



# Longford County Council Chief Executive Report December 2021

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# December Highlights

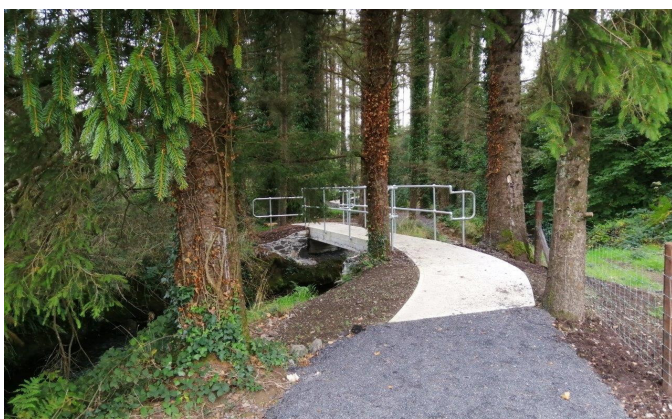
## Longford Live & Local celebrates the arts

Longford Art and Craft Galleries proved to be success stories of the Longford Live and Local Winter Programme. The initiative continued in earnest over the festive break, with many online events shared worldwide.



## Aughnaccliffe River Walk

Work on the Aughnaccliffe River Walk is now complete, making this hidden gem on the Rathmore River accessible and easy to explore and enjoy.



## Freedom of County for Shaunagh Connaire

Longford County Council Cathaoirleach Cllr Peggy Nolan conferred the Freedom of the County on Longford journalist and filmmaker Shaunagh Connaire, the first female ever to be bestowed the honour in County Longford.



## #ShopLongford success

Quinn's TopLine Supply Stores, Edgeworthstown scooped the overall county prize for the Best Christmas Window Display Competition run by Longford Local Enterprise Office and Longford Chamber.



# Community & Enterprise

## Community Development

### Local Community Development Committee (LCDC)

A meeting of the LCDC took place on Tuesday, 14 December 2021.

#### LEADER

Three LEADER projects were approved for funding of over €326,697 at the LCDC meeting in December.

#### Comhairle na nÓg

Longford Comhairle na nÓg is continuing to collect plastic bottles in partnership with secondary schools to create a recycled HOPE (Helping Our Planet's Environment) bench. The bench will be made of 5,000 colourful plastic recycled bottles and will be wheelchair accessible.

This first HOPE Bench will be located along the Longford Canal Walk with the official unveiling set for early spring. Due to the project's popularity, a plan is being put in place to create more benches for other parts of the county.



*Members of Comhairle na nÓg collecting bottles*

### Supporting Women and Diversity in Local Government

The Connecting Women to Local Government booklet and supporting promotional video was which was launched in December. This was a collaboration between Longford County Council, Longford Women's Link, SHE: See Her Elected and Longford Public Participation Network.



*Front cover of the Connecting Women to Local Government booklet*

Designed to encourage participation of women from diverse backgrounds in local government in 2024 and beyond, it provides a great starting point for those wishing to gain learn about local government and their local county councils.

County Longford is rich in diverse cultures. To support all women in our community, this booklet has been translated into five different languages: Polish, Lithuanian, Latvian, Slovak, Brazilian and Portuguese.

This initiative was funded by the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage.

# Community & Enterprise

## Tourism

### Christmas and December Events Guides

Longford Tourism's Christmas Events Guide promoted fun and festive events happening throughout County Longford. All of these Christmas events were supported with online promotion through Longford Tourism's social media and Longford.ie to encourage visitors to support all locally-organised events.

Additionally, Longford Tourism continue to run the ever-popular monthly event guide in the Longford Leader to promote Longford-based events and activities. Longford Live & Local events continue to be promoted through the events guides, as well as on social media and Longford.ie.

### Promoting Longford organisations and small businesses

Longford Tourism made visits to the new Edgeworthstown Community Library, the House of Craft in Ballymahon and St Mel's Brewery in Longford Town, with all promotional visits highlighted on social media.

### Podcasting

Longford Tourism is continuing to work with Inhand Guides on the creation of podcasts for places of interest around the county. December's podcast featured St Mel's Cathedral, and Edgeworthstown Community Library and the town's literary connections.

### House of Craft, Ballymahon



### St Mel's Brewing Co Longford



# Community & Enterprise

## Library, Heritage & Archives

### Edgeworthstown Community Library

Over 2,700 visits have been recorded to the library over the first four weeks of its operation, with 2,000 items borrowed from the library's shelves.

The encouraging and steady flow of customers includes many students and families. There are also many adults visiting to use the fast broadband, wifi and printing facilities on offer to help them work remotely. All customers are being encouraged to use the self-service machines and this is working very well.

Over three weeks in December, a series of well attended talks on 'Minding your mental health and managing stress' was hosted by occupational psychologist Paul Marsden

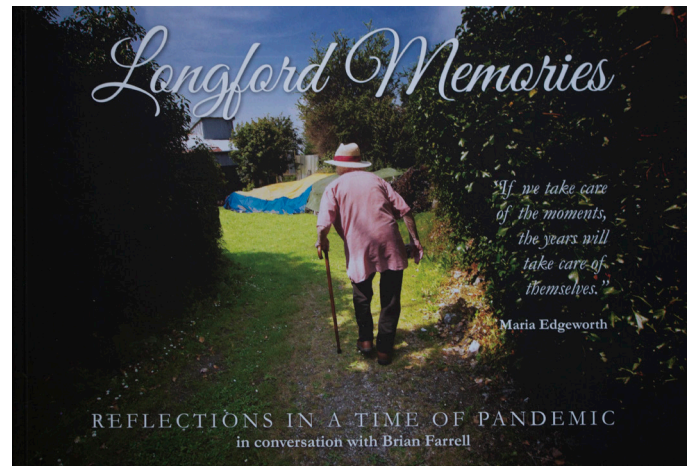


The library also hosted its first successful art exhibition opening on Friday, 17 December by Edgeworthstown artist Ciara Tuite (pictured with her family above). This exhibition runs until Monday, 31 January.

### Longford Age Friendly Programme

Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic the Longford Age Friendly Programme focused strongly on supporting our older citizens' mental health and wellbeing, and keeping them connected.

Aligned to this focus, photojournalist Brian Farrell interviewed and photographed 30 older Longford people from the three municipal districts. This work resulted in a book entitled 'Longford Memories: Reflections in a Time of Pandemic' which was launched in December. Funded through Creative Ireland, this book is proving to be a huge success and has been sent to Longford people all over the world. The book is now in its second print run.



### Heritage

Under the Community Monuments Fund, community archaeological conservation management plans have been advanced for key archaeological sites. This includes the repair of the Tower House at Abbeyshrule Abbey. Additional funding of €15,000 was secured to continue masonry works at this site in December.

# Community & Enterprise

## Library, Heritage & Archives (Contd)

### Beyond 2022 Project

As part of the Beyond 2022 Project, images of the manuscript County Longford Grand Jury Books (1759-1907) have now been digitised and are being prepared for online release. This will recreate, virtually, the Public Record Office of Ireland, which was destroyed in 1922.

### Decade of Centenaries

The Decade of Centenaries programme has been very successful and funding has been approved to continue the programme into 2022. A number of projects have been identified, including the centenary of the setting up of An Garda Síochána.

### Longford Live & Local winter programme got underway

Longford Live & Local continued with phase two bringing a winter programme into winter and the festive season. Longford County Council was awarded a further grant of €143,000 to engage local artists, musicians and creative communities to deliver performances and cultural events.

Coordinated by Creative Ireland Longford, Longford Live & Local ran with the support of local events manager Shane Crossan and his company Republic of Culture. Many events were based around the switching on of the Christmas lights in our towns and villages. All events strictly observed public health guidelines.

Particularly successful were the arts and crafts fairs in Longford and Ballymahon and the art exhibitions held in Longford, Edgeworthstown and Ballymahon. All showcased the work of locally-based or locally-linked professional artists and craftspeople.



A special event in Backstage Theatre to celebrate the success of traditional musician Angelina Carberry (winner of TG4 Ceoltoir na Bliain 2021) was due to take place on 8 January. This has since been deferred to a later date, due to rising case numbers.

# Community & Enterprise

## Local Sports Partnership

### Sports First Aid Course

Sports First Aid Course, the Longford Sports Partnership programme for volunteer and coach training, continued in December in St Mel's College.

As part of this course, coaches and volunteers received information and instruction on how to manage common sports-specific injuries and accidents that can occur during sports training and events.

Participants also practiced CPR and defibrillator, as well as receiving training on concussion, fractures and breaks, dislocations, asthma, winding, choking, bleeding and bandages, spinal injuries, respiratory emergencies, and sprains and strains.

This course is advisable for anybody who is involved or participates in sport including coaches, parents, teachers, and physical activity leaders.

### Longford County Council Sports Bursary

Longford County Council, in collaboration with the Longford Sports Partnership, announced the Longford County Council Sports Bursary in December.

This award facilitates achievement by aspiring individual performers who have the ability and potential to gain recognition and success at national and international level. Longford County Council allocated €5,000 towards this bursary.

### Safeguarding - Good Practices for Children's Sport

Longford Sports Partnership held three safeguarding training courses for coaches and volunteers in the month of December: Safeguarding One Training, Safeguarding Two Training, and Safeguarding Three Training.

Safeguarding One Training is for all volunteers, coaches, children's officers and designated liaison persons involved in any capacity with children in sport. This course educates participants on the implementation of best practice in protecting the welfare of children involved in sport. Certification is awarded by Sport Ireland.

Safeguarding Two Training is for club children's officers whose primary aim is the establishment of a child centred ethos within their club.

Safeguarding Three Training is for any persons appointed to the designated liaison person position in a club. The designated liaison person is responsible for reporting allegations or suspicions of child abuse to the relevant authorities.

### Primary School Exercise and Fitness Programme

Starting in December, the Primary School Exercise and Fitness Programme is a new Longford Sports Partnership initiative for promoting exercise and fitness for Longford's primary schools.

The programme focuses on fundamental movement using games and fun activities designed for the different age groups in primary school. This programme will continue into 2022.

# Community & Enterprise

## Corporate Services

### Ongoing Corporate Services

- Corporate Services COVID-19 Business Response Plan continues to be implemented
- Customer Services desk responded to 640 calls
- General queries from the public continue to be received, monitored and dealt with through our customer services email and at public counters

### Elected Members Supports and Meetings Administration

At a special ceremony this month, the Freedom of the County was conferred on Longford native and award-winning filmmaker and journalist Shaunagh Connaire.

This event took place in Longford Rugby Club on Friday, 3 December and strictly upheld COVID-19 public health guidelines.



*Shaunagh Connaire receives Freedom of County from Cathaoirleach Cllr Peggy Nolan. Also pictured, elected members of Longford County Council and Chief Executive Paddy Mahon.*

Longford County Council's December meetings were held in context of COVID-19 public health guidelines. Meetings were via Microsoft Teams.

Date	Meeting
7 December	Corporate Policy Group
8 December	Longford County Council

### Franchise

The Revision Courts for the Draft Register 2022/2023 took place in December

## Health and Safety

### Inspections

In 2021, 350 safety inspections were completed across the Council. These include inspections with:

- Management team (9)
- Line managers and safety representatives (278)
- Health and safety section (63)

### Audits

In 2021, twelve internal health and safety audits were completed across all sections. The National Standards Authority of Ireland (NSAI) also completed a four-day Health and Safety Surveillance Audit.

### Risk Assessments

In 2021, 135 risk assessments were updated and or developed in consultation with Council employees

### Communications

- 16 Safety Monitoring Consultative Committee meetings were held across the three directorates
- Four safety management team meetings were held
- 11 safety reports were issued

# Community & Enterprise

## Corporate Services (Contd)

### Communications

- Media Queries responded to: 10
- Publicity Campaigns commenced: 8
- Advertisements/Features prepared: 6

#### Highlights included:

- Working on the preparation and publication of external video communication campaigns - Longford Connected and Camlin Quarter Regeneration Projects for Longford town
- Coordination and support of the Local Enterprise Office and Chamber of Commerce's #ShopLongford social media, print and radio campaign
- Coordination and support of the promotion of Longford Live & Local Winter 2021 programme, in print, on the airwaves and through our own digital channels, as well as promotion of the associated community event fund
- Promotion of the change over of Council's 1850 numbers to 1800 - on social media, website, airwaves and print advertisements
- Longford Town Masterplan Funding (Town Centre First) publicity campaign
- Acquisition of recording and photography equipment for the Communications Office
- Completion of an independent communications audit
- RSVP social and digital media campaign over Christmas
- Coordination of annual Christmas messages and greetings

### Social media

Longford County Council continues to use social media to connect with and inform the public. #ShopLongford and Longford Live & Local, as well as the new national RSVP COVID-19 campaign featured heavily in the run up to the festive period.

Exciting plans for Longford Town in 2022 with the Longford Connected and Camlin Quarter Regeneration Projects were well received on social media. The deactivation of 1850 phone numbers for the Council was also highlighted, generating awareness of the new up to date out-of-hours contact numbers.

	Facebook	Twitter	Instagram
<b>Posts</b>	95	86	35
<b>Stories</b>	15	-	15
<b>Reach*</b>	95K	-	1.3K
<b>Impressions**</b>	98.6K	31.7K	15.5K

\*Reach: number of people who had a post enter their screen

\*\*Impressions: number of times a post entered a person's screen

### Freedom of Information (FOI)

	December	YTD
FOI requests received	1	60
Access to information on Environment Request	1	10
Office of Ombudsman complaints received	0	3

See FOI Disclosure Log on [Longfordcoco.ie](https://longfordcoco.ie)

### Data Protection

- Five Data Protection Queries
- One Data Protection Complaint
- Attended Regional and national DPO Workshops

# Community & Enterprise

## Local Enterprise Office

### #ShopLongford for Christmas!

Longford Local Enterprise Office's promotion of local businesses with the #ShopLongford campaign continued to see success in December. Done in collaboration with Longford Chamber of Commerce, many local traders were highlighted as key places for the public to get their Christmas gifts.



This year's #ShopLongford campaign added a Best Christmas Window Display competition, with local businesses entering their fantastic seasonal displays. Quinn's Supply Stores in Edgeworthstown took the top prize (pictured above with Longford County Council Cathaoirleach Cllr Peggy Nolan).

The success of this year's #ShopLongford campaign was seen with the great engagement gained through social media, as well as the feedback from supporting advertising in the Longford Leader.



### Trading Online Vouches and Digitalisation4Micro

Since March 2021, 160 Longford business have developed e-commerce websites with the support of the Trading Online Vouchers scheme. The scheme will be complimented by the launch of a new programme in early 2022: Digitalisation4Micro. Designed to help businesses prepare for the adoption of digital tools and techniques, consultancy support of €4,500 will be available for eligible micro-enterprise.

### Streetscape Enhancement Measure

The Streetscape Enhancement Measure continued into December, making a big difference to the visual appearance of the towns involved. In particular, Longford Town's traders made many physical and cosmetic improvements to the fronts of their buildings.

The closing date for this scheme has been extended to March 2022 to allow the remaining qualifying premises to complete works.

# Community & Enterprise

## Human Resources

### Recruitment

- External competitions advertised: 4
- Internal competitions advertised: 1
- Candidates interviewed: 15
- Competitions completed: 2
- New starters: 0
- Existing employees commenced new roles: 8
- Employee ceased employment: 2

### Learning and Development

Training held during the month December included:

- Performance Management Development System (PMDS) was rolled out in the Roads Directorate
- Climate action raising awareness training for grade three and analogous, which started in November, was completed on 23 December
- Environmental Inspection Skills and Court Room Skills training was completed by designated employees in the Environment section
- Open Source Internet Investigations training was completed by designated employees in the Environment section
- Confined Spaces Management of Risk training was provided to designated employees in the Water Services section
- Customer Services Training (Online Workshop) commenced. Eight sessions were completed in December. Finance, Human Resources, Income Generation, Library, Housing, Planning, Environment, Roads (indoor employees) and Water (indoor employees) were all invited to attend.



### Health and Wellbeing

- 'Letting Go of the Christmas Rush' advice given to all employees
- In conjunction with the HSE, employees were invited to attend online the HSE Health and Wellbeing Staff Christmas Concert 2021
- To show appreciation for the work and effort of Council employees in 2021, a voucher for a hot beverage and a sweet treat of their choice was provided to all.



# Finance & Regeneration

## Finance

Year to Date to Quarter End 30/09/2021

	EXPENDITURE				INCOME				NET
	Expenditure €	Adopted Full Year Budget €	% Budget Spent to date	Budget Remaining €	Income €	Adopted Full year Budget €	% Budget Raised	Budget outstanding €	Actual Overall Surplus/ (Deficit) €
Housing	7,315,016	9,292,019	79%	1,977,003	7,756,433	10,522,822	74%	2,766,389	441,417
Roads	12,349,771	19,991,409	62%	7,641,638	8,753,448	15,078,605	58%	6,325,157	(3,596,323)
Water Services	3,194,637	3,906,342	82%	711,705	2,787,703	3,679,017	76%	891,314	(406,934)
Development Management	7,433,648	10,100,980	74%	2,667,332	3,104,054	5,078,053	61%	1,973,999	(4,329,594)
Environment	4,466,994	5,863,098	76%	1,396,104	647,063	507,244	128%	(139,819)	(3,819,931)
Recreation & Amenity	3,296,463	4,272,545	77%	976,082	558,656	647,068	86%	88,412	(2,737,807)
Agri, Health & Welfare	371,832	474,695	78%	102,863	223,772	217,012	103%	(6,760)	(148,060)
Miscellaneous Services	6,045,150	3,328,889	182%	(2,716,261)	6,275,061	3,480,440	180%	(2,794,621)	229,911
Local Government Fund					6,931,723	9,242,297	75%	2,310,574	6,931,723
*Commercial Rates					7,515,834	8,777,418	86%	1,261,584	7,515,834
	<b>€44,473,511</b>	<b>€57,229,977</b>	<b>78%</b>	<b>€12,756,466</b>	<b>€44,553,747</b>	<b>€57,229,976</b>	<b>78%</b>	<b>€12,676,229</b>	<b>€80,236</b>

These figures were submitted to the Department on Tuesday 16th Nov 2021.

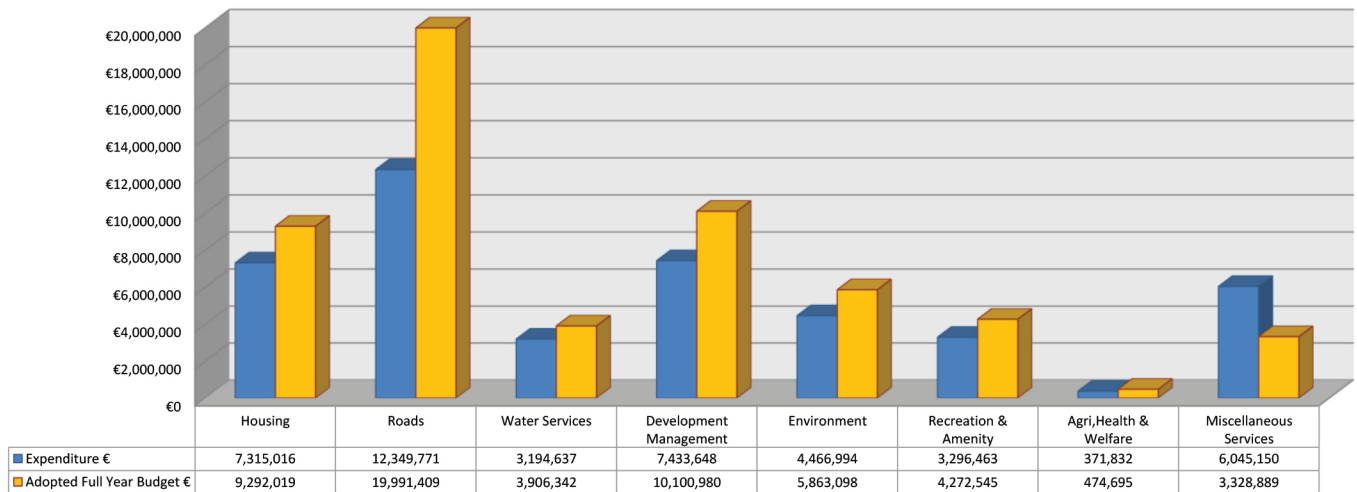
Where Covid-19 related expenditure has been incurred, corresponding Deferred Income from Central Government has been accounted for.

\*The amount of Commercial Rates waived under the 2021 9-month waiver scheme for Q3, 2021 was €2,616,522

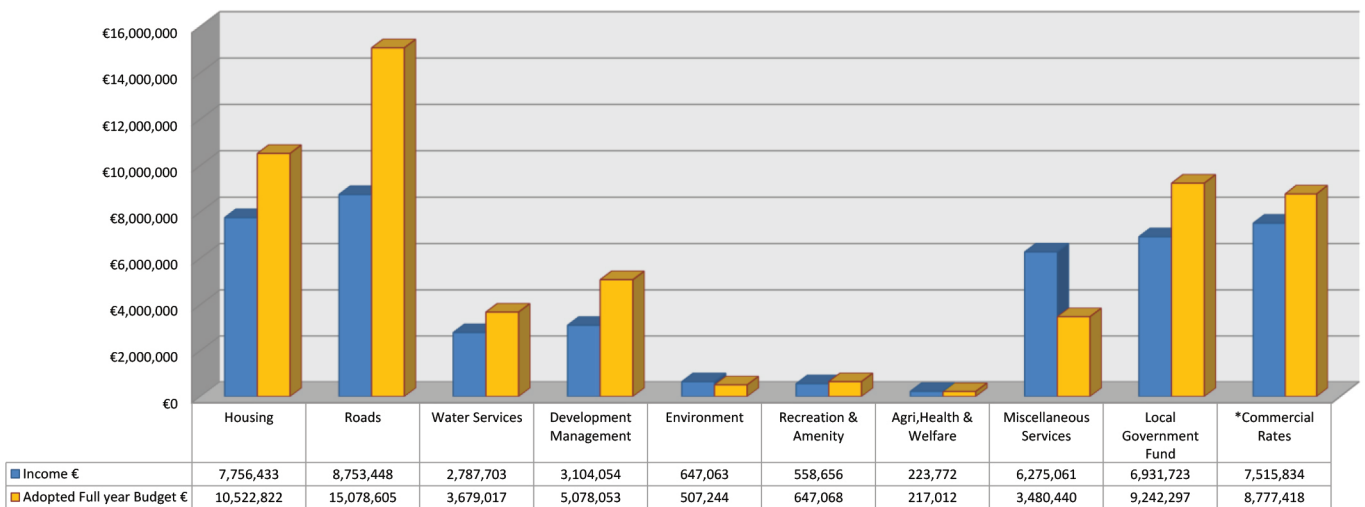
# Finance & Regeneration

## Finance (contd)

**Expenditure V Budget - Quarter 3, 2021**



**Income V Budget - Quarter 3, 2021**



# Finance & Regeneration

## Finance (contd)

### SUMMARY OF MAJOR REVENUE COLLECTIONS - QUARTER 3, 2021

	Opening Arrears	Billed	To be Collected	Collected	Closing Arrears	Collected
Quarter 3, 2021	€	€	€	€	€	%
*Rates	€1,124,618	€10,021,112	€8,526,659	€4,398,415	€4,128,244	52%
Rents (inc. RAS)	€839,673	€5,428,702	€6,266,455	€5,367,992	€898,463	86%
Housing Loans	€481,344	€717,407	€1,198,751	€719,299	€479,452	60%

	Opening Arrears	Billed	To be Collected	Collected	Closing Arrears	Collected
Quarter 3, 2020	€	€	€	€	€	%
*Rates	€1,033,827	€8,666,050	€4,763,300	€4,612,208	€151,092	97%
Rents (inc. RAS)	€736,999	€5,329,478	€6,067,092	€5,174,128	€892,964	85%
Housing Loans	€624,595	€683,257	€1,307,851	€664,309	€643,542	51%

	Opening Arrears	Billed	To be Collected	Collected	Closing Arrears	Collected
VARIANCE YOY	€	€	€	€	€	%
*Rates	€90,791	€1,355,062	€3,763,359	(€213,793)	€3,977,152	-45%
Rents (inc. RAS)	€102,674	€99,224	€199,363	€193,864	€5,499	0%
Housing Loans	(€143,251)	€34,150	(€109,100)	€54,990	(€164,090)	9%

**\* Covid-19 Commercial Rates waivers amounted to €2,616,522 in Q3,2021. These have been taken account of in the 'To be Collected' figures above.**

# Finance & Regeneration

## Regeneration

### River Walk in Aughnaclyffe

A 600m trail at the Aughnaclyffe River Walk has been completed. Linking to a previously developed trail, this development now includes a walkway and viewing platform to Pulliness Waterfall.

Running along the Rathmore River, the trail now creates a looped walk within the village and builds upon the work of the community to make this hidden gem more accessible.

This new trail enhances the amenity by linking to wider trails which lead to the area's dolmens and the site of the ancient village.

The project highlights the Council collaboration with the local community who have driven this project for the betterment of the village's tourism offerings.



*Pulliness Waterfall*



*Part of the new Aughnaclyffe River Walk*

### Unfinished Estates

Much progress has been made throughout 2021 to address the issues associated with unfinished housing developments. The majority of the unfinished estates have now been taken in charge by Longford County Council.

The Unfinished Estates team continues its work to ensure all estates are of a sufficient standard to ensure enhanced quality of life for residents.

There were originally 128 unfinished estates within the county. As of December 2021, there are seven sites remaining to be taken over by the Council. The Unfinished Estates team has negotiated Site Resolution Plans for these remaining estates and work will continue on these in 2022.

# Finance & Regeneration

## Regeneration (Contd)

### Rural Regeneration and Development Fund

Applications were invited for the fourth call of the Rural Regeneration and Development Fund (RRDF) by the Minister for Rural and Community Development, Heather Humphreys TD on 17 December.

This fund provides investment support towards suitable projects for towns and villages (and their outlying areas) with a population of less than 10,000.

The RRDF delivers on the national strategic objective of strengthened rural economies and communities and to achieve sustainable economic and social development in these areas.

Projects that will be funded under the RRDF are those that have full planning and other consents in place and are ready to commence at the date of application. The projects put forward will rejuvenate town centres, boost economic growth and footfall and make our rural towns and villages more attractive places to live, work or raise a family. There is also a strong focus on projects that involve transforming old or derelict buildings into remote working hubs and libraries, as well as e-learning, cultural, enterprise, youth and community spaces.

The Regeneration team is currently working on project proposals for funding applications under this scheme.

### Mid-Shannon Wilderness Park Greenway

Work continued on the construction of the Mid-Shannon Wilderness Park Greenway. This greenway will utilise Bord na Móna land that is no longer used for peat production, repurposing this land to provide a recreational and tourism amenity.

Work in 2021 builds on previous trails developed around Corlea Trackway Centre and the surrounding bogland. It also creates a larger loop which links back into the Royal Canal Greenway. This key piece of tourism infrastructure in County Longford will ultimately link the Royal Canal Greenway at Clondra with Lanesborough.



# Finance & Regeneration

## Information Technology

### Connected Hubs Call

- Connected Hubs Call develops remote working facilities around the county
- Refurbishment is complete in Abbeyshrule
- Equipment procurement is now complete in Moydow, Mullinalaghta, and Co:worx in Edgeworthstown

### IT Infrastructure

- ServiceDesk for December: 339 tickets
- Regular patching of client and server systems
- IT support for statutory and MS Teams hybrid meetings
- Security gap analysis has progressed
- Security policies continue to be reviewed and updated
- Hybrid meeting software continues to be installed in three meeting room locations
- Log4j investigations and remediations have started

### Geographic Information Systems

- Preparatory work for the implementation of a national system to capture planning application spatial data is ongoing
- Work is ongoing on the development of a Geographic Information Systems (GIS) Property Registration application to facilitate the reconciliation of a fixed assets register
- A mapping viewer has been created for a road restoration programme
- Data validation is now complete for the upload

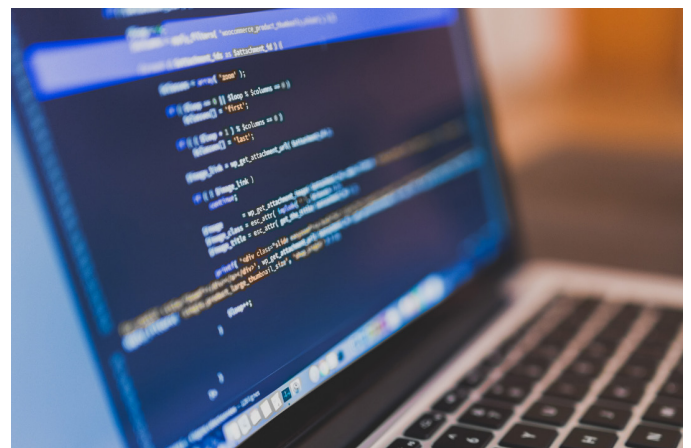
of the Longford County Development Plan 2021-2027 to the national MyPlan portal

### Broadband Connection Points

- Broadband Connection Points (BCPs) have free high-speed broadband for public use
- In December, there were 12 new users and 106 returning users to Longford's BCPs

### Digital Services

- ePerformance Management Development Scheme (ePMDS) software is now live and is being used by 200 employees
- The digital eService Plan is now live and is being used for the Council's annual service plans
- WIFI4EU, which offers free Wi-Fi in Longford, Ballymahon and Drumlish had 1,319 new users and 2,110 returning users
- Customer Relationship Management (CRM) app is in progress
- Longford Text Alert app, which brings together community updates, is in development. This is part of the Our Rural Future Digital Innovation programme.
- eDocument management project is progressing



# Strategic Infrastructure & Climate Action

## Housing

### Regional Homelessness Action Plan

In December, local authorities were notified that the Regional Homelessness Action Plan must be revised. This plan, originally adopted in 2010, has previously been reviewed at different stages across the nine regions with responsibility for the management of homelessness.

Within this review, the regional lead authorities for homelessness must incorporate and reflect the policy positions and actions contained in the Government's Housing For All policy. The lead authorities will be supported by the regional statutory management group and Homelessness Consultative Forum. There will also be input from the local authorities in each region.

The process to revise and amend the existing plan for the Midlands will be undertaken by Westmeath County Council, as the regional homelessness lead with input from Longford, Offaly and Laois County Councils.

### Housing Delivery Action Plans

Under the Government's Housing For All policy, local authorities must develop and submit housing delivery action plans with details of social and affordable housing delivery.

Longford County Council's Action Plan was submitted to the Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government in mid-December. Consistent with the Council's adopted Development Plan and associated environmental assessments, the plan sets out details

of social and affordable housing delivery from 2022-2026, in line with targets set under Housing For All.

### 2021 Void Programme

The 2021 Voids Programme has now concluded. Longford County Council received funding of €639,000 for 25 properties. Two refurbishment options were available: the standard refurbishment and the non-standard voids.

The standard refurbishment was a fast-tracked programme with maximum funding of €11,000 per property. For the non-standard voids, the maximum was €50,000 per property recognising the significant investment required to bring them up to compliance with minimum letting standards.

### Housing Capital Programme

Project	No of Houses	Year End Status
Alderfield, Longford Town	28	Complete
Campbell's Drive, Longford Town	21	Complete
Sli Corglass, Legga	9	Complete
Fairgreen Drive, Longford Town	1	Complete
Rose Cottages, Ballinalee	6	Complete
Cloonahard, Co Longford	1	Complete
O'Hara's Site, Richmond Street	14	On site
St Patrick's Court, Ballinamuck	8	On site



*Campbell's Drive, Longford*

# Strategic Infrastructure & Climate Action

## Roads

### Allocation for National Roads and Greenways 2022

December saw the announcement of the 2022 Transport Infrastructure Ireland (TII) Allocations for National Roads and Greenways, with €8,203,790 allocated to Longford County Council.

Within the allocation to roads, over €7 million is for improvement projects on the N4, N55 and N63, with over €400,000 for national primary and secondary road maintenance, including route lighting and winter maintenance.

In September, TII became the approving authority for greenways. A separate allocation of €750,000 is now available for two greenway schemes in Longford. These are: the Mid Shannon Wilderness Corlea Bog Greenway, with an allocation of €600,000, and the Kilnacarrow Bridge - Darogue and Ballymacormack Greenway with an allocation of €150,000.

Longford County Council have been informed by Westmeath National Roads Office that TII have not provided any allocation for the N4 Mullingar to Longford (Roosky) Scheme.

This scheme is currently at phase two 'options selection' stage. The emerging preferred route corridor is due to be identified in the next few months. Work on this hugely important road scheme will be suspended unless an allocation is provided.

### Municipal District Works

Works on footpaths, drainage, pothole repair and general road maintenance continued in each municipal district during the month.

### Road Safety

The Government's new ten-year road safety strategy 'Our Journey Towards Vision Zero: Ireland's Government Road Safety Strategy 2021–2030' was launched mid-December by Minister Hildegard Naughton. This strategy aims to reduce deaths and serious injuries on Irish roads by 50 per cent by 2030, towards ultimately eliminating all road deaths and serious injuries on Irish roads by 2050.



The new strategy will be delivered in three phases. Phase one runs from 2021 to 2024. It is backed by a projected €3.8 billion investment and includes 50 high-impact actions and 136 support actions.

The strategy builds on the progress made with the previous road safety strategy, which saw Ireland achieve the lowest number of annual road deaths since records began. Ireland also achieved the second lowest rate of road deaths in the European Union in 2019.

The Longford Road Safety Working Together Committee will develop a new Longford Road Safety Plan in accordance with phase one of this new national road safety strategy.

# Strategic Infrastructure & Climate Action

## Roads (Contd)

### National Road Schemes

Works on the N63 Majors Well Road continued with the installation of underground services. Resurfacing work on the N4 at Newtownforbes also continued in December.



*Above and below: N63 Majors Well Road Scheme - installation of underground services*



## Water Services

### Find & Fix Programme

Longford County Council Find & Fix team are operating in the Prucklish, Clooncoose and Clonbalt District Metered Areas (DMAs), with a saving of approximately 144,000 litres of drinking water per day.

### Capital Network Schemes

Water Services Capital section continue to liaise with Irish Water to progress three capital network rehabilitation schemes:

- Cahanagh-Prucklish: replacement of problematic watermain between Cahanagh Cross and Prucklish (along the R198). This project has been substantially completed and the new watermain has been commissioned.
- Rathcline Road, Lanesborough: replacement of approximately 2.5km of problematic watermain between Lanesborough and Carrowroe reservoir. Phase one of this project has commenced with new watermain laid
- Creevy, Granard: replacement of approximately 500 metres of problematic watermain

### Longford to Lanesborough Network

Water Services Capital Section continue to liaise with Irish Water to deliver network upgrades to enable water supply from Longford Central Supply Zone to the Lanesborough Supply Zone.

This work will improve the resilience of the water network and provide security of supply to the Lanesborough area.

# Strategic Infrastructure & Climate Action

## Planning

### Applications and Enforcement

Planning continues to assist the public with planning projects, applications and dealing with queries and planning issues for developments in the county. Planning also assists across various Council services, including the implementation of the housing, regeneration, environment and infrastructural programmes.

The statutory requirements are broad and include managing various applications for housing, retail, amenity, industrial, compulsory purchase orders, and enforcement among others. The planning office, public counter and technical advice including planning enforcement have remained fully functioning throughout the pandemic.

### County Development Plan

Longford County Development Plan 2021-2027 came into effect in November and is now the official development plan for County Longford.

The policies and strategies of the Plan are currently being implemented. The basic draft has been published and work is ongoing in relation to publishing the final document.

### Longford Town Plan

Work now has started on the review of the Longford Town Plan, to include:

- Climate adaptation
- Regeneration
- Employment
- Transport, including active travel
- Housing
- Coordination and implementation of development projects



*Abbeyshrule Bridge, photograph by Colm Mulligan*

# Strategic Infrastructure & Climate Action

## Fire Services

### Operations

- Total callouts in December: 42
- All stations remained fully operational

### Health and Safety

- No injuries or near misses to report

### Training

- Five personnel attended three-day chainsaw refresher training in Edgeworthstown.
- The yearly drill programme was completed as per our annual Fire Service Operational Plan

### Major Emergency Management

- The National Directorate for Fire and Emergency Management held meetings with stakeholders after Storm Arwen which occurred in November.

### Fire Prevention

- One Fire Safety Certificate was processed
- One dangerous substance application was processed

### Recruitment

Five vacancies in three fire stations have been advertised with a number of applications received:

- Granard (1)
- Longford (1)
- Lanesborough (3)

### Equipment

- Annual maintenance service completed on all equipment in the county.

## Civil Defence

### Duties & Taskings

Civil Defence provided medical cover at the following local and community events:

- Christmas Lights Ceremony in Ballymahon

### Training and Operations

- Two emergency medical technician students continued their training
- Manual handling training took place for four probationary volunteers
- Vehicle inspections were completed
- Signage was completed on the new 4x4 vehicle and it was included in the fleet registry
- End of year housekeeping of headquarters and vehicles took place with 11 volunteers attending
- The training plan and vehicle management plans for 2022 were completed



*Civil Defence provided medical cover at the Christmas Lights Ceremony in Ballymahon*

# Strategic Infrastructure & Climate Action

## Environment

### Energy Reduction

Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland (SEAI) confirmed that the Council surpassed the Government-set target to reduce energy usage by 33% by the end of 2020.

Energy efficiency upgrades to Council buildings and public lighting allowed the Council to achieve this. Continued improvements are planned to help the Council reach the new 50% reduction for energy use and 50% carbon emissions reduction targets by 2030.

### Christmas Recycling Campaign

Throughout December, the Council promoted its Christmas recycling campaign to encourage recycling in many different ways.

As part of this, all e-waste and batteries should be brought to the nearest civic amenity site or local retail shop to be recycled.

**Small things matter...**  
This Christmas the power is in your hands!  
Recycle your household electrical & lighting waste

Recycle your old batteries for  
**LauraLynn**  
IRELAND'S CHILDREN'S HOSPICE

**weee Ireland**  
APPROVED RECYCLING SCHEME

Bottles and cans can be recycled at the nearest bottle banks, with everyone asked to seek an alternative bottle bank if the one they go to is full. A full list of bring bank locations is available on [Longfordcoco.ie](http://Longfordcoco.ie).

Post-Christmas, real Christmas trees can be recycled at Mulleady's civic amenity sites in Drumlish and Westlink in Longford.

**RECYCLE**  
Recycle your natural  
Christmas Trees  
**FREE OF CHARGE**  
at Mulleady's Civic  
Amenity Site, Drumlish

4th - 22nd  
January,  
2022

Last year 120 natural Christmas  
Trees were collected and recycled  
into chip bark for bedding and  
ground cover material.

## Veterinary

### Meat Residue Sampling

All local authority meat residue sampling submissions for 2021 were due to the Department of Agriculture in December. Longford County Council supplemented additional residue sampling submissions for 2021 by the deadline in support of other local authorities which were experiencing challenges.



# Strategic Infrastructure & Climate Action

## Climate Action Initiatives

### Libraries

With grant funding of €100,000 from the Department of Rural and Community Development, a programme of works was completed to improve energy efficiency through our branch library network. Works include upgrading lighting, heating, replacing windows and carrying out essential repairs to make our buildings more energy efficient.

### Regeneration

- Development of walkway through Mid Shannon Wilderness Park and at the River Walk, Aughnacliffe to encourage people to get out into nature to walk or cycle and to reduce the use of motorised vehicles.
- Procurement and installation of additional LED energy saving lighting at Ballinalee Forest Walk.

### Information Technology

- Several paperless projects are progressing. The eCorporate Service Planning app and the ePMDS app are both now live. Each app will see a significant reduction in paper, printing, and energy usage per employee.
- IT has completed work with the Community and Enterprise section on a paperless community grants applications process.

### Housing

- As part of the Midlands Retrofit Programme, work is ongoing on the retrofitting of four Council estates in Ballinalee – River Crescent

and Camlin View are now completed, while Cois na hAbhainn and Hill View are ongoing.

- Tender is in progress for St Matthew's Park, Ballymahon and an assessment of works required is being considered for the 46 local authority houses in the county.
- Under the National Energy Efficiency Programme work has been completed on four houses in Slí na Móna, Ballymahon while work has commenced on the 16 others.

### Roads

Longford County Council has applied for funding to the Department of Transport for five road schemes under the Climate Change Adaption and Resilience Works 2022. The grant allocation will be notified to the Council in February 2022.

### Planning

- Climate adaptation actions are being prepared. This will include work on renaturing of bogs, woodland, amenity areas, walkways and cycleways. It will be critically important to work positively with all sectors of Longford society, particularly the agricultural sector, to achieve positive outcomes for all.
- A preliminary list of actions is being prepared, including the implementation of the Lough Ree UNESCO Biosphere proposal.

### Fire Services

The Midland Energy Agency has completed an audit on Longford Fire Station and the new extension.

### Civil Defence

Reusable cups were purchased for all volunteers to eliminate the use of paper cups.

# CONNECTED

People • Place • Opportunity

Management Report for December 2021 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 December 2021 in securing the objectives set out in the Council's Corporate Plan.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_



Paddy Mahon  
Chief Executive





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A Longford County Council Publication 2021