development of innovative IT projects to promote the development of creative activities.

Using the cumulative experiences of a decade of work we decided to develop a dedicated website to promote the level of music currently in Longford in classical traditional and contemporary format.

Apart from developing awareness of current levels of activity which is crucial in audience development it is also hoped that the new website www.longfordmusic.ie will be a proactive tool in the support and education of emerging musicians in Longford

Collaborative Projects

Established a very successful partnership with the Atrium Gallery and produced almost thirty articles for the spring and winter editions of the Midland Arts & Culture Magazine.

Administration

Produced Annual Report 2012; drafted Annual Work Programme 2013; completed Arts Council Funding Application 2013 and significantly expanded the Arts Section of www.longfordcoco.ie.



LONGFORD COUNTY LIBRARY, ARCHIVES & HERITAGE SERVICE

Core Objective: “Our vision is to be a responsive, inclusive public service which helps to enrich and enhance the lives of individuals and communities in County Longford through the delivery of a modern, innovative multi-faceted library service”.

2012 - A YEAR OF PROGRESS

The year 2012 was a very busy and challenging one for the library service in County Longford. Despite cutbacks in funding which led to serious reductions in the book-fund and some unplanned closures of branch libraries the number of visits to our libraries grew this year to almost 200,000. Library membership and numbers of items borrowed have remained at a very high level also. Usage of the recently refurbished Ballymahon Community Library continues to grow with the Goldsmith Room playing host to many important events in Ballymahon throughout the year notably The Goldsmith Summer School and the National Wetlands Conference. A host of exciting projects and events including exhibitions, lectures, readings, book launches, as well as language and computer classes were held throughout the year.

CAPITAL PROJECTS

With the successful completion of the Ballymahon Library project, the refurbishment and extension of Granard Library is the number one priority for the service. The grant application for funding under the Libraries Capital Programme is being actively pursued with the Department of Environment, Community and Local Government.

A possible partnership project with Edgeworthstown Community Cooperative is being explored as a solution to delivering a modern library facility for the community in Edgeworthstown.

ICT REPORT

Longford County Library continues to exploit technology as a means of delivering a modern and effective service to our customers through:

- » The marketing and promotion of our eBooks service and by the addition of new eBook and eAudiobook titles to our digital catalogue. This service has grown in popularity during the past year as a result of the increasing availability and popularity of bespoke e-readers, tablets, and smartphones which are all compatible with our eBook software
- » Our partnership with FÁS in rolling out FETAC-accredited online eLearning courses at Longford, Granard, Ballymahon and Lanesboro libraries
- » The extension of our facilitator-led, customer-focussed internet classes in Drumlish, Longford and Granard branch libraries
- » The introduction of TTRS (Touch Type Read Spell) computer classes in Granard and Longford branch libraries
- » Upgrading of internet and WiFi services
- » The promotion of the self-service facility in the Longford Branch to maximize staff resources and focus more on specific customer needs
- » The upgrading of the Library Management System Hardware which commenced in 2011 with Longford and Ballymahon libraries continued in 2012 to include Granard, Drumlish, Edgeworthstown and Drumlish libraries
- » The exploitation of social media communication tools, such as Facebook and Twitter, via our library website to reach out to the wider community and a younger customer demographic.



Left: Launch of the new eBooks service in Longford Library

LIBRARY PARTNERSHIPS: “OUR LIBRARY - A WELCOMING SPACE FOR ALL”

The library continues to build key partnerships with other statutory and community service providers. The agencies we have collaborated with in the past year include: Longford VEC, Longford Community Resources Ltd., Longford Women’s Link, County Longford Primary and Secondary schools, Longford Older Persons’ Network, Longford Mental Health Association, Longford Integration Network, Longford ICA, St. Christopher’s, Longford Citizens Information Service, Irish Writers’ Centre, Poetry Ireland, Granard Resource Centre, Ballymahon Traders Association and FÁS. We provide a space to meet for Polish Mothers and Toddlers Group, Longford County Childcare, Writers’ and Readers’ groups, Longford Gardening Club, Longford Environmental Alliance, HSE Triple-P, East Meets West, Headway (Acquired Brain Injury) Ireland, and the Longford Secondary Schools Retired Teachers Association, among others.

OUTREACH EVENTS

An ongoing events programme that supports reader development, literacy and learning was rolled out for adults and children throughout the year. Numerous exhibitions were held in partnership with a number of agencies including the Attic Youth Café, St. Mel’s College, Longford Chamber of Commerce, Royal Canal Amenity Group, ICA, local art groups etc. Irish, French and Spanish language classes were held in Longford, Lanesboro and Ballymahon libraries.

Left: Halloween storytime



Right: The Mexican Ambassador, Carlos Garcia de Alba, making Longford connections



Left: Drumlish Knitters exhibition



Right: St. Christopher’s launch their art exhibition in Ballymahon Library



Left: Hat-making in Granard as part of the ‘Bealtaine Festival’



Right: June Belton, a member of the Longford Library Art Group



Longford County Library Programme of Events 2012

Exhibitions and Launches	
February	Exhibition by Sweeney Architects in partnership with local secondary schools
22nd February	Midlands Poetry County Final
1st March	Launch of eBooks Service
2nd April	Longford Library Art Group Exhibition
13th April	Launch of Titanic Exhibition
16th April	Rose Moran, 'From Dawn Through Dark' Poetry Book Launch
1st May	Bealtaine Festival Launch
14th June	Lorne Patterson, 'Witch' Book Launch
9th July-20th July	Summer Olympic Reading Challenge for Children
20th August	Padraic Colum Exhibition
18th August	Ballymahon Heritage Day
28th September	First meeting of Longford Library Knitting Group
October	Peregrine Readings with authors Karen Gillece, Seán O'Reilly, Dermot Healy and Cláir Ní Aonghusa
31st October	Halloween Show
29th November	Jude Flynn, 'Fireside Tales Vol. 10' Book Launch
23rd November	Longford Women's Link 'Women Against Violence' Information Day
5th December	Reflections Art Launch
Classes:	
January	Longford Library Book Club
February	Art classes on Monday and Wednesdays
March	Art Appreciation classes
March	FÁS Computer classes on Mondays and Wednesdays
28th March	Start of Reading Partnership in conjunction with local schools
April	Series of talks on the Titanic given to schools
12th June	Coffee morning with St. Michael's Reading Partners
June and July	Computer Classes
September	Creative Writing classes
September	Kinder Music classes
October	Classes in French and Irish started
November	Time to Read initiative meeting

SHARED SERVICES

MIDLANDS POETRY FOR PLEASURE

The Midlands Library Authorities of Longford, Westmeath, and Offaly in partnership with Poetry Ireland worked together to deliver an exciting pilot project promoting our great Midland writers past and present including Oliver Goldsmith, Maria Edgeworth and Padraic Colum. The overall aim of the project was to give students who have an interest in reading and writing poetry an opportunity to discover some of the great poets from the Midlands and to work with some established local poets to nurture their own creative writing talent. Students attended workshops by midlands based poets Noel Monahan, Jean O'Brien and Nuala Ni Chonchuir. They also explored poems by local writers Vona Groarke, Oliver Goldsmith, Padraic Colum, Breda Sullivan, Eileen Casey, and John Keegan Casey.

The project proved to be a great success with students and teachers alike gaining new insights into some of the great poets from this region and also showcasing their own skills as young writers. The project culminated in an invitation from President Michael D. Higgins to Áras an Uachtaráin where the overall Midlands winner of the project a student from Ballymahon Convent Secondary school Ciaran O'Hanlon recited his poem for the President

Right: Ciarán O'Hanlon, award-winning Ballymahon poet, and the Longford participants in the 'Midlands Poetry for Pleasure' project with President Higgins at the Áras.



MIDLANDS PAL

Midlands Pal is part of the Pathways to Learning programme www.pathwaystolearning.ie initiated originally by the Committee on Library Cooperation in Ireland (COLICO) in 2006. There are currently two other Pal library groups in Ireland, Cork Pal and Music Pal.

Participation in Midland PAL is open to all libraries in Ireland Midlands Region. Its objective is to create a seamless route to information resources for the public by opening up access to a wide range of midland libraries; public, academic and HSE. These libraries have all been made easily accessible through this scheme. The level of access decided by participating library is currently set at reading access however there is scope for development also in this regard. The advantage of closer cooperation by all midlands libraries leads to enhanced facilities for all Midlands library users.

Participating libraries are: Athlone Institute of Technology, HSE Midlands, Longford, Westmeath, Roscommon, Laois and Offaly County Libraries all sharing their information resources, knowledge and expertise among the community.

THE TITANIC CENTENARY COMMEMORATIONS

A series of county-wide events to commemorate the centenary of the sinking of the Titanic which took place on 15 April 1912 and to remember the Longford passengers who travelled on the doomed ship was held in April this year.

There were fourteen passengers from Longford on board the ship, five of whom were lost. The commemoration was coordinated by a committee consisting of elected members of Longford County Council, staff from the Library, Archives and Heritage Services, relatives of some of the Titanic passengers one of whom is a staff member of Drumlish Library and local historians with an interest in the subject.

Most of the events were held during a week in April dedicated to the Titanic 14th - 21st April. One of the highlights was a special reception hosted by Longford County Council to honour the Longford passengers who travelled on the ship. Longford County Library was the venue for an exhibition on the ship and the Longford passengers and a huge numbers visited the exhibition and attended some of the talks on the subject which were held throughout the week.

An information resource pack was prepared for every school in the county and an essay competition was run in primary schools and creative writing competition for secondary schools.

Over two hundred entries were received from schools all over the county and all of these were put on display in the library and the Longford Shopping Centre.



Left: Commemorative events during the Longford-Titanic programme in April 2012

THE LONGFORD GATHERING 2013

Preparations for the Gathering began with the setting up of a committee by the County Manager to organize an event in the Irish Embassy in London in October for the Longford diaspora living in the UK. A first edition of a *Longford - What's on Guide 2013* collated by the library staff was launched on the evening by Minister Michael Ring. A series of six postcards of Longford scenes, past and present, which were selected from the Local Studies photographic collection were printed as part of a national public libraries project to celebrate the Gathering.

A steering group was set up to encourage and support communities and organisations to undertake Gathering events. The steering group included the Mayors of Longford County and Town Councils, Backstage Theatre, Feroige, Longford Chamber of Commerce, ICA, Longford Community Resources Ltd., Comhaltas Ceoltoiri Eireann, Longford Tourism, the Community and Voluntary forum, Attic/Aisling, the IRFU, GAA and Failte Ireland. A Community meeting was held in October 2012 which generated great interest and ideas for Gathering events. Funding of €55,000 was secured from the IPB Gathering Fund to support Gathering events to be held in Longford in 2013.



Left: Longford-Gathering information evening, October 2012

CHALLENGES FOR THE LIBRARY SERVICE

One of the main challenges facing the library service over the next few years will be managing, maintaining and developing high quality library services with considerably reduced financial and staff resources. Our staff has responded very well to this challenge by prioritising frontline services and by increased flexibility in opening hours. We continue to fully exploit technology as a very efficient and effective method of delivering high quality library services.

LONGFORD COUNTY LIBRARY STATISTICAL REPORT 2012

LONGFORD COUNTY LIBRARY MEMBERSHIP/ REGISTRATIONS 2012

Branch	Adult	Child	Student 2nd Level	Student 3rd Level	Other	Total	2012
Longford	1,610	1,931	682	584	82	4,889	4,892
Ballymahon	493	638	101	59	7	1,298	1,792
Granard	188	319	99	51	25	682	794
Lanesboro	168	267	112	80	8	635	779
Drumlish	75	152	20	11	21	279	282
Edgeworthstown	62	284	19	7	9	381	339
TOTAL	2,596	3,591	1,033	792	152	8,164	8,856

NUMBER OF ITEMS BORROWED IN LONGFORD LIBRARIES 2012

Library Branch	Adult Fiction	Adult Non Fiction	Children	Teens	Audio	Foreign Language	I.L.L	Total	2012
Longford	21,415	18,877	27,017	1,854	4,957	703	234	75,057	73,939
Ballymahon	7,264	4,716	13,130	814	1,049	324	39	27,336	30,751
Lanesboro	3,178	1,510	4,836	368	67	21	17	9,997	8,842
Granard	2,709	1,262	4,836	166	268	2	20	9,263	11,742
E'Town	704	417	5,473	165	68	0	1	6,828	4,363
Drumlish	881	477	2,602	79	22	22	1	4,084	5,311
TOTALS	36,151	27,259	57,894	3,446	6,431	1,072	312	132,565	134,948

VISITOR STATISTICS FOR LONGFORD LIBRARIES JANUARY-DECEMBER 2012

Branch	No. of Recorded Visitors January - June 2012	No of recorded Visitors July-December 2012	Total	2011 Fig.
Longford	61,179	63,828	125,007	121,403
Ballymahon	20,888	21,018	41,906	33,315
Granard	6,003	5509	11,512	11,316
Lanesboro	6,850	6232	13,082	12,533
Edgeworthstown	2,141	1453	3,594	3,302
Drumlish	1,500	1,771	3,271	2,530
Local History Room Visitors	200	232	432	435
TOTAL 2012	98,761	100,043	198,804	184,834

INTERNET STATISTICS FOR LONGFORD LIBRARIES JANUARY-DECEMBER 2012

Branch	Jan- June	July-Dec	Wifi sessions	TOTAL
Longford	5,605	5,926	2,312	13,843
Ballymahon	4,162	3,407	0	7,569
Granard	813	638	113	1,564
Lanesboro	1,510	1268	0	2,778
Edgeworthstown	161	87	4	252
Drumlish	166	180	59	407
Total	12,417	11,506	2,488	26,411

STATISTICS FOR LONGFORD LIBRARIES WEBSITE JANUARY-DECEMBER 2012

No. of "hits" on our website www.longfordlibrary.ie	24,520
Returning visitors to www.longfordlibrary.ie	52.36%
New visitors to www.longfordlibrary.ie	47.64%
No. of eBook /eAudiobook downloads	300
No. of eBooks in our eBook digital catalogue	450

LONGFORD HERITAGE OFFICE

The overall aim of the Longford County Heritage Plan is to ensure “that our heritage will be part of life for everyone”.

This is being achieved through:

- » The commitment to achieving the goals of the existing Longford Heritage Plan in partnership with the Heritage Forum and their constituent organisations and the wider community
- » The co-ordination and implementation of heritage-related projects within the county to further the protection and appreciation of the cultural and natural heritage of County Longford and Ireland as a whole
- » Supporting the heritage-related work of Longford Local Authorities, national bodies, local heritage and community groups and individuals.

LONGFORD HERITAGE OFFICE ACHIEVEMENTS IN 2012

The following significant projects were undertaken in County Longford to further the aims of the County Longford Heritage Office and to increase our knowledge and awareness of Longford’s diverse heritage stock and potential threats to its long-term survival.

LONGFORD & THE TITANIC 1912 – 2012 COMMEMORATION

The year 2012 saw the world-wide commemoration of the sinking of the RMS Titanic, arguably the best known peace-time maritime disaster which saw the loss of over 1800 lives. Of the 120 people who boarded at Cobh (Queenstown), 14 of these were from County Longford. The majority were from two parishes in the north of the county, Killoe and Colmcille, and one from Carrickedmond in south Longford. Unfortunately, five were lost in the disaster.

To honour those from Longford who sailed on the Titanic a series of events was held to mark the anniversary, which saw the return of their descendants and family members to Longford from as far afield as the US and Australia. The centrepiece for the commemoration was an exhibition on the Titanic and its passengers, which was co-funded by the Heritage Council and which ran from April through to November in Longford Library.

Other elements of the commemoration included the hosting of a civic reception for the families of the Longford passengers by Longford County Council, the development of a schools information pack for all schools and library branches in the county, a schools writing competition, a public talk and a showing of the film “A Night to Remember”. The development of the James Farrell Titanic Memorial & Garden in Ennybegs by the parish of Killoe was also recognised.



Top: A sample of the exhibition, showing the Longford survivors.

Below: Programme of events for the Titanic Commemoration

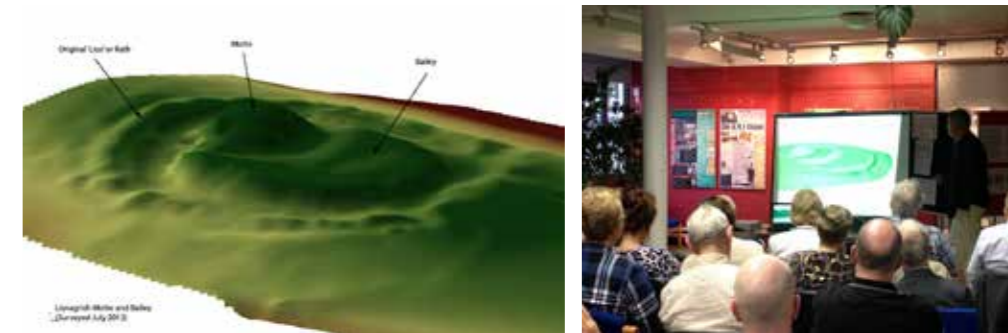
NON-INVASIVE ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESEARCH PROJECT IN ANGLO-NORMAN CASTLE SITES

During the later 12th to 13th centuries, County Longford lay on the north-western edge of the lordship of Meath in a turbulent frontier area that bordered on the native Irish kingdoms of Connacht, Breifne and Ulster. It would appear that within what is now County Longford, elements of the Gaelic O’Farrell sept were regularly at war with the Anglo-Norman colony. The historical sources suggest that the colony in Longford was continually under threat, and eventually culminated in the settlers being largely expelled from the area in the early 14th century.

In 2012, the County Longford Heritage Office in partnership with Dr. Kieran O’Connor and Dr. Paul Naessens of NUI Galway, undertook a project to investigate whether or not this turbulence is evident in the physical remains of the Longford motte-and-bailey castles erected by the Anglo-Normans during this period.

A programme of archaeological survey was undertaken of a number of Anglo-Norman castle sites in the county to address this question and add to existing archaeological data. Topographical surveys recording the undulation of the ground using non-invasive technology were carried out at sites in the townlands of Tully, Glebe and Lisnagrish. Geophysical surveys were also carried out at Glebe, Lisnagrish and the inauguration site at Moatfarrell. Sites without baileys were prioritised for geophysical study where possible to ascertain if they once had an attached bailey and/or external buildings at the base.

The conclusions of the survey found that in line with previous studies, the majority of Anglo-Norman castle sites in Longford had attached baileys, with a number having double-baileys. The survey results indicated that at one site in particular the bailey size was larger than previously thought. The topographical survey also concluded that sites with elevational advantage were also favoured in motte building in Longford, providing important inter-visibility between the sites. The study also showed that the larger motte complexes were situated on earlier rath sites, reusing existing defensive advantages. The results of the survey were presented at a lecture during Heritage Week 2012 in County Longford.



Top left: An example of images produced by the archaeological research project showing Lisnagrish motte-and-bailey, showing its construction without modern interferences, such as trees.

Top right: Dr. Kieran O’Connor giving a talk in Longford Library on the research project during Heritage Week 2012.

DEVELOPMENT OF AN INVASIVE SPECIES AWARENESS AND RECORDING APP – PHASE 1

Longford Heritage Office, with co-funding from the Heritage Council and in partnership with the National Biodiversity Data Centre and Invasive Species Ireland, developed an invasive species smartphone application which will allow users to inform themselves of the primary threats to Ireland’s biodiversity, agriculture and infrastructure from the most damaging of invasive species. The application will also allow the user to record instances of potential invasive species in real time, using mapping and GIS coordinates built into the system. This information will be relayed to the National Biodiversity Data Centre and will help track the spread and impact of invasive species. It may also allow local communities and other organisations develop management programmes in their area more effectively. Although it is being developed in Longford, the application aims to be an all-island service and it is the first of its kind in Ireland and the UK to record both aquatic and land-based species.



This phase concerned the development of the application on the iOS platform, as it provided a stable operating system on a limited number of device types and sizes with a good market share throughout the country. This will be available free of charge in the App Store in the first half of 2013 after testing.

Phase 2 concerns the development of the Android version of the application and will be available to the public later in 2013.

Left: Screenshot of the “Invasives Ireland” smart device App showing a sample of the content and functionality of the App.

HERITAGE WEEK 2012 PROGRAMME

National Heritage Week programme took place in 2012 from the 18th to 26th August. A wide range of events were organised in Longford by local groups and heritage organisations with more becoming involved than ever before – in particular Drumlisk Tidy Towns and Newtownforbes Tidy Towns Committees, who organised fascinating tours highlighting the treasures of their respective areas. Building on the popularity of previous years events, community events were organised to appeal to families, in particular the second annual Ballymahon Heritage Day, which featured a “High Nelly” parade and a busking competition. All events were well-attended with an overall increase of attendees on previous years. It is hoped that the ongoing success of Heritage Week in Longford can be developed further as part of the “Old Days, Old Ways” festival in August 2013, which will take place to celebrate The Gathering 2013.



Top: Images from the Ballymahon Heritage Day 2012, as part of Heritage Week 2012.

Above: Images from other Heritage Week events including: Jude Flynn on genealogy in the Local History Reading Room, the Leo Casey Evening at Ballymahon Library and Jim Fisher talking through organic gardening and planting.

Prof. Barry Raftery Memorial Conference – June 2012

Wetlands Heritage Ireland, in partnership with the County Longford Heritage Office, hosted the Professor Barry Raftery Memorial Conference on the 8th and 9th June 2012.

Prof. Raftery was formerly the head of the Department of Archaeology in UCD. He led the excavation of the Iron Age timber roadways in the Bord na Móna works near Kenagh in the early 1980s. These trackways, or toghers, are conserved and a section of is visible in the Corlea Trackway Visitor Centre, operated by the OPW.

The programme opened on Friday the 8th in the Corlea Trackway Visitor Centre where schoolchildren were invited to learn about the biodiversity and archaeology of the bogs. The conference proper took place on the 9th in the Goldsmith Room of Ballymahon Library. The conference programme included the following speakers and talks:

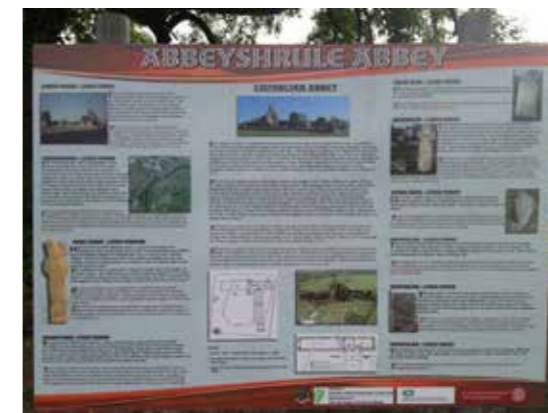
- » Dr. Aidan O’Sullivan, UCD School of Archaeology - “Tales of Trackways from Pagan Celtic Ireland: what did Barry Raftery discover on the Corlea Iron Age Road and why is it important?”
- » Conor McDermott, UCD School of Archaeology – “Around and beyond the great Iron Age road”.
- » Prof. John Feehan - “Looking for footprints, listening to echoes.”
- » Gerry Ryan, Bord na Móna, Director of Land & Property and Group Secretary – “Bord na Móna Strategic Plan - A New Contract with Nature”.
- » Harry Hall, Wetlands Heritage Ireland - “We have a dream! ; an overview of the ethos of WHI”
- » Open discussion forum.
- » Reception in Corlea Trackway Visitor Centre including:
- » Paddy Egan, Local Historian- “My memories of Barry Raftery”
- » Photographic exhibition
- » Corlea Trackway Excavation Reunion – a gathering of archaeology students who worked on the excavation of the Corlea Trackway with Prof. Raftery.

The conference was funded by the Department of Arts, Heritage & the Gaeltacht’s Environment Fund.

OTHER HERITAGE AWARENESS

To further increase awareness of heritage within County Longford the Heritage Office undertook the following:

- » Administration of the Structures at Risk Fund 2012
- » Providing guidance and advice on architectural conservation and heritage matters to Local Authority staff and departments, e.g. traditional stonework in bridge repairs; Protected Structures and conservation or biodiversity and its relevant legislation
- » Providing support and advice to private individuals and community groups in the care and conservation of their built heritage
- » Undertaking assessments of relevant Planning Applications for the Longford Local Authorities Planning Section
- » Providing ongoing support to the Planning Section and to the Diocese of Ardagh & Clonmacnois in relation to the conservation and repair of St. Mel’s Cathedral
- » Liaising and assisting community groups and local heritage organisations in researching and promoting their heritage projects
- » Providing support to the Abbeyshrule community in their participation in the Entente Florale competition in 2012



Signage developed for Abbeyshrule Abbey by Longford Heritage Office

The Heritage Officer Programme is a partnership arrangement between The Heritage Council and Longford County Council

LONGFORD COUNTY ARCHIVES SERVICE

The Archives Service had another busy and very successful year. It acquired new collections, collaborated in various projects and assisted with numerous enquiries from the public. It also continued to assist local authority staff in a variety of record-keeping matters.

1. Archives deposited

The collections deposited were as follows:

- » Daily report books and other items from Ballymahon No. 2 N.S., 1873-1924
- » Papers concerning a dispute between Francis Mullervy, Clonbroney, and Edward More O’Ferrall, 1883
- » Longford U.D.C. rent book, 1908-1921
- » Papers concerning the north Longford I.R.A., 1919-1923
- » Papers of the Fox family, Foxhall, Legan, mainly 19th century
- » Registers, roll books, daily report books and other items from Ballycloghan N.S., c. 1920-2012
- » A collection of bills and receipts from Edgeworthstown, mid-20th century
- » Rent books, diaries and other items from the King-Harman estate, Newcastle House, c. 1850- c.1950.

2. Archives catalogued

The registers, roll books, daily report books and other documents from Colehill N.S. covering the period from 1891 to 2007 have been catalogued and are available to the public.

3. Titanic centenary commemoration

The Archivist was a member of the committee that organised a series of events to commemorate the centenary of the sinking of Titanic, on which there were fourteen Longford passengers. In co-operation with the Heritage Office, he contributed to the preparation an educational pack for schools in the county. He also helped to prepare an exhibition on the disaster, which opened in Longford Library on 13th April.

The Archivist gave talks on the Titanic and the Longford passengers to groups as follows:

- » 18 April: Our Lady's Manor Nursing Home (with Heritage Officer)
- » 23 April: St Mel's College
- » 24 April: Scoil Samhthann, Ballinalee (with Heritage Officer)
- » 1 May: Cnoc Mhuire, Granard and St Columba's N.S., Mullinalaghta
- » 2 May: Longford Active Retirement Group
- » 8 May: St Joseph's Care Centre (with Heritage Officer)
- » 18 June: St Patrick's N.S., Ballinamuck (with Heritage Officer).



4. Other outreach and educational activities

The Archivist was also involved in other outreach activities as follows:

- » 27 March: class visit from St Michael's N.S. to Local Studies and Archives
- » 7 May: short talk at unveiling of Heber Donn statue, Newtowncashel
- » 9 May: class visit from St John's N.S to Local Studies and Archives
- » 14 May: 'An introduction to archives', all first year students, Moyne C.S.
- » 15 June: 'An introduction to family history', St Christopher's Centre
- » 18 August: talk on 'Ballymahon a century ago' and guided walk as part of Ballymahon Heritage and Market Day
- » 8 September: talk on the murder of Caleb Barnes Harman at Ardagh Heritage Centre
- » 25 September: 'An introduction to archives', all first year students, Moyne C.S.
- » 12 October, 25 October: walking tours of Longford town with transition year students, Scoil Mhuire, Longford
- » 13 November: walking tour of Longford town, St Michael's N.S.
- » 27 November: walking tour of town, followed by visit to Local Studies and Archives with Adult Learning Centre.

5. Ireland Reaching Out

At the request of the County Longford Community and Voluntary Forum, the Archivist, in association with the Heritage Officer, prepared a submission on the feasibility of establishing the Ireland Reaching Out initiative in reverse genealogy in Longford.

6. Records management

The Archivist undertook work on records in the County Manager's office and in the Corporate Services Section of Longford County Council.

7. Training in emergency planning

The Archivist attended two training events in Dublin on emergency planning in Archives and Library Services.

LONGFORD SPORTS PARTNERSHIP

BOARD OF LONGFORD SPORTS PARTNERSHIP

The Board of Longford Sports Partnership (2012) comprised of representatives from statutory, voluntary and sporting organisations:

SECTOR	MEMBERS
Longford County Council	Cllr. Michael Carrigy, Chair. Cllr. Brendan Gilmore and Cllr. John Duffy. Frank Sheridan, Director of Services
Health Service Executive	Clodagh Armitage
Longford Community Resources Ltd.	Sean Hannon
Vocational Education Committee	Michael O'Rourke
County Development Board	Ursula Hussey
County Longford Youth Services	Mark Noble
Longford Leisure Centre	Mary Killane
St. Christopher's Services Ltd.	Oonagh Flynn
Community & Voluntary Forum	Reina Flower
Sporting Representatives	Fabien Walsh, Eileen Farrell, Peter O'Reilly, Sean Dempsey
RAPID	Rose Kane and Frank Horne

CORE PROGRAMMES

In 2012, six schools received *Buntús Generic* training in County Longford. The programme provides teacher training, a bag of equipment and resource cards all of which are free to the schools.

Three *Code of Ethics and Good Practice for Children's Sport* (Child Protection) workshops were held throughout the year. Forty six volunteers and coaches were certified by the Irish Sports Council following the training and over 12 sports represented. Courses will continue to run on a regular basis.

The *Sports Club Grant Scheme 2012* administered by the LSP assisted fourteen clubs in the county. Projects that were supported include junior club development, coach education and training and projects which increased community usage of facilities. Successful clubs were granted their award at the Sports Awards evening in June with Paul McGrath as special guest on the night.

The inaugural Longford Sports Awards took place in the Backstage Theatre under the gaze of the legendary Irish soccer star, Paul McGrath, along with Mayor, Frank Kilbride and countless other dignitaries and members of the public. In all, over 200 people turned out to support our local sporting talent. Benny O'Brien was an excellent MC on the night which saw ten winners announced under a selection of categories. Each award was co-presented by a local sponsor and Paul McGrath.

TARGET PROGRAMMES

Girls On The Move, a programme targeting inactive teenage girls was run in four secondary schools in the county. They were Templemichael College, Ardscoil Phadraig, Granard, Moyne Community School and the Mercy Secondary School, Ballymahon.

Longford's first ever *Men on the Move* programme was run in 2012. Organised by Longford Sports Partnership in conjunction the HSE Mid-Leinster, the programme saw a group of enthusiastic men endeavour to improve their health and wellbeing in the fields of physical activity and nutrition. The 12 week programme was the first of its kind locally in that it catered for the men's physical activity needs in addition to their nutrition and health needs. The men got to grips with new exercise techniques which they can do independently in their own homes and also were able to get hands on with food in a kitchen environment experimenting with new tastes and healthy foods.

June was a month for cycling with national Bike week running. The LSP supported this national initiative through a number of events and projects. These include a Cycle to School Day, Bike to Work Day and Cycle safe in schools which was run in conjunction with Longford County Council and the RSA.



Longford Cycling Tour took place on 24th June, with approximately 120 participants enjoying the choice of two routes around North Longford 15km, 50km. The tour was run in partnership with Mid West Road Club and LCRL. Plans are afoot for another tour in the summer of 2013.

Longford Sports Partnership in conjunction with the HSE is currently facilitating the *Playground Markings Initiative* which is being rolled out in primary schools in Longford.

Stencil Packs (stencils and games booklet) which enable schools to put down playground markings are being offered free to all primary schools in Longford to encourage greater physical activity in young children through Play in the school setting.

The LSP supported national *Recreation Week* and *Play Day* contributing to various events including a soccer blitz, intercultural family day, a battle of the bands competition, a mural and an outdoor adventure day for young people. This was done in conjunction with local youth agencies.

On Saturday, 14th January, Longford Sports Partnership teamed up with RTE's 'Operation Transformation' to organise a walk along the canal as part of a nationwide initiative. This walk saw an enthusiastic and well-spirited bunch striding into the New Year.

Over one hundred participants turned out to enjoy the walk along the Slí na Sláinte route at the canal. A great time was had by all who after the event retired to PVs bar to warm up with tea and coffee, light refreshments and a friendly chat.

Longford wasn't the only county on its feet. All counties hosted a walk in conjunction with Operation Transformation.

COMMUNICATIONS

The LSP's Facebook page www.facebook.com/longfordsportspartnership in addition to its website www.longfordsports.ie is an excellent way of communicating to the public. All events, activities and feedback are updated on both. Longford Sports Partnership also has a weekly news column in the Sports section of the Longford Leader. Updates are also put on Longford County Council's twitter account and the Longford website www.longford.ie.

HUMAN RESOURCES

OVERVIEW

The Human Resources Department is primarily responsible for:

- » Recruitment and Deployment of staff
- » Maintenance of Human Resources IT Management System
- » Provision of Management Reports (internally & externally)
- » Administration of Payroll & Superannuation Amendments
- » Staff Welfare, Training and Development
- » Attendance Management
- » Performance Management
- » Human Resources Policies and Procedures
- » Administration of Employee Schemes
- » Administration of Work Experience and Internship Schemes
- » Equality and Diversity Management
- » Industrial/Staff Relations
- » Workplace Partnership.

The work of the Human Resources (HR) Department is determined by the goals and objectives identified in the Council's Corporate Plan. In 2012, our work continued to be heavily influenced by Government Policy decisions in relation to Public Services.

The HR Department has responsibility for the coordination and completion of the annual progress report on savings and productivity measures implemented under the Public Service Agreement 2010-2014. In 2012, the second progress report was submitted.

Ongoing cuts in funding and employee numbers and the promotion of incentivised leave/pension schemes along with the moratorium on recruitment and temporary filling of vacant posts continued to have a significant impact on the key work areas of the Human Resources Department during 2012.

The Human Resources Department's work programme is focussed on the challenge of managing and maintaining service delivery with a reduced workforce, achieving efficiencies and providing leadership to employees to assist them in dealing with current and future challenges.

RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION

The statistics in the attached table clearly demonstrate the reduced level of recruitment activity, with new recruits being restricted to emergency services.

The HR Department follows nationally implemented procedures, referring requests to fill a limited number of identified posts to the Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government as exceptions to the moratorium on filling of public service posts.

RECRUITMENT STATISTICS 2012

Number of Competitions Advertised	Number of Interview Days	Number of Applicants invited for interview	Number of Applicants who attended for interview	Number of appointments	Number of New Recruits
12	9	77	73	16 Permanent 4 Temporary	4 (Fire Service)

TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT

In 2012, HR focussed delivery on Health & Safety training to ensure compliance with mandatory obligations.

A total of 119 training programmes were delivered to 522 participants over 114.6 days across all disciplines, as indicated in the table below.

<i>Toolbox Talk – General Safety Requirements for Roadworks</i>	<i>Chainsaw Training</i>
<i>Health & Safety Refresher Training, Water Services.</i>	<i>EPA – Disinfectant Manual</i>
<i>Slinger & Signaller Training</i>	<i>LAVS Annual Conference</i>
<i>Changes in Building Regulations (Heating & Plumbing)</i>	<i>Water Treatment – Dealing with problems</i>
<i>Control of Fat, Oil & Grease Seminar.</i>	<i>NPS – Procurement Seminar</i>
<i>Time & Attendance Training for Users</i>	<i>Signing, Lighting & Guarding at Roadworks</i>
<i>Time & Attendance Training for Line Managers</i>	<i>Toolbox Talk – Health & Safety Requirements for Roads Section</i>
<i>Accessibility Training</i>	<i>C2 Confined Spaces Refresher Training for Supervisors</i>
<i>Driver CPC Module 3</i>	<i>C3 Confined Spaces Refresher Training for Operatives</i>
<i>Abrasive Wheels Training Full</i>	<i>LA Engineers as Expert Witness Seminar</i>
<i>Abrasive Wheels Refresher Training</i>	<i>Dog Warden Training Course</i>
<i>Signing, Lighting & Guarding at Roadworks Preparation Course</i>	<i>ORP – Activated Sludge Filament Training</i>
<i>Environmental Legislation Seminar</i>	<i>Distribution System O&M Undirectional Flushing Training</i>
<i>Safepass</i>	<i>Low & Medium Risk in Confined Space Programme</i>
<i>IOSH Managing Safely in Construction Refresher Course</i>	<i>Asbestos Guidelines Training</i>
<i>Level B2 Irish Course</i>	<i>Core Organisational Restructuring Training</i>
<i>Safety Representative Training (Full Course)</i>	<i>IAT – Road Engineering Course</i>
<i>Safety Rep Refresher Training</i>	<i>HR Conference</i>
<i>Procurement Conditions of Engagement Course</i>	<i>AED Refresher Training</i>
<i>Safe Systems of Work Practices</i>	<i>Energy Management Committee Training</i>
<i>Safe Lift Passenger Release Training</i>	<i>eTenders Controller Training</i>
<i>Hazardous Chemical & Spillage Control Course</i>	<i>Mini Digger Training</i>
<i>Procurement – Conditions of Contract Course</i>	<i>Planning & Environmental Law Conference</i>
<i>Site Supervision Course</i>	<i>Pavement Surface Conditions Index Workshop</i>
<i>Water Service Operator Training</i>	<i>Water Conservation – Network Managers Course</i>
<i>Retirement Planning Course</i>	<i>Water Conservation – Network Management – Operatives Course</i>
<i>New Health & Safety Legislative Database Training</i>	<i>Energy Efficiency in Water Services Course</i>
<i>Manual Handling Training</i>	

INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS

Industrial relations refers to the collective relationship between employers and employees. The organisation continues to maintain good industrial relations with active engagement with all stakeholders. The key challenge in 2012 was to progress the local action plan in accordance with the Public Service Agreement 2010-2014.

The local action plan has focussed discussions between management and employee representative bodies. The national agreement on standardisation of annual leave was implemented locally in respect of the 2012 leave year. Engagement at local level continues with ongoing implementation of efficiencies and productivity measures.

HR PAYROLL & SUPERANNUATION INFORMATION SYSTEM

Following a Business Process Review at national level in relation to Human Resource Management, it was recommended that an integrated ICT system be implemented to assist with the efficient execution of the activities within this function. Following national tender the agreed system was the CORE HR System. The system offers an integrated ICT solution to the management of our Human Resources; Time & Attendance, Payroll and Superannuation records. 2012 saw the completion of the Phase I module implemented in Longford County Council.

Progress to date:

The Project Team built on the successful implementation of the HR, Superannuation, Indoor and Outdoor Time & Attendance, Departmental Returns, Central Statistics Office (CSO) and Payroll modules with the successful implementation of the Recruitment and Training modules in 2012. Also in 2012 a new electronic staff leave calendar was introduced which provides staff with up to date attendance details from the Core Time & Attendance module for indoor staff.

All the above modules are now fully operational and maintained by the relevant sections. The implementation has facilitated a shared service for Payroll, Superannuation, Indoor and Outdoor Time & Attendance, Training and Human Resources between Longford County and Town Council.

PARTNERSHIP

Workplace Partnership is a process whereby management, employees and trade unions work together to bring about organisational change in an open and co-operative manner. The Workplace Partnership process is achieved by employee participation and consultation, information sharing and the development of joint objectives.

Due to the national withdrawal of the Unions from the Partnership process, the work of the local Partnership Committee had been severely restricted. The Partnership Committee of Longford Local Authorities met once in 2012.

PLANNING

Significant activities undertaken by the Planning Department in 2012 are outlined below. New legislation, guidelines and the Planning and Development (Amendment) Act, 2010, in particular, have created ongoing challenges in these times of strained resources.

PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT

The Development Management Section is responsible for processing all planning applications in accordance with the Planning and Development Act, 2000 (as amended) and the Planning and Development Regulations.

Application numbers for 2012 have remained at a similar level to 2011, reflecting economic trends and the downturn in the construction sector. There were 293 planning applications in 2012, 99 of which were extensions of duration of planning permission. There were 56 Commencement Notices submitted in 2012. The decrease in planning applications was balanced by an increase in demands in other areas of the planning system, most notably in terms of taking in charge, unfinished housing estates, enforcement and the forward planning workload at a local and regional level.

Planning applications are now screened for appropriate assessment as required by the Habitats Directive and in accordance with the guidelines issued by the Department of Environment, Community and Local Government (DoECLG).

Pre-Planning consultations are an integral part of the Development Management process and are utilised on an ongoing and increasing basis. These meetings are held to provide a higher quality and more transparent planning service to the general public. In 2012 over 80 pre-planning meetings were held to facilitate discussion with potential applicants on the issues associated with their proposals as well as many phone and email queries. Pre-planning meetings are now recorded digitally to facilitate consistency, transparency and seamless integration with the decision-making process.

Licence applications under Section 254 of the Planning and Development Act, 2000, principally for roadside signage and planning questions for LEADER funding, are a regular feature of the work carried out in the past three years, representing a substantial increase in workload over the previous years.

DEVELOPMENT CONTRIBUTIONS

Development Contributions are levied in accordance with the scheme adopted by the Council under Section 48 of the Planning and Development Act, 2000. Each grant of planning permission contains a condition requiring the payment of a relevant development contribution which becomes payable if and when the development commences. There are many cases where permissions granted have been superseded by alternative permissions on the same site and where permissions granted have not yet been activated. This can sometimes give an inaccurate impression of the amount actually due and owing to the local authority. Development contributions received in 2012 amount to €130,829.

The Development Contribution Scheme has had a very positive impact on the delivery of infrastructure in Longford since its introduction. It has generated funds for a wide variety of infrastructure, including the acquisition of land, provision of open spaces, recreational and community facilities, amenity and landscaping works, roads, car parks, footpaths, water and waste water facilities.

Significant progress was made in this area over 2009-2012 in the collection of outstanding monies particularly given the difficult economic conditions.

FORWARD PLANNING

The Forward Planning Section is responsible for the research, preparation and production of all Development Plans, Local Area Plans and forward looking initiatives. The economic downturn and slowdown in the construction industry does not affect the forward planning work schedule which is governed by the 2000 Planning and Development Act and ongoing implementation of national and EU legislation in the planning and environmental arena. In addition, the Forward Planning Section is regularly involved with other projects that require substantial time allocation such as Compulsory Purchase Orders (CPOs), Route Corridor Studies and other projects from local to national level.

One of the most significant elements of the Act on the Forward Planning schedule is the introduction of the requirement for each County Development Plan to contain a Core Strategy. This is a specifically defined central foundation statement that outlines the existing and proposed population distribution and settlement hierarchy for the county. The aim has been to produce a transparent evidence-based approach to land zoning and spatial designations clearly informed by and in accordance with ministerial guidelines and higher tier plans such as the National Spatial Strategy and Regional Planning Guidelines. The Core Strategy aligns zoning provisions with the provision of supporting infrastructure and in accordance with other considerations such as housing and settlement strategies.

The Core Strategy review and variation of the County Development Plan was completed in September, 2012.

LOCAL AREA PLANS

All work on Local Area Plans has been put on hold due to lack of staff resources.

PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT (AMENDMENT) ACT, 2010

There are several significant legislative provisions in the Act which will transform planning over the next number of years, in particular with regard to quarries, which were commenced and completed in 2012. 46 quarries or significant sites in total were identified, investigated, surveyed and reported on by the planning section. This involved an enormous and exhaustive amount of investigative work. The work was completed within the statutory period and some cases have now been progressed to An Bord Pleanála for review.

OTHER PROJECTS

STRATEGIC ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT AND APPROPRIATE ASSESSMENT

- » All plans and projects must be screened for Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) – public display and consultation element in each case.
- » Where required and carried out, in tandem with plan process, systems must be developed, maintained and implemented to monitor indicators as set out in SEA.
- » Appropriate Assessment (AA) screening is required for all statutory and non-statutory plans - Appropriate Assessment of plans and projects in Ireland – Guidance or Planning Authorities DoEHLG 2009.
- » Circular SEA 1/08 and NPWS 1/08 – necessity to undertake AA of land use plans in accordance with Article 6 of the Habitats Directive – any plan or project which is not directly connected with or necessary to the management of the natura site (SPA, cSPA, SAC, cSAC) concerned but is likely to have a significant effect on it, on its own or in combination with other plans and projects is to be authorised only if it will not adversely affect the integrity of the site.

The management of Part VIII planning processes and the preparation of reports to facilitate County Council developments (including AA and SEA as appropriate) are a regular feature of the work of the Planning Section.

STATISTICS AND RETURNS

The Planning Section is required, at regular intervals, to provide statistical information to the Midland Regional Authority, DoECLG and the Central Statistics Office (CSO). Some of these returns have a significant time input, notably the annual housing land availability survey, submitted each September to the DoECLG.

Statistics are regularly compiled by the Planning Sections for other departments within the Council to facilitate the functioning of the organisation as a whole. This includes the provision of population and application data for studies on the provision of water and waste water services and infrastructure reports for Heritage, Environment, Roads and Housing projects. The Department has also requested statistics in relation to Quarries.

FLOOD RISK ASSESSMENT

Flood Risk Assessment Guidelines issued by the DoECLG will require significant input from the Planning Section. Detailed county level provisions will be addressed following the preparation of the Shannon Catchment Flood Risk Management Study currently underway by the Office of Public Works (OPW) and due for completion in 2012. Individual Flood Risk Assessments may be required as part of the development management process.

GEOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION SYSTEMS

Geographical Information Systems (GIS) are an essential tool in the planning system allowing ease of access to information internally between different Council departments. It also facilitates the transfer of spatial information to the public over the internet or at information points located in the Council buildings. GIS is also used to acquire information such as statistical returns and for monitoring such as the rural mapping required under the County Development Plan and ongoing SEA monitoring.

The Department has placed a significant emphasis on the GIS mapping of Planning information in local authorities and requires that it be updated regularly. The system is only as good as the information that it receives which must be maintained and updated on a regular basis.

MISCELLANEOUS

The day-to-day workings of the Planning Section require that plans, amendments and variations are prepared, sometimes at short notice. These require strict adherence to the relevant legislative provisions, forming a specific set of consultative processes that the Forward Planning Section are continuously streamlining and refining in order to provide an inclusive, effective and efficient service.

PLANNING ENFORCEMENT

In 2012, 13 pre-warning letters and 23 warning letters were issued along with 11 enforcement notices and 2 new cases referred for legal proceedings.

There has been a drop in enforcement notices issued and legal proceedings instigated over the period 2011-2012 due to reduced development activities and greater success in negotiation and resolution at warning letter stage. A number of very difficult cases including legacy cases, however, have proceeded to Court with a reasonable level of success on the Council's behalf.

There has also been a substantial number of various planning queries and Freedom of Information requests which uses up a substantial amount of the Planning Section's very scarce resources.





Cllr. Micheál Carrigy,

Chairperson of Housing & Planning SPC



Mr. Barry Lynch

Head of Finance/Director of Services

FINANCE & INFORMATION SERVICES, HOUSING & BUILDING

FINANCE

The main functions of the Finance Department of Longford County Council are to:

- » Achieve the financial objectives of the Council's Corporate Plan
- » Manage the financial affairs of the Council
- » Ensure that adequate internal controls are in operation to safeguard the assets of the organisation, and to ensure the accuracy and reliability of the accounting records
- » Ensure as far as possible that value for money is achieved throughout the organisation.

SERVICES

- » Motor Taxation
- » Rates/Water Charges/Housing Rents/Non-Principal Private Residence (NPPR)
- » Higher Education Grants
- » General Office – processing payments to suppliers and payroll.

PAYMENT PRACTICES

The provisions of the Prompt Payment of Accounts Act, 1997 and the European Communities (Late Payment in Commercial Transactions) Regulations, 2002 applies to Longford County Council and Longford Town Council. Both Local Authorities have systems in place to ensure that interest penalties are not incurred. However, in a small number of cases, late payments occurred in 2012.

Total amount of interest penalties:

Longford Co. Council	€212.64
Longford Town Council	Nil

Every effort is made to ensure compliance with the Act and Regulations and avoidance of interest penalties. However, the procedures can only provide reasonable and not absolute assurance against material non-compliance with the legislation.

INTERNAL AUDIT

Internal Audit is an independent appraisal function charged with reviewing activities across all areas within Longford County Council. It objectively examines and reports on management of risks, the adequacy of internal controls and the achievement of proper, efficient and economic use of resources. An Internal Audit Charter sets out the role and responsibilities of the Internal Auditor and Management.

HIGHER EDUCATION GRANTS

The Student Support Act, 2011 provides legislative basis for the reform of student grants. The key provision of the Act is the consolidation of the four student grant schemes into a single unified scheme, the establishment of a single grant awarding authority and an independent appeals board. The grant awarding authority known as Student Universal Support Ireland, SUSI, commenced operation for the 2012/13 academic year.

The grant scheme for the 2012/13 academic year is governed by:

- » Student Support Act, 2011
- » Student Support Regulations, 2012 [S.I. 187 of 2012]
- » Student Grant Scheme 2012 [S.I. 189 of 2012]

HIGHER EDUCATION GRANTS - ACADEMIC YEAR 2012 - 2013

Total number of students in receipt of Higher Education Grants	194
Number of students attending Irish colleges	185
Number of students attending UK colleges (including Northern Ireland) and EU colleges	9

EXPENDITURE

LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 2001 – SECTION 142 EXPENDITURE

Mayor and Other Allowances	€69,000
Entertainment and Associated Expenses	€7,030
Representational Payments, Expenses of Members and Representation at Conferences	€460,065
Total	€536,095

INCOME GENERATION UNIT

The Income Generation Unit is responsible for the collection of the main revenue income streams for the Council. This includes rates, commercial water charges, housing rents, housing loans and RAS rents. The Unit also operates the cash desk which facilitates customer payments for Council goods and services.

(1) COMMERCIAL WATER CHARGES

During 2012, the Unit continued to improve the collection of commercial water charges. The collection rate increased again in 2012. Difficulties remain however in relation to delays in progressing cases of non payment through the Courts and also disconnection of supply in cases where there is a domestic dwelling involved.

Period	Opening Balance	Water Charges Invoiced	Receipts	Writeoffs due to leaks etc.	% Collected	Closing Balance
2009	1,233,982.67	1,626,791.25	-1,448,384.29	-92,980.61	52.30	1,320,871.22
2010	1,320,871.22	1,837,764.27	-1,657,701.18	-196,490.98	55.97	1,304,073.33
2011	1,304,073.33	1,816,346.29	-1,732,251.22	-164,612.84	58.61	1,223,555.56
2012	1,217,484.31	1,671,066.51	-1,685,953.76	-138,993.24	61.33	1,062,953.82

The Local Government Efficiency Review (July 2010) has outlined significant changes in local government funding. Domestic water charges have been highlighted as a revenue stream for local authorities as has the need to improve debt collection of commercial water customers. The Government announced in 2011 that domestic water customers would be metered by 2014. The Government has decided on the format of a new water utility Irish Water which will assume responsibility for operation of the water network including billing of domestic and commercial customers. This will have a significant impact on the role of local authorities in water provision.

(2) RESIDENTIAL PROPERTY CHARGES

NON PRINCIPAL PRIVATE RESIDENCE CHARGE (NPPR)

This charge was introduced in 2009 on residential property which is not the owner's principal place of residence. NPPR collection reports show that the gross amount collected in 2012 (€609,260) has increased from 2011 (€584,220). The number of NPPR properties registered has also increased from 2,721 in 2011 to 2,899 in 2012. The charge is based on self assessment by the property owner and there are substantial late payment charges and fines for non compliance.

During 2012, the Income Generation Unit identified properties where the charge was due and had not been paid. Legal proceedings were commenced in a number of these cases to recover amounts owed to the Council.

HOUSEHOLD CHARGE

The Local Government (Household Charge) Act 2011 introduced a further charge on all residential property of €100 per property. This charge is intended to help fund essential local government services. The Income Generation Unit facilitated payment of the charge at Council Offices and dealt with numerous queries in relation to the operation of the charge. The compliance rate in the county was 70% of households paid or were entitled to a waiver. The number of properties where the charge was paid or where the property was subject to a waiver was 9,066. The Household Charge is to be replaced by a Local Property Tax in 2013 which will be administered by the Revenue Commissioners.

(3) RATES

The continued economic downturn has led to an increase in the number of vacant commercial properties for let in the county. This has an impact on the potential rates base. Inspection of vacant rateable premises was undertaken throughout the year. In addition, details of new buildings, not previously rated, were sent to the Valuation Office for valuation.

The Income Generation Unit continued to facilitate monthly instalment arrangements for rate payers with cash flow problems. Despite a difficult economic environment the collection rate increased slightly to 81.9% and receipts increased by €215,432.

Year	Rates Invoiced 2012	Receipts 2012	% Collected
2009	3,958,704	3,589,771	87.5
2010	3,861,091	3,631,606	85.3
2011	4,705,596	3,642,088	80.6
2012	4,718,199	3,857,520	81.9

(4) RENTS AND LOANS

Income Generation Unit is responsible for dealing with loan and rent accounts that are in arrears. The setting of rent and adjustments to rent accounts are done by the Housing Department. During 2012, rent collection levels were maintained and arrears were reduced. Rent charged decreased by almost €100,000 reflecting the impact of reduced tenant household income on the Council's differential rent scheme. The Council continues to promote payment by standing order and the Household Budget Scheme operated in conjunction with An Post.

Year	Opening Balance	Rent Charged	Receipts	% Collected	Rent Arrears
2009	398,990.21	3,900,396.15	-3,668,815.48	85.76	608,991.45
2010	608,991.45	3,820,020.89	-3,832,610.50	86.74	585,747.80
2011	585,747.80	3,700,689.34	-3,755,677.62	87.79	522,547.25
2012	521,898.78	3,603,116.67	-3,607,784.85	87.65	508,152.42

The collection of housing loan repayments continued to be a major source of concern in 2012. The general economic downturn and reduction in income of many loan customers led to an increase in the level of loan arrears. The Council commenced implementing a new Mortgage Arrears Resolution Process (MARP) in September 2012. This has assisted the making of payment arrangements with some customers and will also facilitate the restructuring of loans in some cases.

Year	Opening Balance	Loan charges	Receipts YTD	% Collected	Loan Arrears
2009	199,182.68	1,146,652.57	-1,177,395.39	87.48	168,439.86
2010	168,439.86	1,272,671.94	-1,094,409.83	75.94	346,701.97
2011	346,701.97	1,137,138.30	-1,037,543.25	69.91	446,467.02
2012	446,467.02	1,057,145.32	-917,423.34	61.01	586,349.00

MOTOR TAX

The Government decided in 2012 to centralise the issue of driving licences. Preparatory work to facilitate the new arrangements took place in late 2012. The Road Safety Authority became the national licensing authority from 01/01/2013. For an interim period in 2013, Motor Tax Offices will continue to issue driving licences on behalf of the National Driving Licence Service.

MOTOR TAX STATISTICS 2012

Motor Tax Transactions	No of Transactions	€
Vehicle Licences (Discs)	28,525	5,944,152
Driver Licences	5,425	94,350
Road Worthiness Certificates	3,391	24,414
Trade Licences	66	21,648
Miscellaneous Receipts	1,880	110,626
Total	39,287	6,195,190

In addition 12,423 vehicle licences (tax discs) were issued by Motor Tax Online Service during 2012. The percentage of motor tax renewals completed on line in 2012 was 34.6% This represented a 4.71% increase on 2011. These vehicle licences are issued directly from the Vehicle Registration Unit in Shannon, County Clare.

Drivers Licences issued 2012

Full Driving Licences	3,494
Provisional Driving Licences	1,485
Duplicate Driving Licences	446
Total Driving Licences Processed	5,425

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATIONS TECHNOLOGY**KEY FUNCTIONS OF ICT DEPARTMENT**

Longford Local Authorities ICT Department provides and supports the following ICT Systems:

- » Electronic mail, Internet, Intranet and Extranet
- » Web based Applications
- » Agresso Financial systems that support the Local Authorities' financial management information systems and transaction processing
- » Geographical information systems that provide essential information on roads, water mains etc. in the county
- » Internal bespoke applications for Housing, Planning, Infrastructure, Environment and various support applications
- » Database management and administration
- » Systems backup and security.

NETWORK INFRASTRUCTURE

Longford County Council's IT network is made up of several complex components which require on-going management, maintenance and monitoring. Responsibility for managing the network also includes maintaining a Wide Area Network which connects all off-site offices back to Aras an Chontae via wireless, fibre optic and DSL links.

There are twelve sites in total - seven in Longford town and five outlying Library sites.

An audit and review of our wireless network took place during 2012 which provided for significant annual savings in maintenance and running costs as well as improved network resilience.

SYSTEM UPGRADES

A server room review took place during 2012 which looked at Virtualisation readiness and feasibility assessments carried out on all our servers in preparation for consolidating a large number of our existing servers onto as few as 3 servers. The Project was progressed to tender stage and will result in better utilisation of processing power and annual savings in energy, administration and maintenance costs.

DIGITAL LOCAL AGENDA PROJECT

During 2012, Longford County Council's ICT Section provided technical support to the Midlands Regional Authority and their participation in the European INTERREG IV C funded Digital Local Agenda Project. The Project's overall objective is, by means of interregional cooperation, to improve regional ICT policies in order to develop new forms and activities related to the application of ICT in the provision of public services, contributing to economic modernisation.

INTERNET & INTRANET

Longford County Council continued to expand its online content during 2012. All notices of public concern are published on our websites which are widely used.

Our Staff Intranet continues to be of strategic importance in the sharing of information among staff while also providing access to many of our most commonly used applications. During 2012 a new staff calendar was introduced on the intranet which extracts data from the newly implemented Core HR, Payroll, Time & Attendance and Superannuation IT System.

WEBSITE VISITS DURING 2012

Website	Number of Hits 2011	Number of Hits 2012
longfordcoco.ie	51,817	56950
longford.ie	51,148	57885
longfordtowncouncil.ie	6,957	7715
virtualwriter.net	3,286	5119
longfordlibrary.ie	19,945	24520

IT SUB COMMITTEE

The IT sub Committee met during 2012 under the Chairmanship of Councillor Mark Casey. Councillor Michael Carrigy joined the committee in 2012. One of the key initiatives of the Committee was a review of the NBS through a presentation made by the service provider, Three.

HOUSING**HOUSING NEEDS ASSESSMENT**

The housing needs of County Longford continued to be met through a range of housing options. A statutory assessment of housing need was undertaken in 2011. The next housing needs assessment will be carried out in 2013. At present Longford Local Authorities have in the region of 1,079 housing applications.

SOCIAL HOUSING

Approximately €1,159,921 was spent under the Social Housing Investment Programme in 2012. This included the purchase of seven individual houses and the construction of a single rural cottage.

TENANT PURCHASE SCHEME

The closing date for final applications for the 1995 Tenant Purchase Scheme was 31st December, 2012 with all transactions to be completed by 31st December, 2013. The completion of transactions for the 2011 Scheme is ongoing with all transactions to be completed by 30th June, 2013.

Final details of the Incremental Tenant Scheme which is due to replace the above schemes have yet to be announced.

HOUSING LOANS

Approval and advancement of housing loans continued in 2012. As in previous years, affordability levels as a result of the economic downturn have had a huge impact on the amount of applications being approved. A total of 11 valid applications were received in 2012 with 4 loans approved and 4 advanced. This does not include preliminary applications refused or withdrawn.

VOLUNTARY HOUSING

Longford County Council has a long association with the Voluntary Housing Sector and a substantial contribution has been made by the Voluntary Housing Sector in the provision of Social Housing in County Longford under the Capital Loan and Subsidy Scheme (CLSS) and the Capital Assistance Scheme (CAS). In 2012, Cluid Housing Association completed works on the second phase of the regeneration of St. Michael's Road, Longford. A total of 37 units were refurbished or built under CAS and CLSS.

The Disabled People of Longford (DPOL) were also successful in their application to fund the acquisition of a previously adapted property in Longford town under CAS.

MAINTENANCE AND REFURBISHMENT

In 2012, a sum of €645,000 was provided in the Budget for the maintenance and repair of Local Authority Housing. This area is continuously examined to ensure that best practice and value for money is achieved at all times.

ESTATE MANAGEMENT

The Housing Liaison Officer and Estate Manager continued to work with tenants and Residents Associations during 2012. Compulsory pre-tenancy courses are attended by all new tenants.

BETTER ESTATES AWARDS

The "Better Estates Awards" were held again in 2012. The results were as follows:

OVERALL WINNER

Cois Na hAbhainn , Ballinalee

Category 1 – Estates with little or no green area

1st Prize	Slí Na Móna, Ballymahon
2nd Prize	Ardán Alainn, Longford
3rd Prize	Marian Terrace, Ballymahon

Category 2 – Small Estate

1st Prize	Cois Na hAbhainn, Ballinalee
2nd Prize	River Crescent, Ballinalee
3rd Prize	Hazelwood, Colehill

Category 3 – Medium Estate

1st Prize	Foxhall Crescent, Legan
2nd Prize	Smithfield Crescent, Legan
3rd Prize	Curraghrua, Lanesboro

Category 4 – Large Estate – No Community Employment Scheme

1st Prize	Devine Crescent, Edgeworthstown
2nd Prize	St. Matthew's Park, Ballymahon
3rd Prize	Casey Court, Kenagh

Category 5 – Large Estate – With Community Employment Scheme

1st Prize	Church View, Lanesboro
2nd Prize	Springlawn, Longford
3rd Prize	MacEoin Park, Longford

Category 6 – Town Council Estates

1st Prize	Annaly Park, Longford
2nd Prize	Canálach Le Chéile, Longford
3rd Prize	Teffia Park, Longford

Category 7 – Best Floral Display – River Crescent, Ballinalee**Category 8 – Best New Entrant – Parkside Gardens, Ballymahon****Category 9 – Community Development**

1st Prize	Springlawn, Longford
2nd Prize	Canálach Le Chéile, Longford
3rd Prize	Wood View, Newtownforbes

Highly commended – Cartron Road, Kenagh – Kilbride Park, Edgeworthstown – Corry Park, Newtownforbes – Deerpark, Kenagh – Wood View, Newtownforbes.



River Crescent, Ballinalee

HOUSING GRANT SCHEMES

In 2012, a combined total of 206 applications were received under the three Grant Schemes:

- » the Mobility Aids Grant Scheme,
 - » the Housing Adaptation Grant Scheme, and
 - » the Housing Aid for Older People Grant Scheme
- A total of 220 grants were paid out and this amounted to €1,098,691.

TRAVELLER ACCOMMODATION

The Traveller Accommodation Programme 2009-2013 continues to be followed by Longford County Council. The programme sets out the 4-year strategy in relation to the programme and type of accommodation to be provided for Travellers. The Local Traveller Accommodation Consultative Committee meets on a quarterly basis and will monitor the progress achieved in relation to targets set out in the plan.

RENTAL ACCOMMODATION SCHEME (RAS)

At the end of 2012, there were 229 RAS tenancies in place. Forty Five (45) tenancies ceased during the year – these tenants were either housed in Local Authority Housing, transferred to RAS properties in other parts of the country or they housed themselves from their own resources. Eligibility for the Scheme depends on applicants being in receipt of rent supplement for more than 18 months and also eligible for Social Housing. The RAS Scheme and the associated operational and administrative costs are self financing in Longford.

LONG TERM / RAS-TYPE LEASING ARRANGEMENTS

The main features of the Scheme involve the Local Authority agreeing long term leases for single or multiple housing units with developers/owners of private rented properties over 10 to 20 years, or short term RAS type leases for properties over a 4 year term. There were 19 short term RAS Type leases in place at the end of 2012.

REMEDIAL/REGENERATION WORKS

Regeneration works at APC, Longford



In 2012, a budget of €1.65 million was approved to carry out Remedial Works at Tromra Road, Granard. Works are due to commence in early 2013.

In 2012, remedial works were carried out on 9 houses at Airde Pauric Colum, Longford. Properties were totally refurbished with new heating systems installed. All houses were subsequently tenanted. The development represents a significant part of the Council's commitment to upgrading its housing stock.

PRIVATE RENTED ACCOMMODATION STANDARDS

The local authority is responsible for implementation and enforcement of accommodation standards in the rental sector. Funding is made available to the local authority based on the number of inspections carried out. One hundred and seventy three (173) inspections were completed in 2012 and landlords were advised of non compliance issues. Many of these properties were inspected as part of the Rental Accommodation Scheme.

ENERGY RETROFITTING SCHEME

In 2012, Longford County Council received funding from the DoECLG in the amount of €211,520 as part of the above programme. Major works were carried out on 7 properties.

APPENDIX 1:

MEMBERSHIP OF STRATEGIC POLICY COMMITTEES 2009 - 2014

The statutory basis for establishment of Strategic Policy Committees (SPC) is contained in Section 48 of the Local Government Act, 2001. The formation of Strategic Policy Committees is intended to afford an opportunity to various sectoral interests to influence the development of policies by the Council. The Strategic Policy Committee Scheme and Membership of the Committees was formally adopted by resolution of the Members of Longford County Council at a meeting held on 20th January 2010.

Strategic Policy Committee (SPC)	County Council Members	Town Council Members	Sectoral Representatives	Total	Chair
Social Housing, Planning and Building Control Strategic Policy Committee	V. Kiernan M. Carrigy P. Nolan P.J. Reilly D. Glennon P. Connell	T. Flaherty	Development and Construction - Kevin Hughes Community and Voluntary - Paula O'Connor - Helena Doyle - Mary Lillis	11	Chair – First Term - Cllr. V. Kiernan Second Term Nominee Cllr. M. Carrigy
Transportation, Road Development and Road Safety Strategic Policy Committee	J. Browne J. Duffy M. Cahill L. McEntire M. Casey	M. Kilbride-Harkin	Agriculture and Farming - John Farrell Trade Union - Kieran Woods Environmental - Ray Hogan	9	Chair – First Term – Cllr. A. Mitchell Second Term Nominee Cllr. J. Duffy
Water Services and Environmental Strategic Policy Committee	G. Brady P. Belton S. Farrell P. Loughrey T. Victory	J. Maguire	Agriculture and Farming - Sean Reilly Environmental - Ray Hogan Community and Voluntary - Kevin Durkin	9	Chair – First Term – Cllr. G. Brady Second Term Nominee Cllr. P. Belton
Economic Development, Urban Renewal, Rural Re-organisation, Educational, Cultural and Recreational Development Strategic Policy Committee	M. Mulleady B. Steele F. Kilbride L. Bannon M. Sexton	J. Keogh	Business and Employers - Fintan McGill Community and Voluntary - Reina Flower Cultural - Tess Murphy	9	Chair – First Term – Cllr. M. Mulleady Second Term Nominee Cllr. B. Steele
TOTAL	21	4	13	38	

APPENDIX 2:

REPORT ON WORKING OF THE STRATEGIC POLICY COMMITTEES DURING 2012

WATER SERVICES AND ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY STRATEGIC POLICY COMMITTEE

The Strategic Policy Committee held four meetings in 2012 on the following dates:

- » 3rd February 2012
- » 3rd May 2012
- » 3rd October 2012
- » 5th December 2012

The main items for discussion and consideration at these meetings were:

- » Reform of the Irish Water Sector
- » Arterial Drainage
- » Dog Breeding Act
- » CFRAMS update
- » Fracking update
- » Control of Horses By Laws
- » Group Water Schemes
- » Sewer Connections

TRANSPORTATION, ROAD DEVELOPMENT AND ROAD SAFETY STRATEGIC POLICY COMMITTEE

The Strategic Policy Committee met two times during 2012. Meetings were held on the following dates:

- » 21st May 2012
- » 23rd November 2012

The main items for discussion and consideration at these meetings were:

- » Roads Grants 2012
- » Health and Safety
- » Public Lighting
- » Winter Maintenance Plan

SOCIAL HOUSING, PLANNING AND BUILDING CONTROL STRATEGIC POLICY COMMITTEE

The Strategic Policy Committee held three meetings in 2012 on the following dates:

- » 9th February 2012
- » 26th September 2012
- » 7th December 2012

The main issues considered by the Committee in 2012 were:

- » Fracking
- » Update on Planning and Housing
- » Update on Licensing of Quarries
- » Termination of 1995 Tenant Purchase Scheme
- » Incremental Purchase Scheme
- » Update on new Differential Rent Scheme
- » Clawback – Housing Grants

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, URBAN RENEWAL, RURAL RE-ORGANISATION, EDUCATIONAL, CULTURAL AND RECREATIONAL DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIC POLICY COMMITTEE

The Strategic Policy Committee for Economic & Community Development, Corporate & Cultural Services and Human Resources held meetings on the following dates in 2012:

- » 27th March 2012
- » 22nd May 2012
- » 20th September 2012

The priority areas for discussion at the meetings were:

- » Economic Development
- » Tourism
- » Connolly Barracks
- » Social Inclusion Initiatives
- » Sports Development
- » Library Services

APPENDIX 3:

COMMITTEES OF LONGFORD COUNTY COUNCIL

COMMITTEE	MEMBERS
Association of County and City Councils	Councillors L. McEntire, P. Connell and F. Kilbride
Local Authority Members' Association	Councillor P. Belton
Lough Oughter, Gowna and River Erne Joint Drainage Committee	Councillors J. Duffy and V. Kiernan
Longford Leisure Ltd	Councillors J. Browne, V. Kiernan and P. Loughrey
Midland Regional Authority	Councillors M. Cahill, J. Browne, L. Bannon, V. Kiernan and M. Carrigy
EU Operational Committee of the Midland Regional Authority	Mayor, Councillors P. Nolan and M. Carrigy
Border, Midland and Western Regional Assembly	Councillor L. Bannon
Longford County Enterprise Board	Councillors P.J. Reilly, P. Connell, P. Belton and F. Kilbride
Longford Enterprise Development Company Ltd	Councillors T. Victory, P. Nolan and M. Carrigy.
Longford Community Resources Ltd	Councillors D. Glennon, S. Farrell and J. Duffy
Appointment of nominee of Longford County Council to attend annual meeting of Irish Public Bodies Mutual Insurances Ltd	Councillor P. Nolan
Rural Water Monitoring Committee	Councillors M. Mulleady, J. Duffy and M. Carrigy
Steering Committee for the promotion of the Irish Language	All members of the Council
Local Traveller Accommodation Consultative Committee	Councillors P. Loughrey, T. Victory, G. Brady, V. Kiernan, F. Kilbride and M. Carrigy. Chairperson, Mayor P. Nolan
County Longford Vocational Education Committee	Councillors B. Steele, L. McEntire, S. Farrell, G. Brady, M. Carrigy, P. Connell, V. Kiernan, J. Browne and M. Sexton
Longford County Council Internal Audit Committee	Mr. Seamus Butler and Councillor G. Brady
Sports Partnership Committee	Councillors M. Carrigy and J. Duffy
Longford County Joint Policing Committee	Councillors M. Mulleady, M. Cahill, T. Victory, P. Loughrey, M. Casey, M. Carrigy, P. Nolan, G. Brady, P. Belton, J. Duffy, L. Bannon and F. Kilbride Chairperson, Councillor S. Farrell
Shannon River Basin District Advisory Council	Councillors P. Connell and S. Farrell
North Western International River Basin District Advisory Council	Councillors G. Brady and V. Kiernan
Health Service Executive Regional Health Forum, Dublin-mid Leinster	Councillors P.J. Reilly, P. Belton and G. Brady
County Longford Heritage Forum	Councillors D. Glennon and M. Carrigy Chairperson, Councillor S. Farrell
Midlands Energy Agency	Councillors G. Brady and P. Belton
Tender Committee	The Mayor and any two members to be present at the opening of Tenders.

APPENDIX 4:

MEETINGS OF LONGFORD COUNTY COUNCIL

MEETINGS

Meetings of the County Council were held monthly, with the exception of the month of August.

The Annual Meeting of the Council was held in on 25th June 2012.

Councillor Sean Farrell was elected Mayor and Councillor Micheal Carrigy was elected Deputy Mayor.

Monthly Meeting – 18th January 2012

Mayor Frank Kilbride made a presentation to the Cnoc Mhuire Secondary School Team, Granard on winning the Longford, Leinster and All Ireland Vocational Schools “A” Under 16 Championship.

Monthly Meeting - 15th February 2012

Mr. Fergus Kennedy, Arts Officer, made a presentation to the members on the County Council's Arts Plan 2012.

Monthly Meeting - 21st March 2012

Representatives from St. Christopher's Services, Longford addressed the members regarding proposed financial cuts to St. Christopher's.

Councillor Alan Mitchell submitted his resignation as an elected member of Longford County Council with effect from Tuesday, 13th March 2012 as he had been nominated for appointment as a Judge of the District Court.

Ms. Karen Clabby, Chairperson of the Audit Committee, presented the 2011 Annual Report of the Audit Committee.

Monthly Meeting - 18th April 2012

Mr. John Browne was elected to the vacancy for the Longford Electoral Area, occasioned by the resignation of Alan Mitchell. Consequent on the resignation of Alan Mitchell, appointments were made to various committees of the Council.

Mr. Gavin Harte, MSc. on Climate Change, made a presentation to the meeting on climate change.

Mr. Alan Gallagher, Business Development Manager, ConnectIreland.com addressed the members on “The Succeed in Ireland Initiative”.

Monthly Meeting - 23rd May 2012

Mayor Frank Kilbride made a presentation to the Cnoc Mhuire Secondary School Team on winning the All Ireland Vocational Schools Junior “A” Football Championship.

Representatives from ESB Energy International addressed the meeting regarding the management of the River Shannon.

Special Committee Meeting - 29th May 2012

A special committee meeting was held to consider the Core Strategy under the Planning & Development Amendment Act 2010.

Monthly Meeting - 18th July 2012

Representatives from the Health Service Executive addressed the meeting regarding health services in Longford/Westmeath.

Special Meeting - 26th September 2012

Ms. Mary Gouldsbury, Health & Safety Officer, addressed the meeting regarding health & safety issues.

Ms. Valerie Maguire, County Longford Digital Outreach Champion, Longford Community Resources, made a presentation regarding the Digital Switchover Programme.

Mr. Adrian Greene, Chief Executive Officer, Longford Community Resources Ltd., made a presentation regarding Leader Funding Programmes.

Monthly Meeting - 17th October 2012

The October meeting of the Council was held in the Rustic Inn, Abbeyshrule by way of acknowledging the Abbeyshrule Tidy Towns Committee on their outstanding achievements in 2012 i.e. Winners of Overall National Tidy Towns Award, Ireland's Tidiest Village and European Entente Florale Gold Medal.

CIVIC RECEPTION

A Civic Reception was held in the Rustic Inn following the Monthly meeting in honour of the Abbeyshrule Tidy Towns Committee.

Monthly Meeting - 28th November 2012

Mayor Sean Farrell made a presentation to the three groups who entered the 2012 National Pride of Place Competition – Rathmhuire and Dolmen Services, Temperance Hall Committee and Ennybegs Hall Committee.

Budget Meeting - 17th December 2012

The Budget for the Financial Year ending 31st December 2013 was adopted by the members of the Council.

CIVIC RECEPTION

A Civic Reception was held on Saturday, 14th April 2012 to honour the memory of the fourteen passengers from County Longford who were on board the Titanic.

MAYORAL RECEPTIONS

A Reception was held on Tuesday, 29th May 2012 to honour Larry Cunningham R.I.P., Derek Davis and Pat Jennings in recognition of their support to charitable organisations in County Longford over many years.

A Reception was held on Monday, 9th July 2012 in the '98 Hall, Ballinamuck to honour the Ballinamuck & Essert de Belfort Twinning Agreement.

A Reception was held on Wednesday, 5th December 2012 to honour the members of the County Longford Ploughing Association on their success at the 2012 National Ploughing Championship held in Heathpark, New Ross, Co. Wexford.

APPENDIX 5:

CONFERENCES ATTENDED 2012

Dates	Conference	Location	Councillors in attendance
13th – 15th Jan	Civil Law (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act, 2011	Galway	P.J. Reilly, Alan Mitchell, Mick Cahill, Thomas Victory, Barney Steele, Michael Carrigy
16th Jan	National Roads Authority	Dublin	Thomas Victory, Frank Kilbride, Paul Connell, P.J. Reilly Paddy Belton, Luie McEntire
20th - 22nd Jan	Restorative Justice for Ireland	Tralee	Paddy Belton, Victor Kiernan, Gerry Brady, Padraig Loughrey, Barney Steele, P.J. Reilly, Frank Kilbride
27th – 29th Jan	Local Government Seminar for Councillors	Limerick	Alan Mitchell
27th - 29th Jan	The Role of the Council in encouraging Enterprise through Tourism	Nenagh	Sean Farrell
27th - 29th Jan	E.U. Funding and Functions	Rosscarbery	Luie McEntire, Gerry Brady
27th - 29th Jan	The National Disability Strategy	Westport	Frank Kilbride, Michael Carrigy, Peggy Nolan, P.J. Reilly Mick Cahill, Barney Steele
31st Jan	European Economic Policy	Athlone	P.J. Reilly
2nd – 3rd Feb	Irish Penal Reform Trust	Dublin	P.J. Reilly, Luie McEntire
3rd - 5th Feb	Building Control (Amendment) Regulations, 2009	Galway	P.J. Reilly, Peggy Nolan, Thomas Victory, Martin Mulleady Larry Bannon
7th – 9th Feb	Renewable Materials Design Strategies Construction Methods & Technology	Donegal	Barney Steele, P.J. Reilly, Martin Mulleady, Frank Kilbride
18th - 20th Feb	Longford Association London	London	P.J. Reilly, Frank Kilbride
16th - 17th Feb	Mid-West Regional Authority Annual Conference	Ennistymon	John Duffy
17th - 19th Feb	Civil Partnership & Certain Rights	Tralee	Paul Connell, Martin Mulleady, Thomas Victory Padraig Loughrey, Barney Steele
24th – 26th Feb	Can the Tourism Industry Lead Economic Recovery in Ireland	Letterkenny	Larry Bannon, Alan Mitchell, Paddy Belton, Victor Kiernan
23rd – 26th Feb	21st Annual Kerry Environmental Conference	Tralee	P.J. Reilly
2nd - 4th March	Dealing with Personal Insolvency	Westport	Barney Steele, Alan Mitchell
9th March	Kerry Community & Voluntary Forum	Killarney	Luie McEntire
9th - 10th March	Guide to Septic Tanks Systems	Merlin Park Galway	Mick Cahill, Thomas Victory
12th March	Launch of the Succeed in Ireland Initiative in the Local Government Sector	Kilkenny Castle	Frank Kilbride
27th – 28th March	Cross Border Conference	Dundalk	John Duffy, Micheal Carrigy
23rd – 25th March	Water Services (Amendments) Act, 2012	Westport	Paul Connell
30th – 31st March	Personal Injuries	Tralee	Mark Casey, Barney Steele

Dates	Conference	Location	Councillors in attendance
3rd April	Amnesty International/NUI Galway	Dublin	Luie McEntire
12th April,	Visit to ESB Power Station	Ardnacrusha	Frank Kilbride, Gerry Brady
14th April	Longford Association in Dublin	Dublin	Frank Kilbride
13th - 15th April	Modern Alternatives to the disappearance of Fossil Fuels	Cork	Mark Casey
12th - 14th April	L.A.M.A. Spring Seminar	Waterford	Thomas Victory, Mick Cahill, Paddy Belton, Gerry Brady Victor Kiernan, Frank Kilbride
19th - 20th April	Guidelines for a Sustainable Energy Community	Dundalk	Luie McEntire
20th - 22nd April	Finance Bill	Tralee	Paul Connell, Pdraig Loughrey, Barney Steele Frank Kilbride, Peggy Nolan
4th - 5th May	Non Payment of Local Gov. Charges Fines & Consequences	Galway	Peggy Nolan, Martin Mulleady
10th - 11th May	Association of County & City Councils	Kilkenny	Mick Cahill, Micheal Carrigy, Frank Kilbride, Paddy Belton, Victor Kiernan, Larry Bannon, John Browne
11th - 13th May	Community Tourism	Rosscarbery	M.Casey
18th - 19th May	Training Seminar for Councillors	Bundoran	Larry Bannon, Micheal Carrigy
25th - 26th May	Reducing Ireland's Dependency on Fossil Fuels	Tralee	Paul Connell, Pdraig Loughrey, Frank Kilbride Barney Steele
1st - 2nd June	Draft Performance Standards for Domestic Wastewater Treatment Systems	Westport	Paul Connell, Peggy Nolan, Mark Casey
7th - 9th June	Planning Seminar for Councillors	Limerick	Paul Connell, Pdraig Loughrey
15th - 17th June	How to Influence People	Westport	John Duffy
15th - 16th June	Getting to Grips with the Nations Debt	Galway	Peggy Nolan
21st - 23rd June	10th National Tourism Conference - pride in our County	Carlow	Larry Bannon
22nd - 24th June	Byrne/Perry Summer School	Gorey	Frank Kilbride
22nd - 24th June	Advancing Technology in Majority World Technology	Rosscarbery	Gerry Brady, Victor Kiernan, Paul Connell, Pdraig Loughrey
29th - 30th June	Building Control (Amendment) Regulations 2012	Westport	Barney Steele, Mick Cahill, Thomas Victory, John Duffy
13th - 14th July	Local Authority Housing	Merlin Park, Galway	John Duffy
22nd - 27th July	Patrick MacGill Summer School	Glenties	Luie McEntire,
20th - 21st July	Bullying & Stress in the Workplace	Tralee	Mark Casey, Martin Mulleady
27th - 28th July	Improving the Social Housing Stock	Westport	Mark Casey
30th - 31st July	Criminal Law for the Local Representative	Galway	Mark Casey
3rd - 4th August	Local Government Auditing	Merlin Park, Galway	Paul Connell, Pdraig Loughrey, Thomas Victory, Martin Mulleady
15th - 19th August	Merriman Summer School	Lisdoonvarna	Micheal Carrigy

Dates	Conference	Location	Councillors in attendance
10th - 11th August	Personal Insolvency Bill, 2012	Tralee	Gerry Brady, Victor Kiernan
17th - 18th August	Freedom of Information	Merlin Park, Galway	Gerry Brady, Victor Kiernan, P.J. Reilly, Thomas Victory
24th - 25th August	Education (Amendment) (Protection of Schools) Bill, 2012	Westport	Gerry Brady, Victor Kiernan
24th - 26th August	Utilising your Tax Entitlements & Reliefs	Rosscarbery	Mark Casey
7th - 8th September	Development Initiatives for your Community	Westport	Peggy Nolan, John Duffy, Martin Mulleady, Thomas Victory, Mick Cahill
6th - 8th September	Kennedy Summer School Festival	New Ross	Luie McEntire
13th - 15th September	A.M.A.I Centenary Annual Conference	Ballinasloe	John Duffy
28th - 29th September	LAMA Autumn Seminar	Letterkenny	Paddy Belton, Larry Bannon
1st October	Third Age National Conference	Croke Park	Luie McEntire
5th - 6th October	Constitutional & Political Reform & the Councillor	Bunclody	Mick Cahill, Thomas Victory
5th - 6th October	Protecting the Public from Dishonest Trading	Galway	John Duffy
19th - 20th October	Septic Tank Case Studies	Westport	Mark Casey, Peggy Nolan, Micheal Carrigy
12th - 13th October	Collecting Local Government Revenue	Westport	Peggy Nolan
26th - 27th October	Amendments to Social Welfare Acts	Merlin Park, Galway	Martin Mulleady
2nd - 3rd November	Debt Settlement	Tralee	Martin Mulleady, Micheal Carrigy
9th - 10th November	Education for Work Initiatives	Westport	Peggy Nolan, Martin Mulleady
16th - 18th November	Leader funding and the Councillor	Bunratty	Larry Bannon
16th - 18th November	Local Authority Budgets 2013	Letterkenny	Mick Cahill
16th - 17th November	Legal Services Regulation Bill	Galway	Martin Mulleady
23rd- 24th November	Information & Communications Tech for Councillors	Bundoran	Larry Bannon, Paddy Belton
23rd - 24th November	Environmental Implications of harvesting Wind Energy	Westport	Peggy Nolan, Mick Cahill
30th Nov- 2nd Dec	Is a Century of Municipal Local Government Services to be abolished	Gormanstown	John Duffy
30th Nov - 1st Dec	Promoting Justice through better consultation & co-operation in Local Government	Tralee	Micheal Carrigy
7th - 8th December	Rights of Way Recent Changes in the Law	Merlin Park, Galway	Peggy Nolan, Paddy Belton, John Browne
14th - 15th December	Maximising Energy Efficiency in the Local Government	Galway	Peggy Nolan, Luie McEntire, John Browne, Larry Bannon, Paddy Belton, Gerry Brady, Michael Carrigy

APPENDIX 6:

ANNUAL PROGRESS REPORT ON CORPORATE PLAN 2010-2014

INFRASTRUCTURE AND ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES

Core Objective: “Ensure that infrastructural transportation policies and investments assist and enhance the economic and social development of County Longford, and preserve and improve the physical attractiveness of the county and its background environment”.

Maintenance and Improvement of Roads

After years of planning and sixteen months of construction, The N5 Longford Bypass opened on Friday 3rd August 2012. The main Contractor was Wills Bros. Ltd. from Foxford, Co. Mayo. The bypass is 2.6km long and road users will now save up to 25 minutes on journeys by using the bypass. The project was constructed 2 months ahead of schedule and had a construction cost of approximately €8million. The new road brings improved safety for motorists and removes tailbacks and congestion from Longford Town.

Longford County Council received a grant allocation of €350,000 from the NRA for an overlay of the N55 Ferriskill (Teemore/Cartron) Overlay 2012. The works improved the structure and profile of a 1.25km section of the N55 National Secondary Road.

The N55 Granard to Ballinrud Overlay 2012 was carried out on the Cavan side of Granard. It consisted of 1.1kms of Overlay Resurfacing works.

Road Reconstruction work was carried out on the N5/N63 Ballinalee Road in Longford Town. This involved approximately 600m of reconstruction work including ducting, new drainage, kerbing, and footpaths.

Works were carried out on the following Bridges during 2012

- » N63 Cloonfiugh Bridge - The works consisted of realignment of approximately 550 metres of the N63 National Secondary Road and associated site works at Cloonfiugh, County Longford and Replacement of the existing Cloonfiugh Bridge over the local watercourse to accommodate the realigned road.
- » N4 Lamagh Bridge – Works were carried out consisting of two new parapet beams, upgrading and waterproofing of existing parapets and reconstructing of footpaths alongside the Bridge. Approximately 400m of Road Resurfacing was also carried out.

The Multi-annual Road Restoration and Surface Dressing programmes for Non National Roads are ongoing with extensive works being completed on a significant number of Regional and Local Roads.

Specific Improvement Grant Schemes were advanced at the following locations:

- » Mullagh Bridge, Longford
- » Derrycolumb Bridge, Ballymahon
- » Aughtnaclyffe Bridge, Aughtnaclyffe
- » R397 Stonepark, Longford

Road Safety and Traffic Management

Low-cost Safety Remedial schemes have been advanced and are at various stages of completion at:

- » Maria Edgeworth Roundabout, N4 Edgeworthstown
- » Lisnagrish
- » Toneywarden
- » N5 Flancare
- » N63 Railway Bridge, Athlone Rd, Longford
- » Ballycloghan National School
- » L-1042 Aughtnaclyffe- Cleenrath
- » Bracklin Rd, Edgeworthstown
- » R198 Crowdrumman
- » Pedestrian Crossing, The Mall, Longford
- » Pedestrian Crossing, Kenagh Village

- » Kenagh School
- » Kenagh-Corina Cross
- » Moydow
- » Daroge, Ballymahon

Road safety recommendations relating to Planning Permissions are ongoing.

The Council continued to monitor effective implementation of the EU Commercial Vehicle Regulations in close consultation with the 2 no. authorised test centres in the county.

Current Policies

Quality road design standards were promoted for implementation.

Access for the disabled was promoted in accordance with recommended guidelines in consultation with stakeholders.

Participation continued in the Steering and Technical Groups managing the National Roads Authority Regional Design Office.

Appropriate liaison was promoted between transportation development stakeholders such as public representatives, representative bodies, the general public, the Department of Transport, the National Roads Authority, the Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government, Gardai, the Road Safety Authority, Iarnród Éireann, Waterways Ireland, etc.

HOUSING

Core Objectives: “Provide and maintain an acceptable standard of Social and Affordable housing in a planned environment that meets the needs of the people of County Longford and promotes social inclusion”.

Social Housing

The housing needs of County Longford continued to be met through a range of housing options. A statutory assessment of housing need was undertaken in 2011. The next housing needs assessment will be carried out in 2013.

Approximately €1,159,921 was spent under the Social Housing Investment Programme in 2012. This included the purchase of seven individual houses and the construction of a single rural cottage.

Housing Maintenance / Refurbishment

In 2012, a sum of €645,000 was provided in the budget for the maintenance and repair of Local Authority Housing.

Estate Management

The Housing Liaison Officer and the Social Worker continued to work with tenants and residents associations throughout 2012.

Voluntary Housing

The Council continued its association with the Voluntary Housing Sector.

Tenant Purchase Schemes

The closing date for final applications for the 1995 Tenant Purchase Scheme was 31st December, 2012 with all transactions to be completed by 31st December, 2013. The completion of transactions for the 2011 Scheme is ongoing with all transactions to be completed by 30th June, 2013.

Loans/Grants

A total of 11 valid applications were received in 2012 with 4 loans approved and 4 advanced. This does not include preliminary applications refused or withdrawn.

In 2012, a combined total of 206 applications were received under the three Grant Schemes. A total of 220 grants were paid out and this amounted to €1,098,691.

Traveller Accommodation

The Traveller Accommodation Programme 2009-2013 continues to be followed by Longford County Council. This sets out the four year strategy in relation to the Programme and type of accommodation to be provided for travellers.

Rental Accommodation Scheme

At the end of 2012, there were 229 RAS tenancies in place. The RAS Scheme and the associated operational and administrative costs are self financing in Longford.

Long Term Leasing Arrangements

There were 19 short term RAS Type leases in place at the end of 2012.

Remedial/Regeneration Works

In 2012, a budget of €1.65 million was approved to carry out Remedial Works at Tromra Road, Granard. Nine houses were also completely refurbished at Airde Pauric Colum, Longford.

Private Rented Accommodation Standards

The Local Authority is responsible for implementation and enforcement of accommodation standards in the rental sector.

Energy Retrofitting Scheme 2010

In 2012, Longford County Council received funding from the DoECLG in the amount of €211,520 as part of the above programme.

ECONOMIC & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT, CORPORATE & CULTURAL SERVICES AND HUMAN RESOURCES

Core Objective: “Longford County Council will in collaboration with the appropriate agencies lead the economic development of County Longford”

Economic Development

Longford County Council continues to collaborate with relevant bodies in supporting local industries in 2012. Despite the difficult economic environment a number of local companies achieved market growth and marginally increased their employment numbers.

- » In 2012, County Longford Tourism Strategy 2012 -2015 was launched.
- » A Steering Group was established to oversee the promotion of the Gathering 2013.
- » Longford Local Authority worked closely in 2012 with ConnectIreland.com in the promotion and delivery of the “Succeed in Ireland” initiative.
- » Planning permission granted for the Clondra Longford Canal cycle/walkway.

Social Development

- » Longford County Development Board held three meeting in 2012. Agencies continued to network and work together on priority areas.
- » The Social Inclusion Measures Working Group held two meetings in 2012 to share information and to facilitate better co-ordination of plans of the local development agencies.
- » The Travellers Interagency Group held two meetings during to 2012 where they continued to discuss and identify co-operative lines of action to deal with Traveller issues.
- » Longford Westmeath Children’s Services Committee and its substructures held a number of meetings in 2012 and continued to implement the priority actions identified in the Children’s and Young Person’s Plan 2011-2013.
- » Funding was secured from the Department of Children and Youth Affairs to continue to support and enhance Longford Comhairle na nÓg. Meetings were held throughout the year where they focused on healthy nutrition for young people with a particular emphasis on the diets of young people and how secondary schools can meet the nutritional requirements of young people.
- » County Longford Community & Voluntary Forum held their AGM in April and 10 Steering Group meetings were held in 2012. A number of information sessions were held in the electoral areas for community and voluntary groups.

Cultural Services

The year 2012 was a very busy and challenging one for the library service in County Longford. Despite cutbacks in funding which led to serious reductions in the book-fund and some unplanned closures of branch libraries the number of visits to our libraries grew this year to almost 200,000. Library membership and numbers of items borrowed have remained at a very high level also.

- » With the successful completion of the Ballymahon Library project, the refurbishment and extension of Granard Library is the number one priority for the service. The grant application for funding under the Libraries Capital Programme is being actively pursued with the Department of Environment, Community and Local Government.
- » A possible partnership project with Edgeworthstown Community Cooperative is being explored as a solution to delivering a modern library facility for the community in Edgeworthstown.

The Library service continues to exploit technology as a means of delivering a modern and effective service to our customers through:

- » The marketing and promotion of our eBooks service and by the addition of new eBook and eAudiobook titles to our digital catalogue. This service has grown in popularity during the past year as a result of the increasing availability and popularity of bespoke e-readers, tablets, and smartphones which are all compatible with our eBook software.
- » Our partnership with FÁS in rolling out FETAC-accredited online eLearning courses at Longford, Granard, Ballymahon and Lanesboro libraries.
- » The extension of our facilitator-led, customer-focussed internet classes in Drumlish, Longford and Granard branch libraries.
- » The introduction of TTRS (Touch Type Read Spell) computer classes in Granard and Longford branch libraries.
- » Upgrading of internet and WiFi services.
- » The promotion of the self-service facility in the Longford Branch to maximize staff resources and focus more on specific customer needs.
- » The upgrading of the Library Management System Hardware which commenced in 2011 with Longford and Ballymahon libraries continued in 2012 to include Granard, Drumlish, Edgeworthstown and Drumlish libraries.
- » The exploitation of social media communication tools, such as Facebook and Twitter, via our library website to reach out to the wider community and a younger customer demographic.
- » The library continues to build key partnerships with other statutory and community service providers and other library authorities in the Midlands region and this has led to a number of successful collaborative projects promoting literacy and lifelong learning for all.

Recreation & Amenity

The work of the Longford Sports Partnership continues to be guided by a multi-agency Board which comprises of sporting representatives, as well as statutory and non-statutory representatives.

In 2012, the Longford Sports Partnership secured over €130,000 in funding from the Irish Sports Council. This covered the salary costs of two full-time staff and helped the Partnership to support core programmes such as Buntus training for schools and for education and training programmes which include child protection and first aid training. It also enabled the partnership to allocate €6000 to the Sports Club Grant Scheme which provided financial support to sports clubs in Longford.

Additional funding was also secured from the Health Service Executive and the Department of Transport to support a varied programme of events which were run by the LSP in 2012. Target groups were reached through activities including the Longford Cycle Tour, the Girls On The Move programme, the Men On The Move programme, Longford Walking Festival, Recreation Week, Communities in Action and Play day. People with disabilities, men aged 35+, new communities, women, older people, disadvantaged youth and the unemployed are some of the groups that participated in these events.

APPENDIX 7: SERVICE INDICATORS



SERVICE INDICATORS:

F: FIRE SERVICE

F1. Fire Service Mobilisation	2011	2012
A. Average time taken, in minutes, to mobilise fire brigades in Full-Time Stations in respect of fire	No full time stations in Longford	
B. Average time taken, in minutes, to mobilise fire brigades in Part-Time Stations (retained fire service) in respect of fire	6.13	6.01
C. Average time taken, in minutes, to mobilise fire brigades in Full-Time Stations in respect of all other emergency incidents	No full time stations in Longford	
D. Average time taken, in minutes, to mobilise fire brigades in Part-Time Stations (retained fire service) in respect of all other emergency incidents	6.2	5.45
F2 Percentage of attendances at scenes		
A. Percentage of cases in respect of fire in which first attendance is at the scene within 10 minutes	34.23	37.21
B. Percentage of cases in respect of fire in which first attendance is at the scene after 10 minutes but within 20 minutes	54.36	53.88
C. Percentage of cases in respect of fire in which first attendance is at the scene after 20 minutes	11.41	8.91
D. Percentage of cases in respect of all other emergency incidents in which first attendance is at the scene within 10 minutes	38.24	40.28
E. Percentage of cases in respect of all other emergency incidents in which first attendance is at the scene after 10 minutes but within 20 minutes	51.47	52.78
F. Percentage of cases in respect of all other emergency incidents in which first attendance is at the scene after 20 minutes	10.29	6.94
F3 Fire Prevention		
A. Total number of fire safety certificate applications received	26	25
B. Total number of fire safety certificate applications processed (including cases deemed invalid)	23	26
C. Total number of applications deemed invalid	2	0

CP: COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION

CP.1 Participation in local Youth Council/Comhairle na n-Og scheme	2011	2012
Percentage of local schools and youth groups involved in the local Youth Council/ Comhairle na n-Og scheme	96	96.3
CP.2 Groups registered with the Community and Voluntary Forum		
Number of groups registered with the Community and Voluntary Forum	158	159

C: CORPORATE ISSUES

C.1 Working Days lost to Sickness	2011	2012
A. Percentage of working days lost to sickness absence through certified leave	5.38	4.53
B. Percentage of working days lost to sickness absence through uncertified leave	0.56	0.62
C.2 Staff Training and Development		
Expenditure on Training and Development as a percentage of total payroll costs:	5.66	5.33

E: ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES

WATER

E.1 Unaccounted For Water

Unaccounted for water (UFW) as a percentage of total volume of water supplied under the water supply schemes that the local authority is responsible for	48.72	47.56
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E.2 Drinking Water Analysis

A. Percentage of drinking water analysis results in compliance with statutory requirements with regard to public schemes	97.1	Information to be provided by EPA
B. Percentage of drinking water analysis results in compliance with statutory requirements with regard to private schemes (where appropriate)	98.1	

WASTE MANAGEMENT

E.3 Waste Segregation

A. Percentage of households who receive a waste collection service and are provided with segregated waste collection for dry recyclables	97.1	88.44
B. Percentage of households who receive a waste collection service and are provided with segregated waste collection for organics	30.09	28.79

E4: Housing Waste Sent for Recycling

A. Percentage of household waste collected from kerbside, which is sent for recycling	51.92	29.25
B. Tonnage of household waste collected from kerbside, which is sent for recycling	3933.61	2391
C. Tonnage of household waste recycled, which arises from waste collected from recycling facilities (i.e. bring banks, civic amenity centres, transfer stations and other recycling facilities)	1390.56	584

E5: Household Waste Sent for Landfill

A. The percentage of household waste collected which is sent to landfill	48.08	70.75
B. The tonnage of household waste collected which is sent to landfill	3643.18	5784

E6: Recycling Facilities

The total number of Bring Sites in the local authority area	26	25
The total number of Civic Amenity Centres in the local authority area	2	2

Glass

A. The number of Bring Sites for recycling	26	25
B. The number of Civic Amenity Centres for recycling	2	2
C. The total number of facilities for recycling	28	27
D. The number of locations for recycling per 5,000 of population	3.59	3.46

Cans

E. The number of Bring Sites for recycling	26	25
F. The number of Civic Amenity Centres for recycling	2	2
G. The total number of facilities for recycling	28	27
H. The number of locations for recycling per 5,000 of population	3.59	3.46

Textiles

I. The number of Bring Sites for recycling	2	2
J. The number of Civic Amenity Centres for recycling	2	2
K. The total number of facilities for recycling	4	4
L. The number of locations for recycling per 5,000 of population	0.51	0.51

Batteries

M. The number of Bring Sites for recycling	0	0
N. The number of Civic Amenity Centres for recycling	2	2
O. The total number of facilities for recycling	2	2
P. The number of locations for recycling per 5,000 of population	0.26	0.26

Oils

Q. The number of Bring Sites for recycling	0	0
R. The number of Civic Amenity Centres for recycling	1	1
S. The total number of facilities for recycling	1	1
T. The number of locations for recycling per 5,000 of population	0.13	0.13

Other materials

U. The number of Bring Sites for recycling	0	0
V. The number of Civic Amenity Centres for recycling	2	1
W. The total number of facilities for recycling	2	1
X. The number of locations for recycling per 5,000 of population	0.26	0.13

Litter**E7: Litter Prevention and Enforcement**

A. Number of full-time litter wardens	3	3
B. Number of part-time litter wardens	0	0
C. Number of litter wardens (both full- and part-time) per 5,000 population	0.38	0.38
D. Number of on-the-spot fines issued	311	326
E. Number of on-the-spot fines paid	110	125
F. Number of prosecution cases taken because of non-payment of on-the-spot fines	8	7
G. Number of prosecutions secured in cases taken because of non-payment of on-the-spot fines	8	5
H. Number of notices issued (under sections 9, 15, 16, 17 and 20 of the Litter Pollution Act 1997)	0	0
I. Total number of prosecutions taken (all prosecutions under the Litter Acts 1997 to 2003)	8	7
J. Total number of prosecutions secured (all prosecutions under the Litter Acts 1997 to 2003)	8	3

K. Percentage of areas in the local authority that are unpolluted (i.e. litter-free)	9	Information provided directly from National Littering Monitoring System
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L. Percentage of areas in the local authority that are slightly polluted with litter	73	Information provided directly from National Littering Monitoring System
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M. Percentage of areas in the local authority that are moderately polluted with litter	18	Information provided directly from National Littering Monitoring System
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N. Percentage of areas in the local authority that are significantly polluted with litter	1	Information provided directly from National Littering Monitoring System
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O. Percentage of areas in the local authority that are grossly polluted with litter	0	Information provided directly from National Littering Monitoring System
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E8: Environmental Complaints and Enforcement

A. Total number of cases subject to complaints concerning environmental pollution (relating to waste, litter, water pollution, noise pollution, air pollution)	1640	1933
B. Number of complaints investigated	1681	1933
C. Number of complaints resolved where no further action was necessary	1561	1713
D. Number of enforcement procedures taken	320	429

E9: Percentage of schools participating in environmental campaigns

A. Percentage of primary schools participating in environmental campaigns	100	100
B. Percentage of secondary schools participating in environmental campaigns	100	100

H: HOUSING**H1: Housing Vacancies**

A. The total number of dwellings in local authority stock	1909.75	1897
B. The total number of dwellings, excluding those subject to major refurbishment projects	1864.5	1867.5
C. The overall percentage of dwellings that are empty (excluding those subject to major refurbishment projects)	4.29	4.56
D. The percentage of empty dwellings unavailable for letting	93.44	84.46
E. The percentage of empty dwellings available for letting	6.56	15.54

H2: Average Time Taken to Re-let Available dwellings

The average time taken (in weeks) from the date of vacation of dwelling to the date when all necessary repairs are carried out which are deemed necessary to re-let the dwelling	14.43	14.26
The average time taken (in weeks) from the works (above) being completed to the date of the first rent debit	1.59	4.75

H3: Housing Repairs

Number of repairs completed as a percentage of the number of valid repair requests received	96.63	94.27
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H4: Traveller Accommodation

Total number of traveller families accommodated as a percentage of the targets set in the local traveller accommodation programme	92.86	57.14
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H5: Enforcement of standards in the private rented sector

A. Total number of registered tenancies	1934	1795
B. Number of dwelling units inspected	57	164
C. Number of inspections carried out	114	173
D. Number of dwellings inspected as percentage of registered tenancies (i.e. B as percentage of A)	2.95	9.14

H6: Grants to adapt housing for the needs of people with a disability

A. Average time taken (in weeks) to process applications under the Mobility Aids Grant Scheme, including any necessary inspection(s), from the date of receipt of a valid application to the date of decision on the application	2	2.42
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B. Average time taken (in weeks) to process applications under Housing Adaptation Grant for People with a Disability, including any necessary inspection(s), from the date of receipt, to the date of decision on the application	4	7.88
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H7: Pre-Tenancy Familiarisation Courses

A. Total number of new local authority tenants	146	143
B. Percentage of new local authority tenants who have been offered pre-tenancy familiarisation courses	81.51	97.9

L: LIBRARY SERVICES**L.1 Library Public Opening Hours**

A. Average number of opening hours per week for full-time libraries	35.97	35.42
B. Average number of opening hours per week for part-time libraries (where applicable)	16.81	16.55
C. Percentage of full time libraries that have lunchtime openings	100	66.66
D. Percentage of full time libraries that have evening openings	100	100
E. Percentage of full time libraries that have Saturday openings	100	100

L.2 Library Visits

Number of visits to full time libraries per 1,000 population	4463.69	4401.46
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L.3 Library Stock

A. Annual expenditure on stock per head of population (county/city wide)	2.04	1.84
B. Number of items issued per head of population (county/city wide) for books	3.3	3.3
C. Number of items issued per head of population (county/city wide) for other items	0.16	0.17

L.4 Internet Access through Libraries

Number of Internet sessions provided per 1,000 population	656.4	677.73
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M: MOTOR TAXATION**M.1 Number of Motor Tax Transactions**

A. Number of motor tax transactions which are dealt with over the counter	32549	31261
B. Number of motor tax transactions which are dealt with by post	3525	2429
C. Number of motor tax transactions which are dealt with in other ways (e.g. online, by telephone)	10791	12423
D. Percentage of motor tax transactions which are dealt with over the counter	69.45	67.79
E. Percentage of motor tax transactions which are dealt with by post	7.52	5.27
F. Percentage of motor tax transactions which are dealt with in other ways (e.g. online, by telephone)	23.02	26.94

M.2 Time Taken to Process Motor Tax Postal Applications

A. Number of postal applications which are dealt with (i.e. disc issued) on the same day as receipt of the application	2869	2130
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B. Number of postal applications which are dealt with (i.e. disc issued) on the second or third day from receipt of the application	618	247
C. Number of postal applications which are dealt with (i.e. disc issued) on the fourth or fifth day from receipt of the application	18	42
D. Number of postal applications which are dealt with (i.e. disc issued) in over five days from receipt of the application	20	10
E. Percentage of overall postal applications which are dealt with (i.e. disc issued) on the same day as receipt of the application	81.39	87.69
F. Percentage of overall postal applications which are dealt with (i.e. disc issued) on the second or third day from receipt of the application	17.53	10.17
G. Percentage of overall postal applications which are dealt with (i.e. disc issued) on the fourth or fifth day from receipt of the application	0.51	1.73
H. Percentage of overall postal applications which are dealt with (i.e. disc issued) in over five days from receipt of the application	0.57	0.41

M.3 Time Taken to Process Driving Licence Applications

A. Number of Driving Licence applications which are dealt with on the same day as receipt of the application	436	757
B. Number of Driving Licence applications which are dealt with on the second or third day from receipt of the application	266	314
C. Number of Driving Licence applications which are dealt with on the Fourth or fifth day from receipt of the application	359	240
D. Number of Driving Licence applications which are dealt with in over five days from receipt of the application	4229	4162
E. Percentage of overall driving Licence applications which are dealt with on the same day as receipt of the application	8.24	13.83
F. Percentage of overall driving Licence applications which are dealt with on the second or third day from receipt of the application	5.03	5.74
G. Percentage of overall driving Licence applications which are dealt with on the fourth or fifth day from receipt of the application	6.79	4.39
H. Percentage of overall driving Licence applications which are dealt with in over five days from receipt of the application	79.94	76.05

M.4 Public opening hours

Average number of opening hours per week	30.71	29.66
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P: PLANNING

P1 Planning Applications - Decision Making

Individual Houses

A. Number of applications decided	99	51
B. Number of decisions in Column A which were decided within 8 weeks	37	38
C. Number of decisions in Column A which required the submission of further information	62	13
D. Number of decisions in Column A where an extension of time was agreed to by the applicant, under section 34(9) of the Planning and development Act 2000	0	0
E. Average length of time taken (in days) to decide an application where further information was sought	67.89	77.38
F. Percentage of applications granted	73.74	92.16
G. Percentage of applications refused	26.26	7.84
H. Percentage of cases where the decision was confirmed, with or without variations, by An Bord Pleanala	100	50
I. Percentage of cases where the decision was reversed by An Bord Pleanala	0	50

New Housing Development

A. Number of applications decided	18	2
B. Number of decisions in Column A which were decided within 8 weeks	11	1
C. Number of decisions in Column A which required the submission of further information	7	1
D. Number of decisions in Column A where an extension of time was agreed to by the applicant, under section 34(9) of the Planning and development Act 2000	0	0
E. Average length of time taken (in days) to decide an application where further information was sought	67.71	78
F. Percentage of applications granted	72.22	100
G. Percentage of applications refused	27.78	0

H. Percentage of cases where the decision was confirmed, with or without variations, by An Bord Pleanala	0	0
I. Percentage of cases where the decision was reversed by An Bord Pleanala	0	0

Other: not requiring Environment Impact Assessment

A. Number of applications decided	116	127
B. Number of decisions in Column A which were decided within 8 weeks	69	91
C. Number of decisions in Column A which required the submission of further information	47	35
D. Number of decisions in Column A where an extension of time was agreed to by the applicant, under section 34(9) of the Planning and development Act 2000	0	0
E. Average length of time taken (in days) to decide an application where further information was sought	72.43	153.3
F. Percentage of applications granted	87.07	96.06
G. Percentage of applications refused	12.93	3.94
H. Percentage of cases where the decision was confirmed, with or without variations, by An Bord Pleanala	83.33	75
I. Percentage of cases where the decision was reversed by An Bord Pleanala	16.67	25

Other: requiring Environment Impact Assessment

A. Number of applications decided	1	0
B. Number of decisions in Column A which were decided within 8 weeks	1	0
C. Number of decisions in Column A which required the submission of further information	0	0
D. Number of decisions in Column A where an extension of time was agreed to by the applicant, under section 34(9) of the Planning and development Act 2000	0	0
E. Average length of time taken (in days) to decide an application where further information was sought	0	0
F. Percentage of applications granted	100	0
G. Percentage of applications refused	0	0
H. Percentage of cases where the decision was confirmed, with or without variations, by An Bord Pleanala	N/A	N/A
I. Percentage of cases where the decision was reversed by An Bord Pleanala	N/A	N/A

P2 Planning Enforcement

A. Total number of cases subject to complaints that were investigated	74	67
B. Total number of cases subject to complaints that were dismissed	9	14
C. Total number of cases subject to complaints that were resolved through negotiations	36	59
D. Number of enforcement procedures taken through warning letters	50	39
E. Number of enforcement procedures taken through enforcement notices	32	23
F. Number of prosecutions	11	3

P3 Planning Public opening hours

Average number of opening hours per week	32.55	30.72
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P4 Pre-Planning Consultation

A. Number of pre-planning consultation meetings held	60	79
B. Average length of time (in days) from request for consultation with local authority to actual formal meeting for pre-planning consultation	8.57	12.62

P5 New Buildings inspected

Buildings inspected as a percentage of new buildings notified to the local authority	13.21	15.69
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P6 Taking Estates in Charge

A- The number of residential estates for which the planning permission has expired, in respect of which formal written requests for taking in charge (from residents or developers), were on hands at the beginning of the year	29	33
B- Number of estates that were taken in charge in the year in question	1	8
C- Number of dwellings in respect of column B	11	193
D- Percentage of estates in column A not completed to satisfaction of the planning authority in line with the planning permission	96.55	75.76
E- Number of estates in column D in respect of which enforcement action was taken in the year in question and/or the bond was called in	3	10
F- Number of estates in column D in respect of which works were undertaken by the authority to bring the estate to taking in charge standard	0	0

Rec: RECREATIONAL SERVICES**Rec.1 Children's Playgrounds**

A. Number of children's playgrounds per 1,000 population directly provided by the local authority	0.31	0.31
B. Number of children's playgrounds per 1,000 population facilitated by the local authority	0	0.03

Rec.2 Local Authority-Facilitated Leisure Facilities

Number of visitors to local authority-facilitated leisure facilities per 1,000 population	2753.37	2863.43
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Rev: REVENUE COLLECTION**Rev.1 House Rent**

A. Amount collected at year end as a percentage of amount due from House Rent	88.2	88.32
B. Percentage of arrears on House Rent that are up to 4 weeks old	6.06	6
C. Percentage of arrears on House Rent that are 4-6 weeks old	4.49	4
D. Percentage of arrears on House Rent that are 6-12 weeks old	6.41	7
E. Percentage of arrears on House Rent that are more than 12 weeks old	83.04	83

Rev.2 Housing Loans

A. Amount collected at year end as a percentage of amount due from Housing Loans	77.16	67.09
B. Percentage of arrears on Housing Loans that are up to 1 month old	2.1	1
C. Percentage of arrears on Housing Loans that are 1-2 months old	3.98	2
D. Percentage of arrears on Housing Loans that are 2-3 months old	4.48	1
E. Percentage of arrears on Housing Loans that are more than 3 months old	89.44	96

Rev.3 Commercial Rates

Amount collected at year-end as a percentage of amount due from Commercial rates	74.99	71.31
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Rev.4 Refuse Charges

Percentage of households paying refuse charges (including waivers) at year end	Not applicable as privatised in Longford Local Authorities	
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Rev.5 Non-Domestic Water Charges

Amount collected at year end as a percentage of amount due for Non-Domestic Water Charges	58.73	61.33
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R: ROADS**R1: Road Restoration Programme**

Number of kilometres of local and regional roads improved and maintained under the Restoration Programme per annum	55.44	55.67
Number of kilometres of local and regional roads constructed under the specific improvement grants scheme per annum	0.6	0.32