



Longford County Council Chief Executive Report November 2022

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November Highlights

Wins at Occupational Safety Awards

Longford County Council won the Regional (Midlands) Award and the Continuous High Achiever Award at the 31st Annual All-Ireland Occupational Safety Awards in November.



#ShopLongford returns

#ShopLongford has launched, as local shoppers are encouraged to support local business this Christmas. The campaign is supported by Local Enterprise Office, Longford and Longford Chamber of Commerce.



Longford Lights Up

Santa Claus rolled into town to help turn on the Christmas lights for Longford Town on Saturday, 26 November. The crowds gathered to meet the man in red and enjoy the festive atmosphere around the town.



Think Before You Flush

Students from St Joseph's Primary School in Longford encouraged everyone to 'Think Before You Flush' in the war against the 'Wet Wipe Monster'. Longford County Council worked with Clean Coasts and Irish Water as part of this campaign.



Community & Enterprise

Community Development

Longford Local Community Development Committee

Longford Local Community Development Committee (LCDC) meetings were held on 13 October and 9 November.

Local Economic and Community Plan

The Local Economic and Community Plan 2023-2029 continues to be developed. Views on the draft socio-economic statement and the high-level goals have been submitted by the public, with the public consultation period coming to a close. A report will be prepared for consideration by Longford LCDC and the Placemaking Strategic Policy Committee (SPC).

Community Support Fund 2022

The Community Support Fund 2022 launched on 18 November, as part of the government's Community Enhancement Programme. This €10m Fund will support community and voluntary groups and is administered by the LCDC.

The Fund will support groups, particularly in disadvantaged areas with running costs such as electricity, refuse and heating charges, or operating costs, such as rents, leases and insurance. Necessary repairs and improvements to facilities, purchase of equipment can also be funded.

€276,585 has been allocated to Longford, with an amount ring-fenced for women's sheds. The scheme will be advertised in the coming weeks.

Community Safety Conference

The first All Island Community Safety Conference was arranged by Longford Local Community Safety Partnership (LCSP). Community Safety Coordinator for Longford, Janine Bartley addressed the Conference, outlining the work of the Longford LCSP and its impact on communities over its first year.



The event explored how agencies and communities can come together to improve safety. It was attended by almost 300 people from across Ireland. This included representatives of government departments, statutory agencies and the community sector.

It was arranged in partnership with Newry Mourne and Down Policing and Community Safety Partnerships, and the Drogheda Implementation Board. A large delegation from Longford also attended, visiting community safety projects across Newry Mourne and Down District and sharing ideas and learning.

Community & Enterprise

Community Development (Contd)

LEADER projects approved

Three LEADER projects to a value of €219,899 were approved at the October LCDC meeting. Two projects to a value of €16,394 were approved in November.

Minister for Rural and Community Development Heather Humphreys TD announced €5.8m in funding for Longford, as part of €180m in national funding for the LEADER Programme for 2023-2027.

Longford Comhairle na nÓg

Over 100 young people from all nine post primary schools and youth services in the county attended the Longford Comhairle na nÓg annual general meeting. Discussions were held on topics selected by young people. Cian's Kennels were guest speakers on the day. Issues on climate change and mental health were highlighted through projects undertaken in the county.



Tourism

Longford Rebel Trail Audio Tour launched

Longford Rebel Trail Audio Tour launched at Knights and Conquests Heritage Centre and the Bailey Café in Granard in November.



Offering tourists and locals alike an audio guide around the Longford Rebel Trail, this Audio Tour tells of story of insurrections and rebellions in County Longford. It is available from the audio section of Longford.ie. Alternatively, CDs of the Audio Tour are available from Longford Tourism Office.

The stops on the audio tour cover many locations around the county, including Longford Town, Drumlish, Ballinamuck, Moyne. The tour is available in English, Irish and French. The audio can also be accessed via QR codes at each stop on the tour.

Including interviews from local people and actors from Backstage Theatre, this Audio Tour covers history from the Normans up to the War of Independence. This Audio Tour can be used with the Longford Rebel Trail Driving Trail. This route covers 71km with important historical locations identified.

The Longford Rebel Trail Audio Tour was created by Longford Tourism and Longford County Council.

Community & Enterprise

Local Sports Partnership

Longford Sports Awards

Longford Sports Partnership and the Longford Leader launched the Longford Sports Awards. Nominations were for the year 2022, as well as for 2021 and 2020.

Ten winners were chosen from public nominations. There were also an additional five special awards, including membership into the hall of fame, club volunteer, junior sportsperson, sports ability, and team of the year.

Winners will be recognised at a presentation on Friday, 2 December.



Longford Afro Dance

A new initiative, Longford Afro Dance took place on throughout November in the Temperance Hall, Longford. Instructor Favour Odusola led the traditional African dance course.

Favour has acted, danced and worked on many stage and film production sets in Nigeria and Dublin, including with Jamie Foxx among other stars. The session were a fusion of Nigerian traditional and modern dance styles.

Winter Initiative

The Winter Initiative encourages everyone to get moving in the colder months. For this, local clubs and groups are encouraged to market their winter events and activities. You can also download your free exercise calendar.

Find out more on [Longfordsports.ie](https://longfordsports.ie).

Xcessible Club Toolkit

Cara Sport Inclusion Ireland and Sport Ireland have created the Xcessible Club Toolkit in response to the popularity of the Xcessible programme for National Governing Bodies of Sport and Local Sports Partnerships.

It works to ensure people with disabilities can access and enjoy regular participation in sports and physical activity at club level. The toolkit supports sports clubs in overcoming the challenges experienced by people with disabilities who want to engage in sports. It also helps them to develop and sustain inclusive practise within their club.

Access the toolkit on caracentre.ie.

Community & Enterprise

Human Resources

Employee numbers

The Council had 395 employees, including:

Managerial	6	Outdoor	97
Administrative, Clerical	172	Retained Fire	42
Professional, Technical	78	Fighter	

Recruitment

Competitions complete	12	Employees in new roles	5
Candidates interviews	50	Leavers	9
New starters	5		

Learning and development

Training held in May included:

Business skills training:

- Longford County Council's Policy and Procedure for the Protection and Safeguarding of Children
- Cybersecurity Awareness
- MakoData Training
- Climate Action Green Procurement Awareness
- Complaints Handling
- Working in a Blended Environment
- AutoCAD
- Investigation and Enforcement for Environmental Officers
- Age Friendly Housing and Public Realm Training
- Legal Island Annual Review of Employment Law

Health and safety training:

- Temporary Traffic Management Design
- Confined Spaces Medium Risk

- Petroleum Vapour Emissions Training Programme
- Road Opening and Reinstatement - Advanced
- Safe Pass
- The Legalities of Accident Management and Incident Investigation
- Winter Service Operator
- Bridges Engineering Inspections
- New Wastewater Treatment Plant Operations
- The Legalities of Accident Management and Incident Investigation

Health and wellbeing

Programmes available to employees included:

- 24-hour Run4Pieta, which raised €406 for Pieta House
- Men's Health Awareness Month information session by Irish Cancer Society on the early warning signs of the cancers for men. There was also a men's prostate blood test health screening
- Winter flu vaccinations
- Retirement event for employees who retired since January 2020
- Breast Cancer Ireland's Breast Health and Education Awareness Presentation
- Lunchtime Run Group, in collaboration with Longford Sports Partnership

Local Government Management Agency Career Drive

The Local Government Management Agency engaged in a career drive in October. This included a social media campaign and promoted many roles in the sector, including those in Longford County Council.

For more, visit localgovernmentjobs.ie.

Finance & IT

Information Technology

Town WIFI

The free Town WIFI in Longford, Ballymahon and Drumlish had 1,127 new and 1,860 returning users.

Broadband Connection Points

County Longford Broadband Connection Points (BCP) had 45 new users and 268 returning users.

Digital services

Microsoft Dream Space was launched in Mullinalaghta Community Centre BCP in October. 100 primary school children from St Colmcille National School, Sacred Heath Primary School Granard, Mullinalaghta and Scoil Mhuire National School Aughnagarron attended the event. Longford is one of four counties piloting these projects.

Longford Text Alert is now live in 14 community alert areas. In October, local launches took place for Edgeworthstown, Stonepark and Ballymakeegan/Listduff, and Abbeylara and Granard.



Our Kids Code workshops took place in Moydow Community Centre and Mullinalaghta Community Centre BCPs.

There has been continued progress and support of several digital services projects, including:

- eDocument management project
- Customer Relationship Management app, with this pilot now expended to include Environment
- ePerformance Management Development Scheme (ePMDS) software
- eService Plan project
- A housing inspection app

Technology infrastructure

ServiceDesk dealt with 1,176 enquiries in October and November.

Internal bookings app is being developed and the monitoring of system migration has started. A cookies review on longfordcoco.ie is now completed.

New security policies continue to be implemented , The upgrading of antivirus software is now complete.

A critical infrastructure review has started and a regional infrastructure meeting was hosted.

There has been continued progress and support of several infrastructural projects, including:

- Patching of client and server systems
- Hybrid meetings
- Mobile phone administration and support

Geographic information systems

Data was collated and app development undertaken to support a Residential Zoned Land Tax map. User training and support was provided. The continued rollout of Longford Text Alert was also supported.

Infrastructure, Housing & Innovation

Roads

Winter Service Plan

The Winter Service Plan 2022/2023 is available on Longfordcoco.ie. It provides the framework for a planned and coordinated response for winter weather conditions by Longford County Council.

Fleet Upgrades

Longford County Council continue to upgrade its fleet and are purchasing three new 26T tipper trucks and a crew cab. A velocity patcher has also been purchased and will be operational in Q1 2023.

Municipal district works

Road maintenance, including drainage, footpath repairs and pothole repairs, continued in each municipal district (MD).

Most roads programme works are complete. Emphasis is now on maintaining the road network in the winter.

National road schemes

Construction work on the N63 Majors Well Road is ongoing. Pavement works are taking place and construction will be substantially complete in December. Works are complete on the €1.2m N4 Garryandrew Pavement Scheme.

Advance drainage works have started on the N4 Longford Bypass Phase 1 Scheme (from the N4 and N5 Charlotte Brooke Roundabout to the N4 and N63 Leo Casey Roundabout). The value of the contract is €2.3m. Pavement works will be progressed in 2023.

Local Improvement Schemes

Eighteen Local Improvement Schemes have been completed and allocations drawn down in County Longford in 2022.

Road Safety Authority Annual Conference

The Road Safety Officer attended the Road Safety Authority (RSA) Annual International Conference. The conference looked at speeding and featured speakers who shared best practice in addressing the issue. The speakers were from operational, academic and policy development backgrounds.

Road Safety Day of Action

The road safety team and traffic team took part in a Road Safety Day of Action in Longford Town, with Longford Local Community Safety Partnership and An Garda Síochána. This day promoted road and community safety and successfully engaged the public.

Check it Fits Campaign

The road safety team, met the RSA Check it Fits team who came to Longford on Friday, 4 November. Check it Fits is a free nationwide expert service helping parents and guardians to ensure children's car seats are safely and securely fitted in their car.

World Remembrance Day

World Day of Remembrance for Road Traffic Victims took place on Sunday, 20 November. Religious services on the weekend of the 20 November remembered victims of road collisions.

Infrastructure, Housing & Innovation

Environment

Think Before You Flush campaign

The Think Before You Flush campaign, from Clean Coasts and Irish Water, urges people to stop flushing wet wipes and sanitary items. When flushed, these items can form of 'fatbergs'. This campaign featured local school children and the 'Wet Wipe Monster' who we are all trying to stop by correctly disposing of these items.

Halloween

A Halloween upcycling project took place in McEoin Park in Longford as part of Dead of Night. It involved 20 children from the estate making reusable Halloween decorations used in the Dead of Night Parade. A junior litter programme was established in McEoin Park to encourage young children to have pride in their place.

Large Good Collection

Large goods collections in Granard and Ballymahon took place in October. 9.30 tonnes of bulky goods and recyclables were collected.

Hope Bench for Ballymahon

Another 'Hope' bench was put in at Ballymahon. This follows on from the installation of a Hope bench at the Royal Canal in Longford Town. The students collected over 7,000 plastic bottles to make this new bench. The concept highlights the effective reuse and recycling of products for the creation of a space for rest and contemplation.

Civil Defence

Duties and taskings

Civil Defence provided medical cover at five events in October and November, including:

- Royal Canal Camino
- Longford Town Football Club soccer match
- GAA county finals
- Dead of Night Festival
- Turning on of Longford Town Christmas lights

Training and operations

- A community first responder course was held for eight members of Longford Town's Men Shed.
- Three volunteers assisted with the annual national radiation exercise. Soil, grass and air radiation readings were taken and the results transported to the Environmental Protection Agency. The exercise also covered the use Civil Defence national communications radio systems and proved very effective on the day.
- The Civil Defence Officer attended a designated liaison person training day in Roscrea.
- Civil Defence volunteers attended a ceremony in Croke Park where they were presented with COVID-19 medals by Minister for Defence Simon Coveney TD. The event recognised the hard work and dedication of volunteers throughout the pandemic.

Planning & Project Delivery

Housing Capital

Housing Capital Programme

Project	Units	Status
St Michael's Court, O'Hara's Site	14	Complete in November
St Patrick's Court, Ballinamuck	8	On site, due for completion December 2022.
Alderfield, Farnagh	1	Complete in November
Campbell's Drive	2	Complete in November
Cranleymore, Abbeylara	3	Stage 3 approved. Tender drawings being prepared.
St Rita's Park Road	12	Stage 2 approved. Phase 1 out to planning.
24 Congress Terrace	2	Stage 3 approved. Tender documents in progress.
Woodland Path, Keenagh	4	Stage 3 approved. Tender documents sent to Department.
Drynan, Ballymahon	13	Stage 1 approved. Stage 2 to be submitted shortly.
Cnoc na Gréine, Granard	6	Stage 1 approved. Stage 2 to be submitted shortly.
2 Woodview, Newtownforbes	2	Single stage application to be submitted shortly.
2 Legion Terrace	4	Single stage approval received.
Richmond Street	23	Turnkey approval, to start on site before end 2022.
Farrell's Ballinalee	4	Turnkey approval, to start on site before end 2022.
Forthill, Aughnaclyffe	13	Turnkey approval – to start on site before end 2022.
Radharc na Muileann, Lanesborough	22	Stage 1 approved. Stage 2 to be submitted shortly.

Colmcille Terrace, Granard

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Combined Stage 1 to 3 approval for Capital Assistance Scheme project. Capital Advance Leasing Facility application approved. Shortlisting of suitable contractors completed by Tuath. Final tenders to be received from the seven contractors selected by 5 December. Works will start in the first quarter of 2023.

Vacant Property Refurbishment

The Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage advised that the Vacant Property Refurbishment Grant under the Croí Cónaithe Fund would include eligible vacant properties in cities and rural areas, to ensure the existing housing stock is utilised. Updated documentation have been uploaded to Longfordcoco.ie. Enquiries can be directed to vacanthomesofficer@longfordcoco.ie.

Provision of State Lands for Future Housing Development

The Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage advised that two initiatives to assist in the development of state lands and property for new residential developments. These initiatives are:

- Consolidated List of State Lands with Housing Potential: this has been circulated and feedback requested by the Department.
- State Lands Enquiry Register: to manage development enquires for state landholdings. It allows local authority to ascertain the specific ownership and development strategy for certain state lands and buildings which are identified as having the potential to be developed for housing.

Planning & Project Delivery

Climate Action Initiatives

Human Resources

Human Resources have been working with the Information Technology section for the development of digital application forms to reduce paper-based forms and paper waste.

Information Technology

Several paperless projects are having a positive impact on the Council's environmental footprint.

The Information Technology section continues to work with business areas to ensure all new schemes are rolled out on a digital first basis.

Environment

Students collected over 7,000 plastic bottles to make a new 'Hope' bench for Ballymahon. The concept highlights the effective reuse and recycling of products for the creation of a space for rest and contemplation.



Housing

Under the Midlands Retrofit Programme, work is ongoing on the retrofitting of Cois na hAbhainn and Hill View. Works have started on 29 units in Glebe View, with works expected to be completed by March 2023.

Tender is in progress for St Matthew's Park, Ballymahon and assessment of works required are being considered on 46 local authority houses in the estate.

CONNECTED

People • Place • Opportunity

Management Report for November 2022 prepared in accordance with Sec 136 (2) of the Local Government Act 2001, as inserted by Sec 51 the Local Government Reform Act 2014. The report outlines key aspects of our service delivery and performance in November 2022 in securing the objectives set out in the Council's Corporate Plan.

Signed: _____



Paddy Mahon
Chief Executive





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