



# Chief Executive Report March 2026

Longford County Council

# Contents

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March Highlights .....3

**Economic, Enterprise and Rural Development**

Corporate Services .....6

Library, Archives, Arts and Heritage .....13

Local Enterprise Office .....19

**Social Development**

Human Resources .....22

**Physical Development**

Roads .....24

# March Highlights

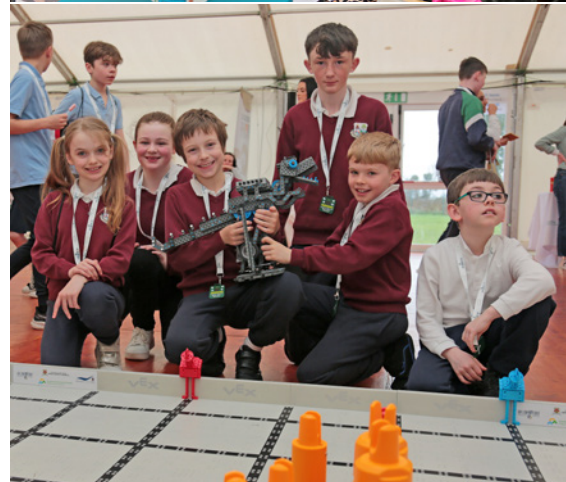
## Over 700 students showcase groundbreaking STEAM projects at Longford’s Microsoft Dream Space Event

More than 700 primary school students from across County Longford transformed St. Mary’s Community Campus, in Edgeworthstown into a hub of innovation on Tuesday, 24 March, as they presented their cutting-edge STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts and Maths) projects at the annual Microsoft Dream Space Showcase. A series of awards were presented across all three Municipal Districts and this year’s overall Rising Star award was presented to St Mary’s NS, Edgeworthstown for their unique project ‘Coding to Communicate.’ The students used their newly acquired coding skills to help communicate with non-verbal classmates and children with Autism.

This year’s Dream Space event also welcomed some of the most prestigious and respected in the industry, including Microsoft, Ericsson, MTU Cork, EY, KPMG, Storm Technologies and Global Logic. Their presence underscored the high regard and esteem in which this pioneering event is held.

The Ambassador of Hungary to Ireland, Gergely Bánhegyi was one of the special guests on the day as part of a series of cultural events and collaborative projects linking County Longford with Hungary as part of Ireland’s EU Presidency community engagement programme.

YouTube star Farmer Phil was also in attendance, and he visited a number



# March Highlights

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of agricultural related projects on the day with children from primary schools all over the county delighted to meet the social media influencer.

Longford’s Microsoft Dream Space Showcase is the culmination of months of engagement with primary schools in County Longford, which included the delivery of hands-on STEAM sessions by the Microsoft Dream Space teaching team as part of a 10-week Dream Space programme. The programme provided students with the opportunity to enhance their STEM and AI skills through the development of innovative STEM projects addressing sustainability challenges.

## County Longford hosts 72 International Local Government Leaders in Global Exchange

Longford County Council hosted 72 senior local government professionals from across the globe as part of the International City/County Management Association (ICMA) Global Exchange — the association’s annual programme of international learning and peer collaboration. Members travelled from the United States, Australia, South Africa, Latvia and Canada for the visit.

The Longford leg of the visit formed part of a wider week-long itinerary across Ireland, which took in Dublin, Limerick and Northern Ireland. It was arranged through a partnership between the ICMA and Ireland’s City and County Management Association (CCMA).

ICMA is the world’s foremost nonprofit membership body for local government professionals, with over 13,000 members — chief administrative officers managing day-to-day local government operations across the US and more than 33 countries. Its Global Exchange programme is designed to build international knowledge-sharing and professional networks, with a focus on best practice in local government leadership and community challenges.

The delegation’s visit was rooted in Longford’s direct experience of Just Transition — the process of moving an economy away from fossil fuel dependency in a way that does not leave workers and communities behind. For generations, the midlands region was shaped by peat harvesting and the Lanesboro Power Station. Since the station’s closure and Bord na Móna’s move away from peat, the region has had to chart an entirely new course. The delegation visited the Corlea Trackway Visitor Centre, took part in a panel discussion in Ballymahon Library and enjoyed a tour of St Mel’s Cathedral.



# March Highlights



# Corporate Services

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## Corporate Management Supports and Customer Services

The Customer Services desk received over 3,000 calls during the months of February and March, as well as 735 emails via the CRM.

## Register of Electors

The Franchise Team are making preparations ahead of National Voter Registration Day which is taking place on 30 April, 2026. This is an initiative aimed at promoting voter registration and increasing political participation in Ireland. The team will be out in the community with the aim of encouraging as many people as possible to register to vote, and also to check their details on the register if you are already registered to vote, to ensure that your date of birth, PPSN and Eircode are included on your entry. Capturing these unique identifiers will enable the Franchise Office to maintain a more accurate register. Please visit [www.checktheregister.ie](http://www.checktheregister.ie) to ensure your details are correct and up to date.

A series of school visits are also planned with the aim of increasing awareness among secondary students that everyone aged 16 and 17 years can now pre-register online and will be automatically added to the register when they turn 18 years.

Further preparations have been made ahead of Longford County Council's migration to the new voter.ie portal. A final data quality report was completed on over 715 data points and returned to the Department

at the end of March. The coming months will see a large volume of activity in testing the new system and training staff on the new system ahead of the migration date of 8 June.

## Official Languages Act

Work continues to meet the obligations under Section 10A of the Official Languages Act (Amendment) 2021.

Longford County Council is required to report on all advertising activities vis- a-vis compliance with the Official Languages Act according to the parameters set out by the Coimisinéir Teanga. The report for 2025 has now been submitted, and the Council has exceeded the requirement to place 20% of all advertisements in the Irish Language, and the requirement to spend 5% of total advertising budget on advertising in the Irish language media.

### Performance in 2025 was as follows:

32.59% achieved in placement of Irish Language ads (this placement is measured on a media category average, measuring Irish language visibility across the various media channels that the Council has advertised in).

5.26% achieved in money expended on advertising in the Irish language media (that is to say, media that has more than 50% Irish language content).

# Corporate Services

## Freedom of Information/Access to Information on the Environment/Office of the Ombudsman

	Year to Date
No. of Freedom of Information (FOI) requests received	29
No. of Access to Information on the Environment (AIE) requests received	5
No. of Office of the Ombudsman complaints received	3

## Meetings Administration

Meetings and events which took place in February and March 2026 detailed below:

<b>11 February</b>	Corporate Policy Group Meeting
	Longford County Council Meeting
<b>16 February</b>	Physical Development Strategic Policy Committee Meeting
	Social Development Strategic Policy Committee Meeting
<b>18 February</b>	Economic, Enterprise and Rural Development Strategic Policy Committee Meeting
	Governance Strategic Policy Committee Meeting
<b>3–4 March</b>	Ballymahon Municipal District Committee Meeting
	Granard Municipal District Committee Meeting
	Longford Municipal District Committee Meeting
<b>11 March</b>	Protocols and Procedures Committee Meeting
	Corporate Policy Group Meeting
	Longford County Council Meeting
<b>23 March</b>	Granard Municipal District Committee Meeting
	Granard Municipal District Meeting
<b>25 March</b>	Longford Municipal District Committee Meeting
	Longford Municipal District Meeting
<b>26 March</b>	Longford County Council Committee Meeting
	Ballymahon Municipal District Committee Meeting
	Ballymahon Municipal District Meeting

# Corporate Services

## Communications

March 2026 saw a number of important news events in Longford County Council including the annual Microsoft Dream Space Showcase with over 700 primary school children taking part, a visit from a global delegation from the ICMA-the world's leading association of professional city and county managers as well as a visit by the Ambassador of Hungary to Ireland, Gergely Bánhegyi as part of Ireland's EU Presidency community engagement programme.

Other highlights of the month included the media launch for the

new Affordable Housing Scheme and public information sessions, St Patrick's Day parade in Longford Town, the launch of Café Lates, County Enterprise Awards, the opening of the new fitness zone in the Albert Reynolds Peace Park and a photo exhibition to mark International Women's Day.

Longford County Council also claimed two of the most prestigious prizes at the 2026 LAMA All-Ireland Community & Council Awards during the month of March.

Work continued on a number of flagship communication related work projects this month including work



# Corporate Services

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on a new five-year Communications Strategy as well as advancing plans for a new website for Longford County Council and a new Tourism website for Q2 of 2026.

All of these events require the assistance and support of the Communications section including pre and post publicity. Work includes event planning and management, invites, press releases, radio interviews, national and local coverage, media relations, communications strategy and advice, media queries from local and national press, radio advertising, digital communications strategy, official openings, management of all social media platforms, video content creation, paid social media advertising campaigns, content management of Longford County Council website and dealing with website content requests from all sections of the county council.

## Press Releases

A total of 21 press releases were issued in March 2026 on a range of issues, representative of all council sections as referenced above.

## Media enquiries

A total of 10 media queries were received and processed by the Communications Section in March 2026 from both local and national print, online and broadcast media with common themes including, housing related queries, derelict sites, dog welfare and sheep worrying issues and illegal parking.

## Communications Strategy

Work continued on the development of a new five year Communications Strategy in conjunction with RPS Consulting Engineers following the recent Communications Audit.

The findings and recommendations from this audit will help inform the content for a new five-year Communications Strategy for Longford County Council 2026-2030.

The Communications Officer has held weekly workshops with RPS to draft and develop the new five year strategy and the first draft will be presented to management for feedback in the coming weeks.

## LCC Website

The Communications and IT section have gone to tender for a new county council website. As part of the preparation in advance of a new LCC website work our Digital Communications Officer continued work on a detailed clean-up/audit of existing content and pages with a view to having all existing website pages ready for migration to a new website during 2026.

## New Tourism related website

The Digital Communications Officer continues to work with the Tourism Officer and the website developer in relation to a site map and migration to a new Tourism website in Q2 of 2026.

# Corporate Services

## Social Media Stats

### Key Social Media Statistics

The following statistics cover the period from 22 January 2026 to 25 March 2026 and are compared against the same period from 22 January 2025 to 25 March 2025.

- 931,156 total impressions, an **increase of 41.8%** on the 656,562 impressions recorded in the previous period.
- 930 post shares, reflecting a **31.7% increase** compared to 706 shares in the previous period.
- 553 posts published across social platforms, representing a **36.9% decrease** compared to 876 posts. (This is due to fact that the comparable period in 2025 included social media activity

during Storm Éowyn. During that time, MapAlerter updates and weather alerts were posted frequently on Facebook and X/ Twitter throughout the 2025 alert period)

- 4,723 post reactions and likes, an **increase of 140%** 1,969.
- **Followers increase by 11.8%** (17,715) compared to the 15,849 in the previous period.
- Video views increased by **744%**, **rising to 15,772** compared with 1,868 in the previous period.

These metrics highlight how the increased use of video content and more creative social media graphics is driving stronger visibility and deeper audience engagement across our platforms.

## Social Media Best Performing Posts:

### Top posts



Longford County Council  
Feb 03, 20:01  
Longford Secures New Family Resource Centre Funding!  
Longford County Council warmly welcomes today's announcement by Minister Norma Foley confirming funding

105 likes



Longford County Council  
Feb 26, 14:02  
New Affordable Homes Scheme Launches in Longford!  
Longford County Council is proud to announce 25 brand-new A-rated homes coming to Cúirt an Easpaig.

80 likes



Longford County Council  
Feb 18, 13:00  
Introducing Longford's new 'Storm-Ready' packet! Designed to help older people stay safe, connected and confident during severe weather. After the challenges of

74 likes

### Top posts



longfordcoco  
Feb 13, 14:01  
Mercy Ballymahon Green Schools Committee Shines in Biodiversity Leadership 🌱 Pictured are the Green Schools Committee from Mercy Secondary School

86 likes



longfordcoco  
Mar 16, 14:01  
ReStyle Runway: Longford's Circular Economy Shines on the Catwalk! 🌱 Community spirit, creativity, and sustainability took centre stage at Colmcille Community

46 likes




longfordcoco  
Mar 24, 10:16  
Excitement is building in Edgeworthstown ahead of Dreamspace 2026! Longford County Council's Microsoft Dream Space Showcase is co-funded by the Government of

41 likes


# Corporate Services

**Top posts**




**Special Announcement: Meet Longford's 2026 St Patrick's Day Parade Grand Marshal!** Longford County Council is delighted to announce that Michael

60 reactions



**Longford County Council Wins Big at 2026 LAMA All-Ireland Awards!** We're celebrating a double victory at this year's LAMA All-Ireland Community & Council Awards!


54 reactions



**Longford Secures New Family Resource Centre Funding!** Longford County Council warmly welcomes today's announcement by Minister Norma Foley confirming funding


49 reactions

**Top posts**



Tá Comhairle Chontae an Longfoirt ag earcú anois do na post seo a leanas: Oifigeach Riarachán Oifigeach Tacaíochta Teicniúla IS Féach sonraí iomlána agus an chaoil le

1 likes



Tá Comhairle Chontae an Longfoirt ag earcú anois do na post seo a leanas: Pleanálaí Feidhmúcháin Pleanálaí Cúnta Oifigeach Sínearach Foirme

0 likes

**@longfordcoco**  
Mar. 25, 10:32

Úisce Éireann is reporting a water disruption in the Cloondara area. Details at <https://mapalerter.ie/r?ref=T668Y>. Includes traffic issues. Get free alerts for your area <https://www.mapalerter.ie/alert?ref=5045106976E998C0295074264C0000A2>

0 likes

## Website

The following statistics cover the period from 22 January 2026 to 25 March 2026 and are compared against the same period from 22 January 2025 to 25 March 2025.

- Longfordcoco.ie recorded 33,081 visits, representing an increase of 3,523 visits (11.9%) compared to this time last year.
- The most popular sections were:
  - Housing (8,802)
  - Planning (8,766)
  - Environment (4,413)
  - Community Development (3,700)
  - Roads (2,842)
- During this period, the following view counts were recorded across other council websites:
  - LongfordSports (1,201)
  - Longford Libraries (4,199)
  - Longford.ie (5,879)

## Data Protection

Number of Data Breaches	3
Number of Data Agreements	2
Number of Data Subject Access Requests	0
Number of Data Protection Impact Assessments	2
Number of Data Protection queries	112

The Data Protection Team issued their Q1 Data Protection Newsletter in March 2026, to all Longford County Council staff. The purpose of which is to keep colleagues up to date with current Data Protection news within Longford County Council and it also provides some tips and guidance from Longford County Council's Data Protection and Information Compliance Officer.

Data Protection Induction training has been delivered to 16 new entrants to Longford County Council in Q1 2026.

The number of Data Protection queries received by the Data

# Corporate Services

Protection Team have been steadily increasing and on average have increased by 98% over the past four years. This shows Longford County Council's Data Protection Awareness programme is a success. A total of 112 Data Protection queries have been received since the beginning of January 2026.

The Data Protection and Information Compliance Officer continues to sit on the National DPO Network and the Regional DPO Network. She is also a member of the National DPO Working Group that reviews National Data Agreements on behalf of all 31 Local Authorities.

## Health and Safety

### Health and Safety Inspections

A total of 14 safety inspections were completed by the Health and Safety section and the Management Team.

### Health and Safety Training

Ongoing risk assessment briefing sessions are held with each section of the Council.

A total of eight new employee Health and Safety inductions were completed.

### Health and Safety Seminar

The Health and Safety Seminar took place on Friday, 13 February in the Rugby Club. The seminar focused on 'Driving for Work' and the 'Dangers of Electricity', followed by a guest speaker session with Marion Deacy, who shared her personal experience after the tragic loss of her son in a workplace accident.

### Risk assessment review program

A revision of several risk assessments has commenced as part of a five-year planned cycle. Revised and updated risk assessments are issued and communicated to the relevant employees and included in the monthly Health and Safety report to all employees.

### Internal Audit

Health and Safety internal audits were completed in the following section – Roads, Building Facilities and Libraries. An audit schedule is in place for other sections.



# Library, Archives, Arts and Heritage

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## Age Friendly

### Storm Packs

The recent Storm Pack initiative was a huge success with 250 packs now distributed to older persons throughout the county. Each pack contains a power bank charger, a head torch and a one litre flask- all items to assist the most vulnerable within our communities during adverse weather events. An emergency checklist is also included. This was a collaborative project between Longford County Council Age Friendly, Community Safety Partnership and Climate Action departments.

### Climate Course for Over 55's/Digital Radon Monitor Lending Initiative

The Climate Course with climate mentor Jacinta Barrins continues until mid-April with good attendances and positive engagement. In February, the group received presentations from Longford SEAI representative Hugh Baxter, Longford Biodiversity Officer Adam Mulvihill and Longford County Council Housing Capital Section and Age Friendly Healthy Homes Co-ordinator.

### An Bosca Beo

Developed collaboratively by the Creative Ireland, Age Friendly, Library Services, and Healthy Ireland teams in both Longford and Laois local authorities, Bosca Beo takes the form of a beautifully illustrated memory box, styled after a vintage suitcase. Inside, there is space to safely store keepsakes, photographs, documents, and other important personal items.

The official launch of Mo Bosca Beo took place in Portlaoise Library on Monday, 9 March attended by An Cathaoirleach Cllr Garry Murtagh, Director of Service Barbara Heslin and members of Longford Age Friendly and Creative Ireland Programmes as well as ten members of the Older Person's Council who were centrally involved in the project.

The box contains a set of eighty prompt cards with gentle questions to help spark memories and conversations. These cards are ideal for sharing stories with family members of all ages, making it a wonderful intergenerational activity. Included, is a life journal where people can write about their experiences, from childhood through to the present day. In addition, Bosca Beo includes a family tree booklet, allowing users to record details about themselves and previous generations, helping to preserve their family history for the future.



### Age Friendly Ambassadors' Day

County Longford's Age Friendly Ambassador Eamonn Brennan attended the annual Ambassador networking day organised by Age Friendly Ireland which was held

# Library, Archives, Arts and Heritage

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in Tralee accompanied by Martina Needham Longford Age Friendly Programme Manager and Kitty Burkhill, Longford Age Friendly Older Persons Council Chairperson. As Ambassador, Eamonn issues an invite to all present to visit Longford.

## Archives Argentinian Project

The Archives Service, in collaboration with the Heritage Office, organised the visit of the Ambassador of Argentina, Ms Ana Laura Cachaza, and the Deputy Head of Mission, Mr Nicolás Vidal, to Ballymahon Library to launch the Longford part of the Longford-Westmeath Argentina Oral History Project. It was underway since mid-2025 and involved recording interviews with people in each county who have family connections in Argentina. The recordings will be kept in the Archives, along with copies of photographs and other family records that were loaned to the Library Services. Thanks is extended to the Westmeath Heritage Office and the Longford-Westmeath Argentina Society, partners in the project; to Adrian Roche, who recorded the interviews; to the participants; and to the Heritage Council for funding it.

The Archives Service helped to appraise and organise many of the council's records prior to their transfer to alternative storage. It is also working with a couple of sections on records management projects.

## Creative Ireland

On the 24 March, Longford Microsoft Dream Space Showcase took place in St. Mary's Hall, Edgeworthstown. Over

700 students participated in the event with over 130 projects presented and judged on the day. The exhibition tent was filled with information stalls from Departments in Longford County Council and industry leaders in the region. It was a very successful day organised by the wonderful IT team.

Creative Ireland provided funding for this project.

## ICMA visits Longford

The ICMA Global Exchange Program hosted members from the International City/ County Management Association in Longford on 25 March. Over 70 participants from around the globe attended this event, which included visits to Corlea and the historical Iron Age trackway, St. Mel's Cathedral in Longford Town and a panel discussion in Ballymahon Library. The program focused on tourism and Just Transition programme in Ireland's Midlands regions, showcasing Longford's connection to the bog and its role in the region's history both industrial and social and its future. This is an example of history and innovation coexisting for the betterment of the local community.

## Healthy Ireland

### Classes

Prime of life and Move for Better Balance classes continue Monday and Fridays in conjunction with Longford Sports Partnership, classes are always very well attended.

# Library, Archives, Arts and Heritage

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## Stay Safe and Active

An eight-week programme began in January, which consisted of Activator Pole walking, Self Defence and talks by Community Gardai/ Fire Services/ Pharmacist. This programme taught people how to look after themselves, give them confidence in emergency situations and they had the opportunity to learn how to keep themselves safe in the community. The programme was very successful and finished up on Wednesday, 4 March when Stephen Mc Nally presented participants with a certificate for completing the series.

## Heart Health Checks

Irish Heart Foundation/ Hidden Hearing – Hearing Checks. Longford Library hosted Irish Heart Foundation and Hidden Hearing mobile check vans on Tuesday, 3 February and Ballymahon Library hosted Irish Heart Foundation on Friday, 6 February. In Longford 45 people availed of the service while 55 people in Ballymahon took part. As a result, the Irish Heart Foundation will attend Lanesboro Library with their mobile unit on Thursday, 19 March.

## Sepsis Information Session

A sepsis information session took place in Ballymahon library on Tuesday, 10 February for Council staff with 22 attendees.

## Radon Monitor Launch

Longford Libraries launched a new Radon Monitor Loan Scheme in Ballymahon Library on 2 March attended by An Cathaoirleach

Cllr Garry Murtagh, Deputy Chief Executive John Brannigan and members of Longford County Council Healthy Ireland and Climate Teams. Through the scheme, library users can borrow a digital radon monitor just like a book, gaining a snapshot of radon levels in their homes. While not a replacement for the recommended three-month test, the monitors offer a valuable first step in identifying potential radon issues.

This is an important health initiative being provided through the library, and people are encouraged to avail of it. It's a simple step that could make a real difference to your health. It is a Healthy Ireland at Your Library initiative, supported by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), to raise awareness of radon and promote proactive health measures.



# Library, Archives, Arts and Heritage

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## Right to Read programme

### Ireland Reads, Saturday, 28 February

Longford Libraries were proud to join libraries across Ireland in celebrating Ireland Reads, a national campaign to get the whole country reading during February, which culminated with Ireland Reads Day on Saturday, 28 February. The campaign, part of the government's Healthy Ireland programme, celebrates and promotes the many benefits of reading for wellbeing and enjoyment. The theme for 2026 was 'Get Lost in a Good Book'.

On Friday, 27 February as part of Ireland Reads, Edgeworthstown Library hosted children's author Brian Gallagher for a special event celebrating reading, creativity and community. Brian spoke about his book 'The Case of the Vanishing Painting', which is at the heart of the 'One Mystery, One Town' book project, and gave young readers an insight into storytelling, mystery writing and bringing stories to life. The visit reinforced the objectives of the campaign by celebrating reading as a shared community experience and allowing students to engage directly with the author. The project attracted national attention and featured on RTÉ News at One in recognition of World Book Day further strengthening the visibility of Longford Library Services and highlighting the positive impact of collaborative literacy initiatives at local level.

Ballymahon Book Club members spoke about their favourite book of the year and Ballymahon Scribblers read some of their own work at an

open morning in Ballymahon Library on Ireland Reads Day.

In Lanesboro Library, members of the poetry and music group and the Library Bookclub gathered in the library to share favourite pieces of prose and poetry.

Local poet, Kieran Feeney also read some poems from his recently published collection of poetry entitled 'Opaque'.

On Saturday, 28 February at 1pm, Granard Booktown launched its official programme for its 2026 Festival in Granard Library. John Connell, co-director was there to discuss this year's programme. The 2026 programme is now Live! LIVE! All tickets are on sale via its website (link in the profile) [granardbooktownfestival.ie](http://granardbooktownfestival.ie) This year marks their fourth festival and it's the biggest one to date! There are over 20 talks, over 35 authors, writers and poets, three writing workshops, one film screening, in four venues over four exciting days.

### Showcase project: One Mystery, One Town Book Project – Edgeworthstown Library

One Mystery, One Town was delivered as a collaborative literacy initiative between Edgeworthstown Library, St. Mary's N.S., St. John's N.S., and community stakeholders. The project leads were Home School Liaison Officer, Enda Ward and Librarian Kim Taylor.

Over 250 students read 'The Case of the Vanishing Painting' by Brian Gallagher. The action of everyone reading the same book promoted

# Library, Archives, Arts and Heritage

literacy, discussions on books, strengthen community partnerships, and increase engagement with library services.

The initiative aligned with the national Ireland Reads campaign and supported DEIS literacy objectives within the school setting.

The project was supported by Longford County Council and Creative Ireland.

Funding facilitated an artist in residence Sophie Carroll Hunt for the duration of the project. As part of this programme, participating students developed their own interpretations of 'The Vanishing Painting' and designed individual project badges, which were presented and worn at the final celebration event.

The initiative culminated in a successful author visit by Brian Gallagher during Ireland Reads weekend. The visit reinforced the objectives of the campaign by celebrating reading as a shared community experience and allowing students to engage directly with the author.

The library's role was both strategic and operational. The branch negotiated a discounted purchase of 181 copies of the novel, supported school-based access, delivered structured in-library activities linked to the book, and created a themed display to maintain visibility of the initiative.

The initiative received external recognition, including a feature on RTE news on World Book Day, RTÉ Radio 1's Oliver Callan Show, coverage in Books Ireland, and front-

page coverage in the Longford Leader.



## Seachtain na Gaeilge 2026

Seachtain na Gaeilge is an annual celebration of the Irish language and culture that takes place around St. Patrick's Day. It encourages us all—from fluent speakers to beginners—to enjoy and use an Ghaeilge in a fun and welcoming way. A number of events were held in Libraries to celebrate Seachtain na Gaeilge

Ballymahon Library hosted a workshop with Aine Ni Ghlínn and the 3rd year pupils of Ballymahon Vocational School on Monday, 2 March. The children thoroughly enjoyed speaking as gaeilge and the teacher feedback from the event was very positive.

The launch of the Edgeworthstown Library Photography Club's latest

# Library, Archives, Arts and Heritage

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exhibition, 'Through an Irish Lens' also took place on 12 March at 7pm. The exhibition celebrates Irish landscapes, places, and moments that reflect the beauty and character of the country.

Lanesboro Library hosted author Sadhbh Devin on Thursday, 5 March and on Monday, 9 March, Sarah Tully and her puppet friends visited Lanesboro for bilingual ceol, damhsa agus draoicht.



# Local Enterprise Office

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## ReStyle Runway – Circular Economy Event

Colmcille Community Centre was alive with colour and community spirit recently as Longford County Council and the Local Enterprise Office brought the ReStyle Runway to life – a circular economy fashion show co-funded by the Government of Ireland and the European Union through the EU Just Transition Fund.

The event was officially opened by Cathaoirleach of Longford County Council, Cllr Garry Murtagh. The Restyle Runway fashion show made a simple but compelling argument: new is not always best. From relaxed everyday looks to striking occasion wear, every outfit on the runway that night had a previous life – and a fraction of the price tag. The fashion show also demonstrated the power of community spirit and partnership as every model on the night was a volunteer while local shops also embraced the event.

The clothing and accessories came from eight local charity and community shops. The evening extended beyond the rails of the charity shop to celebrate the creativity and innovation of the next generation. Students from Cnoc



Mhuire Secondary School, Granard, brought their Junk Kouture creations to the runway – garments built not from new fabric but from materials that would otherwise have been discarded.

## County Longford Enterprise Awards 2026

The County Longford Enterprise Awards 2026 took place in PVs on Thursday, 5 March as part of Local Enterprise Week 2026. Contract and event catering specialists, Dial a Chef Catering Longford Ltd took home the top prize and will go on to represent Longford at the National Enterprise Awards in Dublin in June this year.

Dial a Chef Catering, has grown from a small rural catering service in Ballinamuck into one of the region's most respected food enterprises, driven by founder Eilish McLoughlin. Despite its rural location, Dial a Chef has become an important local employer, continuing to expand through ongoing investment.

Other winners at County Longford Enterprise Awards 2026 were:

- Longford Signs – Lean Champion Award
- Cassidy Blinds – Digital Champion Award
- Janni Bars – Green and Sustainability Award
- FC Fabrications Ltd – Best Start up

Also at the event, Norman Hall was crowned this year's winners of the 'Spirit of Longford' award. Norman

# Local Enterprise Office

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Hall is a longstanding North Longford entrepreneur whose company, Hall Transport, has been a major local employer for decades and who has further strengthened the region through continued investment, rural business revitalisation and major fundraising initiatives. The County Longford Enterprise Awards took place as part of Local Enterprise Week which saw over 300 events taking place across the country.



## Circular Advantage Event

The Local Enterprise Office hosted an event called Circular Advantage as part of the Just Transition Fund aimed at promoting circular practices to Longford's SME's. This project included completing a feasibility study on Developing a Circular Economy Centre for Longford. This along with other events locally aimed to raise the profile of Circular Economy in Longford.

The event took place during Enterprise Week and was hosted by award-winning broadcaster Ella McSweeney in Longford Golf Club. Circular Advantage is a practical, results-focused event designed to show Longford SMEs how circular economy practices can directly improve profitability, reduce risk and

unlock new growth opportunities. This event moved beyond theory to focus on what business owners care about most: cost control, contract wins and long-term resilience.

The event featured practical insights from industry leaders -Valentina Tarasco, Assessment & Metrics Lead with the Circular Economy Team at Irish Manufacturing Research, John O'Shanahan of LeanBPI and Tim Murphy of Circular Economy Company. The event concluded with a panel discussion hosted by Ella McSweeney, focused on practical implementation and the funding supports available to help SMEs take the next step.



## Student Enterprise Awards

The County Longford Final was held in The Longford Arms with 300 students from eight schools taking part in the annual programme locally.

The winning entrepreneurs from Ardscoil Phadraig Granard and Moyne Community School will represent County Longford at this year's Student Enterprise Programme National Final on Thursday, 7 May in The Mullingar Park Hotel. In the Junior Category, Longford will be represented by

# Local Enterprise Office

James Denny from 'Boot Buddy' at Ardscoil Phadraig, Granard. In the Intermediate Category, Martinss Martinsons from 'Fern & Foam' at Moyne Community School will go forward to the National Final.

In the Senior Category, County Longford will be represented on 7 May by Sophia Dow, Mimi Keller, Paddy Croghan-Casey, Bonnie Nolan and Molly Sherwood from 'The Twister', also at Moyne Community School. The local students will compete against hundreds of other student entrepreneurs from all over Ireland at the Student Enterprise Programme National Final.



the celebration. Dry weather held long enough for crowds to enjoy a bright, lively afternoon from Connolly Barracks through the Town Centre. This year's theme, 'Amuigh Faoin Spéir – Out in the Open,' inspired a colourful mix of music, performance, creativity and community pride.

The vibrant mix of cultural groups, schools, clubs, businesses, performers, emergency services and community organisations delivered a lively and diverse event for the thousands in attendance. The parade also featured enhanced accessibility supports, including a sensory viewing area on Bridge Street and a wheelchair-accessible zone in Centenary Square, both of which were welcomed by families and community members. The 2026 St Patrick's Day Parade was funded by Longford Municipal District and organised by the Local Enterprise Office on behalf of Longford County Council.

## St Patrick's Day Parade

Longford Town's 2026 St Patrick's Day Parade has been hailed a fantastic success, with over 60 floats and entries reflecting the remarkable community spirit at the heart of



# Human Resources

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## Learning and Development

The following training courses were attended during the months of February and March 2026.

### Business Skills Training

- Excel – Beginner
- Excel - Intermediate
- Excel - Advanced
- Legal Requirements and Guidelines for Preparing Land Registry Compliant Maps
- Joint RIAI and DHLGH Housing Conference
- SPS Leadership Accelerator Programme 2026
- Women in Leadership
- Standards for Private Rented Houses
- Housing Ireland Conference
- AIE for decision makers
- Public Sector Procurement Frameworks
- Anti-Social Behaviour / Estate Management
- Learning Management System Training
- Rental Standards Seminar
- Environmental Consideration for Roads Staff

## Health and Safety Training

- Manual Handling
- Safe Pass
- Abrasive Wheels
- CPC Module 2
- Mobile Elevated Platform
- Dealing with Violence and Aggression in the Workplace
- Slinger/Signaller

## Health and Wellbeing

The following events relating to the Four Pillars of Wellbeing as identified in the LGMA Wellbeing Strategy – Mental Wellbeing, Physical Wellbeing, Social Wellbeing and Financial Wellbeing took place during the months of February and March 2026.

### Physical Wellbeing

- Lunchtime circuits classes continue in the Longford Athletics Centre
- Lunchtime running group with Brendan Doyle, preparation for the Noel McManus run on Good Friday, 3 April at Lough Rynn Castle, Leitrim

# Human Resources

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## Sepsis Awareness

Pleased to support and participate in the recent launch of a Sepsis Awareness Campaign led by local advocates Linda Lowry and Bobbi Yasir, in partnership with the Irish Sepsis Foundation.

- Four Information Sessions attended by 132 online and in person
- Skin Cancer Awareness – 75 attended information session on 24 February
- Four Screening Clinics fully booked for 108 appointments
- Information/ Webinars – Epilepsy Awareness, Parent Talk – Eating Disorder Week, Screentime and Teens



## Financial Wellbeing

Employee Financial Wellness Programme. Monthly online masterclasses and 1 to 1 guidance clinics recommenced and will continue until December 2026. A total of 40 staff engaged during February

## Social Wellbeing

Line Dancing Classes – Taster session on 23 March attended by 18 staff. A six week programme will commence on 13 April.

# Roads

## Regional and Local Road Allocations

On the 17 February Longford County Council was notified of the Regional and Local Road Grant Allocations for 2026. The Roads Programme is currently being prepared. Longford County Council received an overall increase of €252,152 or approximately 2.45% on the 2025 allocation.

The total allocation per grant heading is detailed in the table below.

DEPT GRANT	Allocation 2026
Restoration Improvement	€5,725,000
Restoration Maintenance	€676,000
Supplementary Restoration Maintenance	€625,000
Discretionary Grant	€1,359,500
Bridge Rehabilitation Grant	€463,300
Specific Improvement	€175,000
Safety Improvement Works	€286,152
Speed Limits Review Signs	€188,500
Strategic Rehabilitation Regional Roads	€260,000
Climate Adaption	€297,000
Training Grant	€36,400
Community Involvement Scheme	€296,900
Drainage Works	€299,000
PSCI: Survey Support	€12,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>€10,511,252</b>

## National Road Schemes

Longford County Council also received notification of their allocation for National Roads Improvement and Maintenance Works 2026. A total allocation of €3,122,573 was announced.

The TII allocation for Capital Investment – Protection and Renewal was €2,683,000 with substantial pavement works to be carried on the N63 at Gowlan. Pavement works are also due to be carried out on the N4 from Lamagh Bridge to Main Street, Newtownforbes.

An allocation of €439,573 for current maintenance – protection and renewal was also provided for ordinary maintenance, route lighting and winter maintenance on the National Road Network.

Other pavement works will be carried out on national roads at various locations throughout the county funded through HD28 schemes, defects schemes or emergency pavement schemes.

The N4 Mullingar to Longford (Roosky) Scheme is currently progressing well through Phase 3 (Design and Environmental Evaluation) of the TII Project Management Guidelines.

The scheme has recently received an allocation for 2026 of €6m. This €6m funding will primarily be utilised to continue to fund consultant's fees, ground investigation works, topographical works and environmental surveys along the extent of the N4 corridor.

# Roads

Longford County Council received TII approval to proceed to Phase 2 (Option Selection) for the N55 Granard By-Pass Scheme. Longford County Council are in the process of appointing a consultant to progress the design of the scheme.

## Municipal District Works

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

Area technical staff continued work on the preparation of the roads schedule for 2026 which will be presented to the members at the various Municipal District Meetings by the end of March.

Procurement of plant and materials is ongoing.



## Phase 2 of the National Speed Limit Review

Following a direction from the Department of Transport LCC have commenced Phase 2 of the National Speed Limit Review.

Phase 2 is a review of urban and built-up areas. (all the towns and villages in County Longford).

As part of this review consideration will be given to the following;

- Introduction of 30km/hr speed limits in urban / built-up areas.
- Introduction of 30km/hr speed limits at Schools in urban / built-up areas.

On 3 and 4 March members of the Speed Limits Team (SLT) held preliminary in committee meetings with the Members of each Municipal District to outline the process involved in the review and seek feedback and submissions from the Members regarding the appropriate speed limits for the various urban and built-up areas within their MD.

The Members provided some very useful feedback and the SLT will now prepare draft bye-laws for further consultation with the Members in April/May 2026.

The key dates in this review are 30 October 2026 which is the date that it is expected the new bye-laws will be adopted and 31 March 2027 when the special speed limits will be enacted nationally.

# Roads

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## Road Safety

The Road Safety Team participated in Longford Microsoft Dream Space Showcase event in Edgeworthstown on 24 March 2026, engaging with primary school children and other young attendees to promote road safety awareness and showcase Longford County Council's ongoing commitment to community education. The team displayed a range of interactive materials and resources, encouraging children to learn about safe travel practices in an engaging and hands-on way. Their presence supported wider collaboration with Comhairle na nÓg, An Garda Síochána and other partners, helping to strengthen local engagement and reinforce the importance of safety on Longford's roads.

This will facilitate civil engineering works including embankment stabilisation, road edge strengthening, raising road level, drainage etc at various locations throughout the county including R198 Camagh/Corrinagh, R392-L1629 Foigha, L1127 Mullaghavorneen, L1143/L1141 Forthill, L10404 Kiltyreher and R392 Gorteengar.



## Climate Action

Longford County Council have received an allocation of €297,000 for works under the 2026 Climate Change Adaption and Resilience Works allocation.

