



ANNUAL REPORT

2020



comhairle chontae na mí  
meath county council

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This Annual Report has been prepared in accordance with Section 221 of the Local Government Act and adopted by the members of Meath County Council on June 14, 2021.

## Foreword

We are pleased to present Meath County Council's Annual Report 2020, which outlines the achievements and activities of the Council during the year. It was a year dominated by the COVID pandemic, which had a significant impact on the Council's operating environment and on the operations of the Council and the services it delivers.

Despite it being a year like no other, the Council continued to deliver essential and frontline local services and fulfil its various statutory obligations, even during the most severe of the public health restrictions. The pandemic also necessitated that the Council change and adapt how it works and delivers services but also that it was agile and proactive in coordinating local efforts to deal with the consequences of the crisis here in Meath.

In particular, it is worth noting that in responding to the crisis the Council maintained business continuity and provided all essential services, and in reality most of our services, throughout the year. Protecting the health and well-being of councillors and staff was of paramount importance and required that the Council introduce new ways of working, from home, online, by roster and that meetings of the Council were adapted to take place safely in-person or remotely or in a hybrid manner, as the public health measures allowed.

The Council was tasked with new responsibilities, not least the establishment of the Community Forum and Community Call Line to coordinate the effort to support those most vulnerable during the lockdowns. Similarly, we were also to the forefront in terms of operating the various rates waivers and business supports to the local business community. This was done in a most efficient and responsive way, which has been crucial to the survival of many local businesses.

Finally, COVID added to existing challenges but the Council continued to respond effectively to the national housing situation locally through the delivery of additional housing units and meeting people's housing needs through various delivery streams. While major advances were also taken in 2020 in reviewing the County Development Plan, which we hope will be adopted in 2021 to provide a framework for future investments in the county.

We are very proud of how the elected members and staff of the Council responded to the challenges posed by COVID and we thank them for their support and commitment to the delivery of services to the people of County Meath.



**Cllr. David Gilroy**  
Cathaoirleach



**Jackie Maguire**  
Chief Executive

# 2020 - Highlights

## Response to the Covid Emergency

The threat from the Covid-19 virus prompted a series of unprecedented public health measures, which required Meath County Council to respond immediately to a rapidly changing environment and to put in place a series of measures in response to Government decisions.



This included the establishment of the Community Forum and the Community Support Line in March, the implementation of the #InthisTogether initiative in June and various other keep well campaigns during the periods of lockdown. The Covid crisis also necessitated the Council introducing new work arrangements and methods to ensure that it continued to deliver essential public services in a safe way.

## Council Meetings Continue



In order to fully comply with the various public health measures, new arrangements were introduced to ensure that the statutory business of the Council continued and that the impact on the political work of the elected members was kept to a minimum.

Initially, briefings were held via Zoom for the Municipal Districts and from June meetings of the full Council, including the AGM, took place in the Solstice Theatre in a physically distanced format. Later in 2020, with the coming into effect of new legislation, Council meetings were also held in a hybrid format (with in-person and remote attendance).

## **Special Planning Meeting – Review of County Development Plan**

In October, the Council continued the review of the County Development Plan process with consideration of the Chief Executive's report on the 2,452 submissions received during the public consultation process, which closed in March.



The elected members also tabled some 299 Notices of Motion, which were considered in a series of 16 meetings held in November and December. The meetings continued into 2021.

## **Community Wellbeing Initiative**

A Community Wellbeing Initiative was established, in the absence of the Pride of Place initiative, to recognise the work undertaken by community groups in response to the Covid crisis in supporting their communities and aiding vulnerable groups. Examples of the work undertaken include maintenance of planted areas during the restrictions, keeping in contact with older persons, arranging delivery/collection of groceries for those in local communities and villages.

# Corporate Services

The Corporate Services Department works within a framework of democratic principles, providing services to the Elected Members, the management of meetings and the preparation of the Register of Electors. It also facilitates the delivery of services to the public, through our customer services team, the management of corporate facilities, safety and health procedures and supports effective corporate governance practices. It also manages communications and media relations, corporate events, twinning and relations with a number of relevant bodies.

## 1.1 Meeting Administration

The holding of Council Meetings in 2020 was disrupted by the Covid-19 pandemic and the public health restrictions. A number of alternative arrangements were put in place to ensure that the business of the Council continued and that the elected members were able to meet and make decisions. Following the first lockdown in March, all Municipal District meetings were held via the Zoom online platform. No statutory decisions could be taken at these initial meetings, but members were kept briefed on the most relevant issues and held discussions on these.

The full Council was not in a position to meet during the months of April and May, but there were regular meetings of the Corporate Policy Group and party whips. Physical meetings of the Council resumed in June and these were held in the Solstice Theatre, to ensure that physical distancing could be observed and that other health and safety measures were in place to protect the well-being of all participants. Council meetings continued to take place in the Solstice for the remainder of 2020.

During 2020, two Special Council Meetings were held in February and June, to co-opt four new Councillors following the Dail and Seanad Elections, as follows:

- Councillor Michael Gallagher, Sinn Féin, replaced Johnny Guirke on February 24, 2020.
- Councillor Aisling O'Neill, Sinn Féin, replaced Darren O'Rourke on February 24, 2020.
- Councillor Geraldine Keogan, Non-Party, replaced Sharon Keogan on June 8, 2020.
- Councillor Elaine McGinty, Labour, replaced Annie Hoey on June 8, 2020.

The Annual General Meeting was held on June 8, 2020, with Councillor David Gilroy elected as Cathaoirleach and Councillor Aisling Dempsey elected as Leas Cathaoirleach.

The Annual Budget Meeting was held on November 30, 2020 and saw the adoption of the Council budget for 2021.

The process of reviewing the County Development Plan also required the convening of a series of Special Meetings of the Council, commencing in October and running through into 2021. These meetings were impacted by the second and third waves of the pandemic and required a number of new measures to be put in place to allow the business of the Council to continue.

New legislation was commenced at the end of October, which enabled the elected members to meet and take statutory decisions online, which necessitated a revision of the Council's Standing Orders and new meeting arrangements to facilitate the elected members but also members of the press and public.

Council Meetings 2020	No. of meetings
Ordinary (monthly) meetings	9
Annual and Budget Meetings	3
Special Meetings	2
Special Planning Meetings	16
<b>Total</b>	<b>30</b>

#### Meeting Admin – MD Meetings:

Municipal District 2020	No. of Meetings	No. of Briefings
Ashbourne	11	2
Kells	11	2
Laytown-Bettystown	11	2
Navan	10	2
Ratoath	11	2
Trim	11	2
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>65</b>	<b>12</b>

## 1.2 MD Allocation Scheme

In 2020, a total of 561 applications were processed, totalling €558,476. This represented allocations of €73,791 towards 28 internal projects and €484,685 benefitting 376 groups across the county. A further €26,774 was deferred towards projects in 2021 and €14,750 reverted to the relevant municipal districts for allocation. (Appendix attached)

## 1.3 Register of Electors

The Corporate Services Department manages the on-going capture of information, quality control, publication and distribution of the Register of Electors. The Register of Electors was published in February 2020. The following gives details of the various categories of Electors in the County:

Dáil Electors	143,403
Presidential Electors	141,906
European Electors	145,142
Local Electors	147,798
Postal Voters	826

The General Elections were held on 8<sup>th</sup> February, 2020. The following is a breakdown of the Local Electors in each Local Electoral Area

Ashbourne	21,123
Kells	26,191
Laytown-Bettystown	25,501
Navan	23,175
Ratoath	26,120
Trim	25,688



## 1.4 Ethics

The role of Ethics Registrar is set out in Part 15 of Local Government Act, 2001 and is hosted by Corporate Services. During 2020, the number of:

- Possible Part 15 Contraventions notified = 2
- Complaints referred to Chief Executive and/or Cathaoirleach = 2
- Investigations carried out = 2
- Cases for disciplinary action/referred to appropriate external bodies = 0

All elected members and staff at certain grades are required to make an Annual Declaration of interests to the Ethics Registrar, who maintains a register of such interests.

## 1.5 Freedom of Information

Meath County Council as a public body is subject to the provisions of the Freedom of Information Act, 2014, which allows for access to certain records held by the local authority subject to a number of exemptions.

Records made available under the Freedom of Information Act, are those records not already available under alternative legislation and applies to all local authority records created after 21<sup>st</sup> October 1998.

In 2020, Meath County Council received 165 Freedom of Information requests, 120 of which were for non-personal records and 45 of which were for personal records. The following are the 2020 statistics relating to Freedom of Information requests:

<b>Applications Received</b>	<b>165</b>
<b>Carried forward from 2019</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>177</b>
<b>No. of requests Grants</b>	<b>56</b>
<b>No. of requests Part Granted</b>	<b>34</b>
<b>No.of requests Refused</b>	<b>39</b>
<b>Requests Transferred</b>	<b>00</b>
<b>Requests Withdrawn</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>Requests dealt with outside FOI</b>	<b>27</b>
<b>Live Cases at end of 2019</b>	<b>09</b>
<b>No. of Internal Reviews</b>	<b>03</b>
<b>No. of Appeals to Information Commissioner</b>	<b>01</b>

The Freedom of Information Act 2014 requires Freedom of Information (FOI) bodies such as Meath County Council to publish a disclosure log, which contains details of the types of requests received under FOI and the decisions made by the body in response to those requests. Disclosures are listed on the Council's website [www.meath.ie](http://www.meath.ie)

#### **Publication Scheme under Freedom of Information Act, 2014**

Section 8 of the Freedom of Information Act 2014 requires FOI bodies to prepare and publish as much information as possible in an open and accessible manner on a routine basis outside of FOI, having regard to the principles of openness, transparency and accountability as set out in Sections 8(5) and 11(3) of the Act.

Meath County Council's Publication Scheme was reviewed and updated in November 2020.

### **1.6 Access to Information on the Environment (AIE)**

The following are the 2020 statistics relating to Access to Information on the Environment requests:

<b>Applications Received 2020</b>	<b>19</b>
<b>Carried forward from 2019</b>	<b>03</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>22</b>
<b>No. of requests Granted</b>	<b>07</b>
<b>No. of requests Part Granted</b>	<b>04</b>
<b>No. of requests Refused</b>	<b>06</b>
<b>Requests Transferred</b>	<b>00</b>
<b>Requests Withdrawn &amp; handled under FOI</b>	<b>01</b>
<b>Deemed Refused</b>	<b>01</b>
<b>Live Cases at end of 2020</b>	<b>03</b>
<b>No. of Internal Reviews</b>	<b>06</b>
<b>No. of Appeals to Information Commissioner</b>	<b>00</b>

### **1.7 Data Protection**

In 2020 the Council's Data Protection Unit (DPU) continued to carry out significant work across the organisation to ensure compliance with the GDPR and Data Protection Acts.

This included measures taken in response to Covid-19 involving the processing of personal data, including health data, which resulted in a number of new and updated Records of Processing/Privacy Notices been completed in 2020.

The Council's Data Protection Officer (DPO) has also actively engaged in supporting Departments in carrying out Data Privacy Impact Assessments and addressing any risks identified in such assessments.

In 2020, the Unit dealt with the following incidents/requests:

<b>Year</b>	<b>2020</b>
<b>Data Subject Access Requests</b>	<b>28</b>
<b>Data Breach Notifications (DBN) reported to DPU</b>	<b>23</b>
<b>Data Breach Notifications (DBN) reported to office of Data Protection Commissioner</b>	<b>3</b>

The Council along with all local authorities across the country was subject to an Audit by the Data Protection Commission (DPC) in 2018/19 with regard to the use of CCTV for Law Enforcement purposes and or security/safety in public places. This particular area has been the focus of attention by the Data Protection Commission nationally in 2020 and following an audit of 6 local authorities has resulted in the DPC advising that amendments be made to Litter Pollution and Waste Management Acts so as to allow local authorities to use CCTV in the prevention, detection and enforcement of offences under these two regimes.

These findings have helped inform the preparation of a Circular Economy Bill, currently being drafted. Further, the Local Government (Use of CCTV in Prosecution of Offences) Bill 2021 is currently under consideration in the Oireachtas.

Data Protection General Awareness eTraining was carried out by 80 staff members in 2020, the majority of which were new members of staff that had joined the Council in 2019/2020. The DPU has continued with an internal communications campaign and engagement with Data Protection Liaison Officers (DPLOs) across the organisation to improve staff awareness of the Council's obligations and responsibilities in how we collect, use and protect and safeguard personal data, and how we need to demonstrate accountability for all our data processing activities.

## 1.8 Customer Service

Meath County Council is committed to delivering the best possible service to our customers as outlined in our Customer Service Action Plan. We strive for excellence in our customer service model and will endeavour to deliver quality services in accordance with the highest standards of effectiveness, efficiency and integrity.

Throughout 2020 the Customer Service Team continued to provide support to our elected members, customers and staff. As the first point of contact with the organisation, the Team logged 17,305 requests on our Customer Relationship Management System. Over 4,200 requests were received from our Elected Members with 4,000 resolved.

In addition, the Customer Service Team has managed the Covid Help Line and logged and resolved over 1,200 calls, since it was set up at the end of March 2020. This line operated 7 days a week from 8am to 8pm providing assistance to the community.

The Council's contact centre handled a total of 130,845 calls in 2020. This represents an increase of 15% from 2019. 70,000 of these calls were dealt with directly by the Customer Service Team, a further 57,266 were handled by other service departments, while 3,579 were abandoned.

Due to Covid 19 restrictions, our public counters were closed for most of 2020.

## 1.9 Promotion of the Irish Language

### Irish Language Scheme/ Scéim Teanga

Meath County Council is committed to improving services through Irish and to continue to meet the relevant obligations under the Official Languages Act 2003 together with the implementation of an Irish Scheme/ Scéim Teanga.

The Council commenced the preparation of its 2<sup>nd</sup> language Scheme/ Scéim Teanga in 2020 inviting submissions from the general public on any changes or improvements to its existing scheme. A total of 5 submissions was received and the Council's draft 2<sup>nd</sup> Scheme is currently awaiting approval from the Department of Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport and Media.

### Irish Officer

In May 2020, the Council appointed an Irish Language Officer to help promote and assist in improving the services available from the Council through the medium of the Irish language.

### Oifig an Choimisinéara Teanga

The Council continued to co-operate with Oifig an Choimisinéara Teanga, in dealing with issues raised by members of the public, regarding Irish language services and legislation.

## 1.10 Governance and Risk Management

The Council's corporate governance policies and procedures are coordinated by the Corporate Services Department. In 2020, the Risk Committee met three times, to consider the implementation of the Council's Risk Management Policy and, specifically, the recommendations of the Audit Committee in terms of the draft Corporate Risk Register, with amendments made as appropriate.

## 1.11 Internal Audit

The primary role of Internal Audit is to advise management on the adequacy of the Council's internal control systems and provide recommendations for improvement where necessary. It also assists the Council's Audit Committee in carrying out its functions and provides assistance and information to the Local Government Auditor as required.

During the Covid-19 pandemic the continuity of Council services was maintained, and the Internal Audit Unit continued to review and evaluate the effectiveness of risk management, control and governance processes in accordance with the Internal Audit Work Programme. All objectives of the 2020 Work Programme were met.

Internal Audit has also prepared a Strategic Audit Plan 2021-2024 which was approved by the Audit Committee in December 2020. This is a medium to long term plan, which focuses the audit coverage on areas identified in the risk assessment process, over a given period. The term of this Plan aligns with the mandate of the current Audit Committee and Council Term to better reflect the changing environment in which local government operates.

## 1.12 Audit Committee

The Audit Committee plays an independent role in advising the Council on financial reporting processes, internal control, risk management and audit matters as part of a systematic review of the control environment and governance arrangements of the local authority.

The Audit Committee is composed of 5 members, 3 external and 2 sitting councillors. The current membership is:

Mr. Tom McGuinness (Chair)

Ms. Geraldine Tallon

Ms. Kate Williams

Cllr. Sean Drew

Cllr. Gerry O'Connor

During 2020 the Audit Committee continued to make progress in discharging its responsibility to provide independent assurance on the Council's control environment and governance framework.

The appropriateness and the implementation of risk management arrangements were also reviewed which included a review of the challenges faced by the organisation during the Covid-19 Pandemic.

In accordance with statutory legislation and regulations the Audit Committee Chairman's Annual Report 2019 and the Audit Committee Report on the 2018 Audited AFS were presented and approved by the Council at its monthly meeting in June 2020. The Audit Committee is satisfied that its statutory and regulatory obligations were carried out and that the objectives in its Work Programme for 2020 were met.

## 1.13 Communications

The Corporate Services Department plays a key role in ensuring accurate, timely and relevant information is made available to the public, Councillors and Council staff. A range of communication channels are used to ensure information is accurate, up-to-date, accessible and widely available.

To reflect the changing environment within which the Council operates and the increasing strategic importance of communications, the Council's Communications and Events unit works to a strategic programme for communications and engagement with stakeholders. This work was severely impacted by the pandemic in 2020 and the Council's communications activities had to pivot to respond to the new challenges of the lockdown and the impact on Council services. This demanded the use of traditional and social media, in order to engage with specific target audiences.

At the end of 2020, the Council recorded the following numbers in relation to social media followers: Facebook – 18,947, LinkedIn – 2,981, Twitter – 9,799, Instagram – 1,971.

### External Meath Matters Newsletter

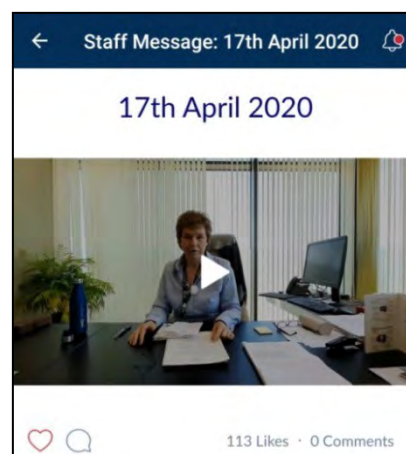
The Communications Team, working with other colleagues, published a 16-page A4 coloured booklet to provide engaging content in line with the national #InThisTogether initiative. The purpose of the booklet was to provide information in a more traditional format. The booklet was distributed, by An Post, to every household in the county. Copies were also distributed to Meath Libraries and all nursing homes.



A second edition of ‘Meath Matters’ was published in September which was different in that it was an e-publication, available on the Council’s website, promoted on social media and circulated to subscribers. There was a very limited print run (1000 copies), distributed to the libraries and to Meath nursing homes.

**Focus on Video Content – Internal Communications**

In April the Communications team recorded and produced the first of a 14-video series of messages from the Chief Executive to staff via the MCC Connect App. The videos bridged the communication gap throughout the early months of the pandemic, with staff members restricting their movements or working from home. Over ten weeks in the early months of the pandemic (April, May and June) a video message was produced and uploaded to the app every Friday.



**Focus on Video Content – External Communication – Covid Series**

In May, the Council launched the Covid-19 Video Series, the aim of which was to share with social media followers how the Council was working through the crisis to deliver public services to Meath.

To first video in the series focused on Homelessness and the work of the Housing Department. The series also included videos on Planning, Emergency Services, Local Enterprise Office, Community, Environment and the work of Age Friendly Ireland.

**Focus on Video Content – Cathaoirleach**

During 2020, there were a total of 12 videos featuring the Cathaoirleach, 3 with Cllr. Wayne Harding and 9 with Cllr. David Gilroy. These videos ran on both Facebook and on our YouTube channels and helped to get out some key messages to the public during the periods of the public health restrictions.

All 12 videos reached a total of 69,879 on Facebook with an engagement rate of 9.3%, while they received 622 views on YouTube.

**1.14 Civic and Corporate Events**

The Council’s planned programme of commemorative events was significantly impacted by the pandemic in 2020. However, some events did take place including a Civic Reception to mark the Bicentenary of the Establishment of Ashbourne, 200 years to the day after Frederick Bourne signed a lease on the land at Killelland and built a small village which he named Ashbourne. The event was held in Ashbourne Civic Offices on March 4th.



**Meath County Council host Civic Reception to mark Ashbourne Bicentenary**

### **Official Opening of the Civil Defence Headquarters**

The new headquarters of the Meath Civil Defence was officially opened by Minister Helen McEntee TD, Minister for Justice, on Friday, September 25<sup>th</sup>. This project is the largest Civil Defence building development in the country and together with the outdoor training area on site, it will now provide the 185 volunteers with modern accommodation for both training and the housing of vehicles and equipment. The new facility will also open up the possibility of joint training with neighbouring Civil Defence units in other counties. The new headquarters represents an investment of over €2.6 million, mainly from the Council's own resources with a contribution from National Civil Defence.

### **The Official Opening on the Meath Civil Defence Headquarters on September 25, 2020**



### **Meath County Council receives donation of PPE from Chinese Sister City**

In March, Mr Chen Yan, Mayor of Guiyang pledged a consignment of PPE to the Council to support its efforts to coordinating the fight against the spread of virus locally. The donation consisted of facial masks, gloves and goggles.

The Council, in coordinating the Community Response Forum and operating the Community Support Line in the county, allocated a certain amount of the PPE to the Meath Civil Defence, the Meath Women's Refuge and the HSE locally for many of its frontline services in the county.



**Meath County Council donating some of the PPE to the Meath Women’s Refuge**

### **Lighting up Public Buildings**

The Municipal District members agreed in October 2020 to invest the Arts and Festivals Discretionary Allocation into equipment that will remain at the disposal of the Municipal Districts for many years to come. Each of the MD’s purchased projectors to project light and images onto significant buildings and plazas within each MD area.



**Projection in the Slane Municipal District – Hill of Slane**

There were buildings selected in November 2020 to project with Christmas lighting and these buildings can be lit up all year round for various occasions such as St Patrick’s Day, Halloween and other festivals and to support national and local charities and causes.



**Women in Politics Project**

Corporate Services also delivered the Women in Politics project in March. The project, which was part funded by the Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government, had the objectives of: increasing the visibility of local elected women; highlighting barriers in getting involved in politics; engaging young women and girls to get involved in politics and civil society generally; and changing the public perceptions of women in politics.



**The Kells Event (left) in Eureka School and the Navan Event in the Solstice Theatre**

The project was well supported and featured the female councillors in Meath County Council and engaged directly with local schools in two flagship events in Kells and Navan. The project was well received and cited in various publications and shortlisted for an Excellence in Local Government Award.

**1.14 Occupational Safety and Health**

Meath County Council continued to improve our Safety Management System to ensure the safety, health and wellbeing of our employees, contractors and members of the public. The success of our Safety Management System was accomplished through the continual commitment of our employees and external interested parties.

**Safety Management System**

Legal and operationally required occupational safety and health (OSH) documentation was reviewed and as relevant updated to ensure compliance. A continuous risk assessment programme for the completion, review, update and communication of risk assessments is in place and implemented within all Sections.

COVID-19 requirements and arrangements were embedded within our Safety Management System with all activities risk assessed and control measure implemented.

**Regulatory Inspections**

The Health and Safety Authority (H.S.A) completed 14 No. Regulatory Inspections:

14 No. Inspections	5 No. Internal (MCC) Operations
	9 No. External (Contractor) Operations

### OSH Incident Summary

The reporting of incidents is an important element of our Safety Management System and is used as a tool for identifying areas for continual improvement. A total of 58 incidents were reported during 2020:

<b>No. of Accidents</b>	26 No.	The greatest number of incidents were reported in related to vehicle movements; driving interactions, equipment and machinery and slip, trip and falls.
<b>No. of Incidents</b>	31 No.	
<b>No. of Near Misses</b>	1 No.	

### OSH Training and Awareness

Training is a key element of promoting a positive safety culture and embedding good safety practices.

The training courses held included Safe Pass, IOSH Managing Safely in Construction, CSCS Signing Lighting and Guarding, first aid responder and manual handling.

Internal safety briefings were also held on construction management, school warden activities, winter gritting operations, beach wardens and lifeguards' activities. COVID-19 Briefings were conducted with all employees and other interested parties e.g. housing maintenance contractors and TVIs.

### Communication, Consultation and Participation

The Council consults and communicates with employees using the following methods:

- MCC App;
- Preparation of Risk Assessments and Safety Procedures;
- Quarterly safety reports;
- Safety representatives;
- Safety Monitoring Groups;
- Safety Management Committee meetings;
- COVID-19 Consultative Committee; and
- Management Team meetings.

The Safety Monitoring Group Meetings were held with each Section on a six-monthly basis, this allowed for specific safety issues to be discussed and addressed.

Safety Management Committee Meetings were held four times during the year to address issues on a Corporate basis and any specific safety issues raised at the Safety Monitoring Group Meetings which may impact on a Corporate basis. These meetings are also used to evaluate compliance with safety and legislation and to review progress on the annual continual improvement programme.

COVID-19 Consultative Committee was established for the development, review and consultation of COVID-19 arrangements and to progress employee queries or concerns. Membership includes representatives from Unions, Corporate Services, HR and the Safety Section and meets on a 6-weekly basis.

A number of tool box talks and safety alerts were issued as relevant across Sections, these included working with underground services, driving in severe weather conditions, hi-visibility clothing, COVID-19 updates.

The intranet is used as a communication tool for up to date content of the Safety Management System.

### **OSH Monitoring**

OSH audits and inspections of direct and external (contractor) operations including the implementation of COVID-19 arrangements were routinely undertaken across all sections of the Council. These reviews assist in achieving our OSH objectives by bringing a systematic, disciplined approach to improve the effectiveness of safety management through continuous improvement.

Meath County Fire and Rescue Services maintained certification to ISO 45001:2018 Occupational health and safety management systems.

## **1.15 Energy Efficiency**

The Council is obliged to meet the National Public Service Efficiency Targets. This means that energy consumption must be reduced by 33% by 2020. An energy efficiency improvement of 24.9% had been achieved by December 2019. The monitoring & reporting for 2020 is underway and is due to be completed by the end of June 2021. The Council is currently setting out an action plan to deliver the 2030 target of 50% reduction in energy consumption. This target is challenging and together with the Climate Action Strategy, measures will need to be agreed to achieve the targets. Meath County Councils 2019 Energy Statement is available in Appendix 10.

# Housing

## 2.1 Capital Programme

Meath County Council delivered 407 new social units across the various delivery mechanisms in 2020, as detailed below, exceeding the Rebuilding Ireland targets set for the County.

<b>MEATH COUNTY COUNCIL 2020</b>		
<b>Delivery Mechanism</b>	<b>No. of Units</b>	<b>€</b>
MCC Direct Construction	68	15,531,302
MCC Turnkey Acquisitions	30	7,371,500
MCC Standard Acquisitions	18	3,884,000
MCC CPO	3	0
MCC Part V	48	11,580,365
AHB CAS	0	0
AHB Turnkey	129	33,910,365
AHB Part V	34	8,455,270
AHB Acquisitions (Housing Agency)	2	310,000
AHB Mortgage to Rent	27	2,768,074
AHB Long Term Leasing	48	0
<b>TOTAL UNITS DELIVERED 2020</b>	<b>407</b>	<b>83,108,896</b>
<b>Build+Acq.+Leasing Target 2018-2021</b>	<b>1,190</b>	
<b>Build+Acq.+Leasing Delivery 2018-2020</b>	<b>1,576</b>	
<b>% of Delivery Over Target</b>	<b>32%</b>	



Direct Construction – Bettystown

Part V Bungalows, Drogheda



Turnkey units, Navan

Direct Construction - Carlanstown

Funding approval was received from the Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government in respect to a number of capital project submissions made during the year, including direct construction, Part V, turnkey acquisitions and regeneration projects. Total funding approved in 2020 regarding capital project totals €35,351,874 (142 units), representing future pipeline delivery.

Collaborative work with Approved Housing Bodies has yielded significant delivery during 2020 (163 units), with a further 352 units granted approval, with expected delivery in 2021.

#### **Affordability Measures**

The following local affordability measures were advanced by Meath County Council during 2020:

- The disposal of 7 LIHAF Cost Reduced Units, Broadmeadow Vale, Ratoath, in accordance with local administrative scheme
- Nine low cost private sites were advertised (Lagore, Dunshaughlin), with closing date of 21<sup>st</sup> December 2020. A total of 67 applications have been received, which are currently being assessed. The sites range from €20,000 to €22,666, representing a discount of between €55,000 - €62,000 per site, when compared to market valuation.

#### **Housing Adaptation Grant Schemes for Older People and People with a Disability**

Grants to the value of €2,359,608 were awarded to 345 Households under the various Grants schemes in 2020.

#### **Local Authority Adaptation Works Scheme**

For 2020, 37 projects were completed to existing Council stock with a total expenditure of €290,329.

#### **Local Authority Vacant Units Currently Unavailable for Allocation**

A total of 86 Vacant units required works prior to being re-tenanted in 2020.

In respect of vacant units, a total of €1,570,771 funding was secured in 2020 from the Department of Housing, Local Government & Heritage (pre-let repairs - €1,336,000 & energy efficiency works - €234,771).

#### **Response Maintenance**

A total of 5,690 response maintenance cases were logged in 2020 and subsequently dealt with by Housing Operations.

## **Vacant Homes Action Plan**

Work was on-going in respect of our Vacant Homes Action Plan; including a continuous review of vacant privately-owned units that may be interest to Meath County Council, in its capacity as a Housing Authority. A Vacant Homes Register has been created to record private vacant homes that have been identified through the Vacant Homes Officer, that are located within areas of demand of social housing (149 units). The main reasons for vacancy have been recorded as Derelict/Uninhabitable (40%), Financial/Receiver (24%) and Currently for Sale (11%). During 2020, 64 units were removed from the Register, with the following key reasons noted for removal: i) occupied following subsequent inspection (40%), ii) sold (23%) and iii) AHB acquired (21%).

During 2020, Meath County Council's Environment Section compulsory purchased three derelict units that have been transferred to Housing in order to complete refurbishment works and return to productive use, while the Housing Section commenced the compulsory purchase process on one unit. A further two units were acquired under the Buy & Renew Scheme in 2020.

Four brownfield derelict sites (Navan/Trim/Kells) are currently being progressed under the auspices of the Vacant Homes Action Plan and are at various stages of the acquisition and the Department's approval process. In addition, the design for the regeneration of Carrick Street, Kells is well advanced, and will incorporate the respective agendas of age friendly, universal design and community dividend.

## **Homeless Service**

A total of 165 households required an emergency accommodation placement in 2020, with a significant increase in the presentation of single adult households.

A total of 554 households presented as homeless to Meath County Council in 2020 (362 individual/couples and 192 families). The reasons for presentations were 105 NTQ, 301 family circumstances (199 family breakdown, 41 domestic violence, 39 addiction, 22 mental health), 17 leaving prison/hospital, 108 sofa surfing/cannot afford rent, 13 rough sleeping and 10 others (returning from abroad/outside county, fire).

A total of 202 households exited emergency accommodation in 2020, with 42% of households exiting into private rented/Local Authority/Approved Housing Body tenancies.

Progress was made during 2020 with the roll out of Housing First in the County (seven tenancies), while the Homeless HAP Placefinder Service supported 179 tenancies during the year.

An Isolation Plan was devised and subsequently implemented, in response to Covid-19, and the designation of homeless persons and members of the Traveller Community as vulnerable persons. A number of units within stock have been set aside, and fully furnished, for the purposes of isolation, as and when the need arises. In addition, four units have been handed over to Meath Women's Refuge in order to allow their services to victims of domestic violence continue unaffected, outside of their traditional communal refuge setting.

### Private Rental Inspections

During 2020, 1,249 Inspections of private rental accommodation properties were carried out.

A significant increase was recorded in 2020 in respect of the number of second and follow up inspections completed compared to previous years, thus further enhancing our remit in improving standards in private rented accommodation in the County.

### Tenant Purchase Scheme

Five units were acquired by tenants of Meath County Council under the Tenant Purchase Scheme in 2020, at a cumulative discount of €340,597.

### Traveller Accommodation

Meath County Council expended €1,135,839.00 directly on Traveller specific accommodation in 2020. This expenditure was across several initiatives, including acquisitions, halting site bay refurbishments, disability adaptations and measures to resolve overcrowding within St Patrick Park halting site.

Year 1 Targets under the Traveller Accommodation Programme 2019-2024 were achieved, with 15 allocations to social housing applicants from the Traveller community (Target: 10).

The issue of overcrowding as a result of unauthorised encampments within St Patrick's Park halting site was successfully resolved during 2020.

A strategy, predominately centred on facilitating transfer requests for existing tenants in bays, thus making bays available for allocation, was implemented. In total, 21 families were subject to moves in Q4 2020. In addition, security measures were installed on site to safeguard residents of St Patrick's Park from any further unauthorised encampments and associated health and safety risks. The composite cost associated with the outlined resolution was €332,608.

Departmental approval was received on 22<sup>nd</sup> of December 2020 to proceed to the Part 8 planning process in respect of the refurbishment proposal for St Francis Park (€3,771,374).

### Social Housing Supports

A total of 1,280 households had their accommodation needs met by Meath County Council in 2020, as detailed in the table below:

<b>Allocations/Housing Supports</b>	<b>Number</b>
MCC Direct Allocations	300
Approved Housing Bodies	254
RAS	1
HAP	725
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1,280</b>

Some 1,188 new applications for Social Housing Support were received in 2020.

There were 163 refusals of offers of accommodation made by the Housing Department to applicants during 2020, representing a 23% refusal rate on the total offers of accommodation made. The main reasons recorded by applicants for a refusal were i) property deemed not to meet their accommodation needs, ii) no longer willing to accept a house in previously selected Area of Choice, iii) wish to remain in existing HAP property.

### **Tenant Liaison**

In excess of 216 tenants completed pre-tenancy training during 2020, obtaining a variety of information concerning their tenancy with Meath County Council.

A total of 376 anti-social behaviour cases were investigated by the Tenant Liaison team in 2020.

A pilot outreach initiative targeting tenants aged over 70 years of age was instigated by the Tenant Liaison team in 2020, in conjunction with Age Friendly Ireland. Over 322 tenants were contacted with a view to providing a support coordination role, including signposting to local services, encouraging participation where appropriate and making any necessary referrals. The learning from this initiative will inform future policy in terms of Meath County Council connecting with our older tenants.



# Planning and Development Management

## 3.1 Key Achievements 2020:

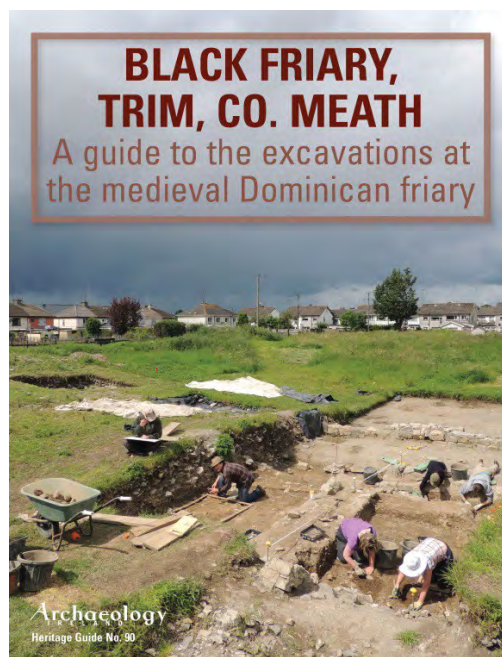
### Forward Planning

The Draft Meath County Development Plan came off public display on 6<sup>th</sup> March, 2020 with a total of 2452 valid submissions received in total. Following the commencement of the Emergency Measures in the Public Interest (Covid 19) Act, statutory planning timelines were paused for a period of 8 weeks and this paused the timeline with respect to the Plan. Due to the pausing of timelines, Special Meetings, whereby Members agreed to accept or amend the Chief Executive's recommendations on the submissions, commenced on 16<sup>th</sup> November. These meetings were held on a hybrid basis, both online and in situ, to allow for social distancing in line with government guidelines. The Special Meeting was adjourned on 18<sup>th</sup> December due to the Christmas break and was scheduled to reconvene on 11<sup>th</sup> January, 2021.

### Heritage and Conservation

A number of projects were progressed under the Heritage and Conservation work programmes, these included;

- **Irish Walled Town Network – Trim:** Production of eight videos to document and showcase 10 years of archaeological excavations at the Black Friary; which were launched during Heritage Week 2020.



***Archaeology Ireland Heritage Guide No. 90 featuring the Black Friary, Trim***

**Blackfriary Community Heritage and Archaeology Project (BCHAP) (Town and Village Renewal Project Funding):**

- Appointed a landscape architect to prepare a landscaping plan of the Black Friary.
- Secured additional on-site cabin
- Five new interpretive panels designed and installed.
- Supported publication of *Archaeology Ireland Guide No. 90 Black Friary, Trim, Co. Meath A guide to the excavations at the medieval Dominican friary.*
- Detailed recording and conservation of exposed walls.

**National Biodiversity Action Plan Funding:**

- Two online Pollinator and Citizen Science Workshop -
  - All Ireland Pollinator Plan Workshop with Local Authority Staff.
  - Seven online workshops to support the implementation of Community Biodiversity Action Plans in Ratoath, Slane, Kells, Stamullen, Rathcairn, Julianstown and Longwood.
- In partnership with Birdwatch Ireland and Tidy Town groups - Swift Nest box Project.
- Commissioned and completed three biodiversity short videos.
- All Ireland Pollinator Plan Radio Communications campaign – LMFM.

**Care and Conservation of Historic Graveyards:** Supported implementation of Meath County Council Burial Group Grant Scheme.

**Heritage Week 2020:** Event migrated online, encouraged and supported local groups to prepare projects – 30 projects showcased from County Meath.

**Kells Printworks:** Working with a paper conservator to conserve the Kells Printworks Poster Archive.

**County Heritage Plan Fund 2020:** Appointed Industrial heritage archaeologist to complete field survey of Meath’s Industrial Heritage (Phase I), supported publication of Knowth Volume on Megalithic Art and acquired an archive of high-quality photographic and drone video images from Ken Williams (Photographer).

**Community Heritage Grant Scheme 2020:** 16 local heritage projects supported.

**Kells Creative Placemaking Project:** Multi-faceted collaborative project between Meath County Council and project stakeholders (artists, festivals, community volunteers, property owners and local business) which focuses on the regeneration and adaptive re-use of four key heritage buildings into the social, cultural and economic fabric of Kells;

- Appointed design team for the Kells Printworks Project and held two workshops
- Finalised business plan for Kells Creative Placemaking Project
- Kells Courthouse Cultural Hub

**Meath County Council Culture Team:** Member of team to support the implementation of *Culture and Creativity Strategy for County Meath 2018-2022.*

**Community Monuments Fund 2020:** New scheme launched by National Monuments Service, three projects funded – Rathmore Graveyard Wall and Conservation Reports for Dulane Church and Beaubec, Bymore.



***Conservation works to boundary wall at Rathmore Graveyard, Athboy completed as part of the Community Monument Fund 2020***

**LGMA and Heritage Council:** Member of a focus group for *Review of Local Authority Heritage Officer Programme*.

**Meath Partnership:** Member of the Local Evaluation Committee for assessing projects.

### **Development Contributions**

Receipts from development contributions fell in comparison to previous years, with a projected outturn (pre-audit) in the region of €9.4 million (inclusive of Irish Water receipts) for 2020. The Financial Compliance Team continues to actively engage with debtors to ensure compliance with conditions of planning.

### **Compliance Activities**

Complaints regarding planning compliance continue to rise with 316 new cases referred to or initiated by the Planning Department in 2020, an increase of approximately 12% on 2019. These figures do not include action taken for non-compliance with the financial provisions of extant planning permissions.

The Council continues to carry out its function in regard to the taking-in-charge of estates. In 2020 a total of 13 estates were taken in charge and exploratory studies were carried out on a number of other estates.

## **3.2 Development Management**

The number of applications received continues to increase on previous years, with a total of 2114 applications received in 2020, an increase of approximately 15% on 2019. Pre-planning clinics are now fully subscribed with over the phone and online consultation being availed of. The Planning Department continues to note an improvement in the scope and complexity of development proposals being considered.

The Planning Department also assisted in a number of other projects as follows;

- Strategic Housing Development,
- Strategic Infrastructural Development 2 Oral Hearings
- 8 Part VIII applications

### **Quarry Regulation**

The Planning Authority continues to monitor and assess quarrying operations in Meath.

### **Building Control**

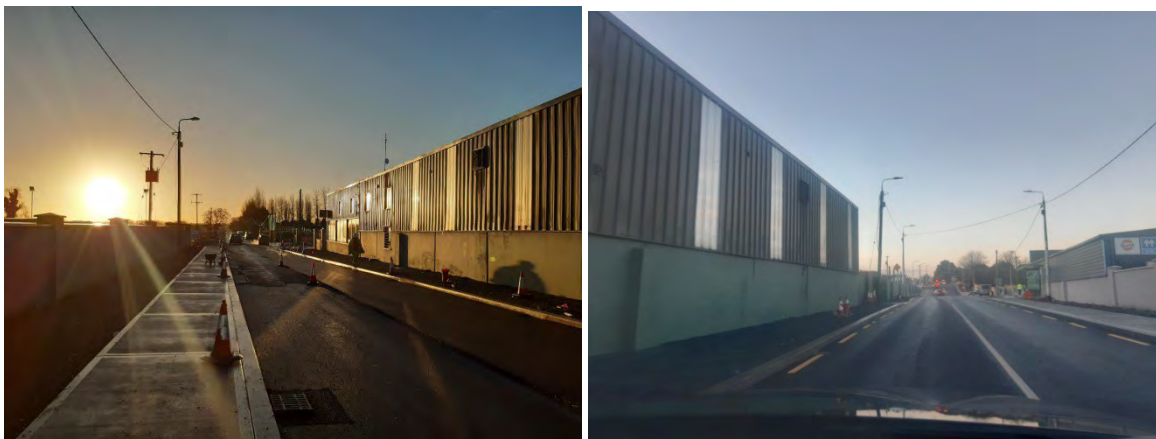
The Council's Building Control function is performed by the Building Control Officer who also leads the Planning Enforcement Team. The Building Control function plays a critical role in informing the Council's Financial Compliance Team.

# Road Transportation and Safety

## 4.1 Overview

Meath County Council manages and maintains over 3,500 km. of road network. This is achieved with the co-operation and assistance of the NTA, TII, and DTTAS through 4 main elements, namely:

- Road upkeep, including routine and winter maintenance, surface dressing and public lighting
- Road improvements, which includes discretionary improvement, restoration improvement, specific improvement schemes, bridge works, footpath improvements and other improvement schemes
- Road traffic, which includes traffic management and safety
- Sustainable transport Initiatives



Kilberry Traffic Management – Phase 1

## 4.2 Achievements

Road Improvement achievements included the delivery of the circa €42.4m road works programme and the completion of 16 Community Involvement Schemes (majority of funding from DTT&S) and 5 Local Improvement Schemes (grant funding from DR&CD). These schemes showcase how partnership between the Council and communities can deliver meaningful improvements on roads, which otherwise would not receive maintenance/improvement funding.

## 4.3 Summary of Progress on Schemes

### National Primary and Secondary Road Schemes advanced

- N2 Slane Bypass – Consultants progressing Phase 3 design. Initial Landowner meetings commenced
- N51 Dunmoe Phase 2 –Notice to Enter served on all landowners. Stage 2 & 3 Archaeology ongoing. The main construction contract going to Tender early 2021
- N52 Grange to Clontail Road scheme –Part 8 decision due in Q1 2021. Phase 3 design being progressed, and initial meetings have been held with landowners.
- N2 Rath Roundabout to Kilmoon – Assessments/Surveys progressing to assist in identifying the Emerging Preferred Option. 3<sup>rd</sup> public consultation scheduled for Q1 2021.
- National Road Pavement Schemes – 3.8 km resurfacing constructed at 20 locations and 1.3km of retexturing completed at 6 locations during 2020.

**Non-National road network maintained in 2020**

**Road Restoration**

- Regional Roads – 19.41 km and Local Roads – 61.24 km (including 8.9 kms for CIS)
- 3.25 kms of roads were completed under the Local Improvement Scheme

**Surface Dressing**

- Regional – 21.66 kms (including road restoration lengths)
- Local – 97.6 kms (including road restoration lengths and CIS schemes)

An additional element of funding, under the Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport grant, was allocated to Meath County Council in 2020 in the amount of €750,000 for works on former National Roads and 2.7 km of resurfacing has been completed in 2020, under this heading.



**N51 Resurfacing – Cruicerath to Carrickdexter**

**Additional Non-National Schemes progressed**

- R150 Laytown to Bettystown Spine Road – Construction commenced in August 2020 and is expected to take 12 months approximately.



**R150 Spine Road – Aerial Image of Construction**

- LDR4 Abbeyland Navan - Formal applications for EIS and CPO lodged with An Bord Pleanála in July 2020. Oral Hearing for the CPO held December 2020 with decision expected for both applications in Qtr 2 2021.
- LIHAF - LDR6 Navan R153 to Ferganstown and Ballymacon – Construction works substantially complete by end of 2020.



**LIHAF Scheme – LDR6, Ferganstown**

- LIHAF - Ratoath Outer Relief Road Phase 1 - Construction works substantially complete by end of 2020



**LIHAF Scheme Ratoath**

- LDR1b –Consulting engineers appointed August 2020, reviewing Part 8 planning & preliminary design and preparing CPO documentation.
- R162 Kilberry- Phase 1 - Construction works substantially complete by end of 2020.
- R155 Curragha – The works have been delayed pending works by Irish Water. Temporary ramps being installed pending completion of the permanent works.
- Milltown Road Scheme – Construction were well advanced by end of 2020
- R154 Batterjohn Junction – Works completed in 2020.
- Access Road Frontlands Kells – MCC application submitted to An Bord Pleanála and subsequently approved in June 2020
- Designs progressed for junction improvements and traffic calming in Julianstown.
- Bracetown Link Road - Consultants appointed to prepare preliminary design and Part 8 documentation.

### Bridge Remedial Works progressed in 2020

Remedial Works were carried out on Annes Bridge, Stoneyford Bridge, Annesbrooke Bridge, Skearke Bridge, Clonard Bridge, Kearntown Bridge, Cornmill Bridge and Maudlin Bridge.

Design of repairs to Kilmainhamwood and Donaghmore retaining walls and embankments have progressed, and repairs works to Danestown and Normansgrove culverts were carried out also.

### Safety Improvement Works progressed in 2020

Safety Improvement Works have been funded at the following locations: R164 Kells Town, L2813 Cortown, R163 Drumbaragh, L5615 Minnistown Rd, L1625 Sallygardens Crossroads, L1600 Beauparc Junction, R161 Newhaggard Road, L1005 Oberstown Cross and R163 Scottstown, Gormanlough. Safety Schemes being designed for N52 at Johnsbrook Cross and Balrath Cross.

### Jobs Stimulus Package

In addition to the €42.4m mentioned above, in the latter half of 2020, Meath County Council was successful in securing funding under two Job Stimulus packages implemented by the Government.

The first is being managed through the National Transport Authority to support local authorities' response to Covid-19 challenges and assist with their work to equip local communities and businesses with improved walking and cycling infrastructure. A brief description of the 38 successful schemes that received an allocation of €3.105m follows:

No.	Road Number /Street Name	Location of Proposed Scheme	Cost	Type of Works
1	R-159-89	Enfield	€120,000	Footpath Works
2	Ratholdren Road	Navan	€44,000	Pedestrian Crossing
3	R195 and The Square	Oldcastle	€30,000	Pedestrian Crossing
4	R151	Mornington adjacent to 'Harry's Shop'	€60,000	Footpath Works & Pedestrian Crossing
5	Lackanash Road	Trim	€40,000	Pedestrian Crossing
6	Church Road (R150)	Donacarne	€30,000	Pedestrian Crossing
7	R147	Clonee Main Street	€30,000	Cycle Lanes
8	R154	Townlands of Batterjohn, DerryPatrick Grange, Kiltale and BatterJohn	€1,220,000	Road Works
9	Jim Brunnock Rd	Kells Town	€50,000	Footpath Works
10	Kilcarn Court, Navan	Kilcarn Court, Navan	€90,000	Footpath Works
11	R-158-0	Bettystown Village	€40,000	Footpath Works
12	On the N2 near the M2 Rath Roundabout	Edge of N2 linking houses to existing footway Ashbourne	€40,000	Footpath Works / Pedestrian Crossing
13	R-125-2	Main St., Ratoath, Arkle House to SuperValu	€80,000	Footpath Works
14	Rockfield Green	Kells Town	€50,000	Walkway
15	Dean Cogan, Navan	Dean Cogan, Navan	€65,000	Footpath Works
16	R125	Main Street Ratoath	€250,000	Cycle Lanes / Walkway
17	R132-322	R132 Painstown-Colp Cross	€40,000	Footpath Works/Cycle Lanes
18	Castle Way access road	Castle Way, Ashbourne	€5,000	Footpath works
19	Castle Way access road	Garden City, Ashbourne	€7,500	Footpath works
20	Castle Street	Castle Street, Ashbourne	€7,500	Footpath Works/Cycle Lanes
21	R-158-0	Summerhill Road, Trim	€30,000	Footpath Works/Cycle Lanes
22	Church View	Athboy	€30,000	Pedestrian Crossing
23	L-34142-0	Dan Shaw Road, Navan	€45,000	Pedestrian Crossing
24	L16167-0	Sea fields (Corvallis) Laytown	€82,000	Footpath Works / Cycle Lanes
25	Castle Way access road	Garden City, Ashbourne	€10,000	Pedestrian Crossing
26	L1006	Skryne Road Ratoath (Cemetery Road)	€180,000	Road Works
27	R-161-0	Navan Gate Street, Trim,	€25,000	Footpath Works / Cycle lanes
28	Estate access road	St Oliver Plunkets Estate, Kentstown	€15,000	Footpath Works
29	Enfield Village	Various locations in the village	€50,000	Footpath Works / Cycle lanes
30	R150 Bettystown	Bettystown Square & Laytown	€85,000	Pedestrian Crossing
31	Deerpark estate access	Deerpark Estate, Ashbourne	€35,000	Pedestrian Crossing
32	Summerhill Village	Various locations in the village	€30,000	Footpath Works / Cycle lanes
33	Deerpark estate access	Deerpark Estate, Ashbourne	€25,000	Pedestrian Crossing
34	R156	Summerhill Village	€25,000	Footpath Works / Cycle lanes
35	L1617	Stamullen to Gormanstown road	€40,000	Road Works / footpath works
36	R135	Existing cycle lane on R135, Ashbourne North	€15,000	Cycle Lane
37	Ribbontail Lane	Longwood	€20,000	Road Works
38	Killeland Estate and	Ashbourne	€64,000	Footpath Works



The second, managed through DTT&S, was for measures to address the impact of climate change on the network. A total allocation of €517,000 was secured for 5 approved projects:

No.	Road Number	Location of proposed scheme	Cost 2020	Type of Works
1	L1002-37	Riverstown road	€100,000	Remedial Works - along road edges following heavy rainfall events
2	R151	R151 Mornington	€142,000	Altering the level of road to mitigate flooding & reduce road closure frequency
7	R-160-1	Trim ring road	€150,000	Remedial works due to severe damage -Storm Emma & subsequent severe weather events
9	R125	Dunshaughlin	€110,000	Remedial works where road has been damaged by recent severe weather events
14	R125	Greenoge, Donaghmore	€15,000	BroadmeadowRiver(floodplain) is makingtheembankmentoftheR125road unstable causing gradual slippage over a 100m long section

**Sustainable Transport Schemes progressed in 2020:**

- Boyneside Trail – Planning application submitted to An Bord Pleanála in July 2020, currently awaiting a decision.
- Boyne Greenway–Oldbridge to Navan - Consultants appointed in March 2020 to prepare preliminary design and application for statutory approval. It is currently expected that a planning application will be submitted to An Bord Pleanála in late 2021.
- Boyne Valley to Lakelands County Greenway – Looped walks completed around Nobber and Castletown using ORIS funding. €500K of ORIS funding secured for Navan to Wilkinstown Section, to be constructed in 2021.
- Navan 2030 – Phase 1 construction contract for Railway Street complete. Phase 2 (Bridge Street and Abbey Road roundabout) construction progressing on site – estimated completion Q2 2021. Design works for Phase 3 which includes works on Ludlow St, Market Sq, Kennedy Rd & Kennedy Plaza progressing



**Works Completed on Railway Street**



**Works completed on Bridge Street**



**Proposed Ludlow Street**



**Proposed Kennedy Road**

- Installation of Bus Shelters – Countywide project ongoing – Geophysical and Topographical Surveys being progressed.
- Cycle Parking - Site locations have been identified and tender documents prepared.
- Laytown Park & Ride Facility – Contractor appointed for refurbishment works which are now substantially complete
- Athlumney to Trim Road Cycle and Pedestrian Scheme – Topographical survey complete, drainage design ongoing. Scheme will be tendered for construction in 2021.
- Pedestrian & Cyclist footway – N52 Bypass, Kells – Works substantially complete and route open to the public.
- Navan Bus Stops – Tender for construction works associated with new town bus service on route N1 and N2 undertaken in Q4 2020.



**New Bus Stop- Navan**

- Part 8 for cycling and walking facilities in Ratoath commenced Q4 2020.
- Part 8 commenced for Park and Ride facility on N51 in Navan

**Work continued on the delivery of additional services:**

- Ordinary Maintenance, Winter Maintenance Service and Maintenance of Plant and Machinery
- Establishment of centralised contract for maintenance of traffic signals/lights
- Capital Programme of Footpath Improvement Works



**Kells By-Pass Footpath**



**Longwood Footpath Works**

- Public Lighting Services, maintenance and capital programme of Public Lighting upgrades and Energy Efficiency Schemes across the county
- Development Control / Transport Planning Advice
- Road Safety Improvement Schemes, Promotion and Education
- Road Opening Licences, Abnormal Load Applications, Roads and Services in Charge queries
- Review of Bus Licences and Bus Stop locations
- Additional funding was provided by DTTAS of €680,8674 for Drainage Schemes throughout the county

# Environment

## 5.1 Overview

The protection of the environment and the enhancement of the county's natural and built environment are of significant importance for the residents of, and visitors to, County Meath. Clean air and water, a litter free countryside, pristine beaches and sustainable waste management systems are fundamental to a sustainable and high quality environment and improving the quality of life of our citizens.

The Council has responsibility for over 500 statutory environmental functions which are contained within legislation and which provide for proper regulatory and monitoring systems for environmental protection and control of pollution.

## 5.2 Climate Change

Late 2019 saw the establishment of Meath Climate Academy, this sought to deliver high quality training events to various stakeholders including citizens, communities, schools and businesses, to provide these groups with the information and confidence to start a climate conversation within their communities and network, to build climate leadership at a grass roots level. Unfortunately, Covid 19 significantly impacted this initiative and while training could be undertaken online it was felt that it would not deliver the same value as face to face training where people can make connections and grow their network of support. Planned events will hopefully be delivered on the easing of restrictions.

September 2020 saw the Climate Team's remit grow to include the Sustainable Development Goals, one of the first local authorities to take this route. Climate Action is one of the 17 goals and the SDGs are an excellent vehicle through which to deliver on climate action, the goals are highly interconnected and promote inclusivity and justice. Initially, the work revolved around awareness and linking the goals to activities to promote the use of the goals throughout the organisation.

Covid has impacted greatly on our activities but has brought opportunities. It has allowed us to expand our network both in Ireland and the EU through the many Climate and SDG events we attended across the EU, pre-covid this would not have been achievable. This network allows us to showcase our work and learn from and work with other climate professionals.

### 2020 activities include:

- Citizen Climate Action Leadership training – over 60 participants attended this full day training in January, feedback was very positive and will form a template for future events
- Online Sustainable Tourism event
- A Climate Summit for Elected Members, a School's Summit and Climate Film Festival were all postponed due to Covid
- Increased numbers of Sustainable Development Communities (SECs) – Batterstown Energy Master Plan completed and Trim SEC applied for funding to do same. Various webinars took place around SECs where the Climate Team participated.
- First report on Climate Action Strategy produced, information collated through the CARO office.
- Climate Action Plan Implementation Guidelines produced, this was collaboration with Louth, Kildare, Wicklow and Cork County Councils.
- @MeathClimate Twitter account set up in April
- Partnership building – throughout Meath and beyond, identifying organisations we can work with on climate projects.

- Collaboration with ICrag, Age Friendly and the Solstice on #PurlsofWisdom project, using wool craft to communicate on climate change, project resulted in an exhibition in the Solstice. This project is now being expanded.
- Tree planting project on council owned lands on-going.
- Partnership with Devenish, Macra na Feirme and Credit Unions on sustainable farming and networking. Currently developing this to a wider outreach.
- 3 members of staff and 1 councillor completed the 6 week EU MPower course which promotes sustainable energy transition
- 4 staff members and 1 councillor became Climate Reality Leaders under the AL Gore Climate Corp
- Meath County Council became the only Irish EU Climate Pact Ambassador, an initiative under the EU Green Deal, this connects us to Climate Pact Ambassadors all over the EU and with opportunities for collaboration and knowledge sharing.
- Meath Climate Academy long listed for World Forum of Democracy Environment Conference – postponed
- Participated in the DRIFT TOMORROW Energy Transition Relay European workshop.
- Continue to facilitate the Councillor Led Climate Action Forum.
- Assisted Central University of Europe in trialling a survey for Climate Emergency Declarations.
- Presentation of Meath’s Climate story at the ESTG conference.

### 5.3 Environmental Education and Awareness

Each year the Council engages in a wide range of environmental education and awareness activities and supports including:

- Green Schools Initiatives including Green Schools Seminars on Litter and Waste, Water, Energy, Biodiversity, Global Citizenship.
- Grants for School Gardens through CEAF Funding, on average 10 school gardens are supported annually together with approximately 30 community based projects, seminars, workshops.
- Secondary Schools – The Really Rubbish Film Company, ECO UNESCO Young Environmentalists, ReLove Fashion.



ReLove Fashion Final with students from Convent of Mercy, Navan

- Local Authority Prevention Network (LAPN) Funding acquired and project to commence in December 2020 for Reusable paint with the Rediscovery Centre.
- Community related projects – Anti-Litter Initiatives, Stop Food Waste Regional Campaign, Spring Clean Events.
- Litter Management Support from Meath County Council to community and other groups in terms of equipment and collection of material.
- Food Waste Digester Project at Navan Recycling Centre.
- Comprehensive Anti-Litter, Anti Dog Fouling and Anti-Dumping Advertising Campaign – Cinema, Radio, Billboards, Social Media.
- Provision of signage across the county – Litter, dumping, car litter, dog fouling.
- Dedicated collection days for old toys, couches, and on-going collection of Paint.

Bikes for Africa – Reuse project with Rotary Ireland supplying bikes for secondary school transport in the Gambia, through Navan Recycling Centre and Loughan House Prison. Bikes are collected at the Navan Recycling Centre for onward transportation to Loughan House Open Prison in Co Cavan. There the bikes are upcycled by the inmates in the Bike Shop for onward transportation to Gambia where they provide vital and life changing school transport for teenagers.



**Bikes for Africa initiative**

Plastic Bottle Free School – Beaufort College became the first school to take part in the Water Dispenser Scheme in Meath, providing students with reusable bottles and new water dispensers, supported by Meath County Council. There are a number of other schools due to join the scheme in 2021. There is a ban on single use plastic bottles in place in participating schools.

## 5.4 National Waste Enforcement Priorities

In 2020, a Waste Action Plan for a Circular Economy ‘Ireland’s National Waste Policy 2020-2025’ was launched which introduces new targets to tackle waste and move towards a circular economy. The plan includes halving our food waste by 2030, the introduction of a deposit and return scheme for plastic bottles and cans, a ban on certain single use plastics from July 2021, and a levy on disposable cups. Other measures include applying green criteria and circular economy principles in all public procurement, a waste recovery levy to encourage recycling, and ensuring all packaging is reusable or recyclable by 2030.

An overarching objective in the action plan is to support clear and robust institutional arrangements for the waste sector, including through a strengthened role for local authorities.

In accordance with national waste enforcement priorities identified by a National Waste Enforcement Steering Group, the following were the enforcement priorities for the Regional Lead Authorities and the constituent Local Authorities for 2020. These are likely to remain the same for 2021.

- 5.4.1 Tackling Significant Illegal Waste Activity
- 5.4.2 Construction & Demolition Activity
- 5.4.3 End of Life Vehicles (ELV) Directive
- 5.4.4 Identification of unauthorised ELV Sites –
- 5.4.5 Waste Collection – Household & Commercial
- 5.4.6 Multi-Agency Sites of Interest
- 5.4.7 Man in the Van – Tackling illegal dumping and unauthorised movements of waste

Co-ordination of works by the local authorities in respect of these priorities was undertaken by the Waste Enforcement Regional Lead Authorities (WERLAs) which will be Intelligence Led Enforcement

The EPA in 2017 published the National Ambient Air Quality Monitoring Programme 2017 - 2022 and providing for a greatly expanded national monitoring network providing enhanced real time information on air quality to the public. The programme provides for an additional 38 new monitoring stations in all urban areas, the siting of which will be based on the criteria of population size, vulnerability to air quality issues and spatial distribution. The network of sites will monitor a range of specified air quality parameters including particulates, heavy metals, inorganic and organic gases. A new monitoring station for Navan in close proximity to the Fire Station has now been put in place and providing enhanced real time information on air quality for the area. New monitoring stations are also proposed for Drogheda and Balbriggan.

## 5.5 River Basin Management Plan 2018 -2021

**The River Basin Management Plan 2018-2021 was launched on April 17, 2018 and** outlines the measures to improve water quality in Ireland’s groundwater, rivers, lakes, estuarine and coastal waters over the following four years. The Plan is to fulfil requirements under the Water Framework Directive (WFD) to protect and improve water quality in approximately 726 of Ireland’s 4,829 water bodies over the next four years. The 726 water bodies including nine in County Meath form part of a total of 190 Areas for Action which have been prioritised nationally for particular attention during 2018–2021 and where a multidisciplinary and cross-agency approach will be involved.

The process for selection of the priority areas for action for the next **River Basin Management Plan 2021-2027** is underway and after consultations with **LAWPRO** and the **EPA**, we expect the draft Plan to go to public consultation in early 2021.

## 5.6 Derelict Sites

There are currently 20 properties on the County Meath Derelict Sites Register, fifteen of which have been added over the past 12 months. An up-to-date list of these properties is available on the Council's website. In 2020, two properties were removed from the DSR after improvement works were carried out by the owners. Over that period, 11 properties were compulsory acquired and one voluntarily acquired. There are a further 95 properties which have potential to be included in the register. The Derelict Sites Section has been actively engaging with property owners, solicitors, financial institutions and complainants to try and resolve dereliction issues prior to acquisition. In the majority of cases there are issues with ownership / title, negative equity or debt. All of the properties acquired to date will be developed or improved by the Housing Section of Meath County Council for social housing. The derelict sites section has particular focus in areas where there is funding for urban regeneration.



# Fire and Emergency Services

## 6.1 Overview

**Meath Fire and Rescue Service covers a broad range of functions ranging from operational response to fire prevention, including:**

- Firefighting and rescue services
- Community fire safety
- Technical fire prevention
- Major emergency planning and pre-incident planning

Meath Fire and Rescue Service responded to a wide range of incidents and emergencies in 2020 and adapted to new ways of working to ensure full provision of service to the public during the COVID-19 pandemic.

### Health and Safety

Meath Fire and Rescue Service continually develops the Health and Safety Management System to ensure the safety, health and welfare of staff and service users they interact with. This Health and Safety Management System continued to meet the requirements of the International Standard ISO 45001 with certification renewed for 2020. There was a change in focus necessitated by COVID-19 to address the new risks presented and continuous review of work practices and procedures to maintain the high standards of health and safety within the service.

### Equipment & Training

The Fire and Rescue Service employs a broad range of specialist equipment in the delivery of its operational rescue service and there was further investment during 2020 both in procuring equipment and servicing and maintenance of same.

The Training Plan for 2020 was adapted to ensure that all essential training requirements were met having regard to changes necessitated by COVID-19 and new training needs met which arose as a result of the new working environment.

### Fleet & Station Maintenance

Meath Fire and Rescue Service maintains over 30 fire appliances in seven stations throughout the County and there are a variety of different types of vehicles in operation. A new Scania Class B firefighting appliance came into service at Navan Fire Station in 2020. This vehicle was provided under the governments 'Fire Service Capital Programme 2016 – 2020' and is now in full service as a frontline firefighting appliance.



**Dunshaughlin Fire Station following upgrade**



**New Fire Truck for Navan Fire Station**

In addition to this a Scania F28 Bronto Skylift, Combined Aerial Rescue Platform (CARP), was also purchased for Navan Fire Station in March 2020 – this was to replace the Simon Snorkel Hydraulic Platform which had been in service in Navan since the '90s.

Both fire appliances provide a welcome upgrade to our Fire Service fleet and will enhance emergency service operations for the coming years. Meath County Fire & Rescue Service is committed to providing the best service possible to citizens and communities across Co. Meath.

Capital funding is secured for the upgrading of both Nobber and Oldcastle fire stations, with the full design for Nobber Fire Station finalised in 2020.

### **Fire Prevention and Community Fire Safety**

Fire Prevention Officers deal with a wide range of Fire Safety Certificate applications for new and existing developments and a range of inspections are carried out by fire officers to deal with fire safety of the existing building stock and proposed developments across County Meath.

Educating the community in fire safety is a key role for the fire service and targeted campaigns are carried out during the year at key times such as Fire Safety Week and Halloween. Most community fire safety activity was online/through social media in 2020 due to the restrictions imposed by COVID-19.

## **6.2 Civil Defence**

There are currently one hundred and eighty active **volunteer members** in **Civil Defence** throughout the county. COVID-19 disrupted training from mid-March when all training activities were suspended in compliance with public health guidelines. By contrast the organisation was heavily immersed in community support providing transport for patients to Health Centre and hospital appointments, delivering essential medical equipment to patient's homes, transporting patients for COVID tests, assisting at Blood donation Clinics and delivering food hampers in conjunction with the Meath Partnership food hub. A total of 570 taskings were undertaken as well as 34 community events primarily before the arrival of COVID during 2020. The pandemic response has been the longest sustained deployment of Civil Defence volunteers in the 70-year history of the organisation. Volunteers were also involved in a number of search operations during the year.



**Providing transport for patients to Hospital appointments**

In April the Civil Defence Branch sanctioned funding for the appointment of a temporary Assistant Civil Defence Officer which was upgraded to a permanent position in August. Long serving volunteer commander Shane Quinn was successful in being appointed to the position. The Civil Defence Branch issued the organisation with a new 4 x 4 crew-cab jeep and an operational support van to replace an ageing vehicle. A number of items of training equipment were also upgraded and replaced.



**4x4 Crew Cab Jeep**



**New Operational Support Van**

On 25<sup>th</sup> September Minister for Justice Ms. Helen McEntee T.D. in the presence of Cathaoirleach Cllr. David Gilroy, Mayor of Navan Cllr. Francis Deane, Chief Executive Ms. Jackie Maguire, Director of Service Des Foley and David Buckley, Principal Officer from the National Civil Defence Office performed the official opening of the new headquarters building for the council's Civil Defence service and named it "Moat View House". The premises were blessed by Rev. Declan Hurley Adm. Navan and Rev. Cannon John Clarke, Navan.



**Civil Defence Headquarters – Official Opening**

The building on the Mullaghboy Industrial Estate is the first A3 energy rated building in the Council and will serve the Civil Defence organisation well into the future. The building comprises 10,000 sq.ft. of office, training rooms and storage facilities for equipment and transport. An additional feature of the site is the external training ground providing facilities for off road and severe weather driver training as well as confined space, search and rescue skills training and flood pumping.

# Community

## 7.1 Overview

Local Authorities have a strengthened role in local and community development with focus on promoting the well-being and quality of life of citizens and communities.

### Community Response Forum Covid 19

In response to Government and the Covid 19 pandemic, a Community Response Forum was set up comprising essential agencies, state-bodies and non-government organisations. The forum met regularly and was chaired by the Chief Executive of the Council. In addition, a Covid freephone number and email address were also set up and available 7 days a week to assist and co-ordinate queries been received from the public in relation to Covid.



**Partner Pack Supplies**

### Local Community Development Committee (LCDC)

The function of the LCDC is to implement the 2016-2021 Local Economic Community Plan, to co-ordinate, manage and oversee the implementation of local and community programmes on behalf of the government departments e.g. SICAP, LEADER, Healthy Ireland programme and the Community Enhancement Programme.

**Local Economic & Community Plan (LECP) 2016-2021**

The LCDC prepared a six-year Statutory Local Economic Community Plan in conjunction with the Council. This Plan serves as the primary strategy guiding development in Meath and the targeting of resources under the direct management of the LCDC. Any funding applications for proposed projects must also be consistent with the objectives of the plan. Quarterly updates are sought from the agencies involved and presented to the LCDC.

**Social Inclusion Community Activation Programme (SICAP) 2018 - 2022**

The SICAP Programme which is funded by the Department of Rural & Community Development aims to reduce poverty, promote social inclusion and equality through local engagement and collaboration. This is the third year of the 5-year programme with this year's budget at €405,136. Meath Partnership who was awarded the contract continues to deliver the programme on behalf of the council.

**LEADER Programme 2014-2020**

The LCDC and Local Authority are responsible for monitoring/overseeing the delivery of the LEADER programme 2014-2020. Meath's allocation (including administration and animation under the programme is €6.9 million. This allocation includes grant approval capacity of €5.18 million. The LCDC agreed to a joint approach to LEADER with the LCDC as the Local Action Group (LAG) and Meath Partnership as the Implementing Partner (IP). Meath Co. Council is the Financial Partner (FP). Currently there is 100% of the total budget committed. There has been a huge increase in the number of claims during 2020 due to the completion of projects. Over €1.3M has been paid out to date which represents 26%. All project claims for payment must be submitted by 30<sup>th</sup> June 2024. The existing programme has been extended to March 2021 as a result of Covid 19. As a result of delays at EU level in agreeing the EU budget for 2021-2027, there will be a gap between the current LEADER programme and the next one which will not begin until January 2023. The Minister is introducing a Transitional LEADER programme from April 2021 to bridge the gap. The budget allocation for Meath towards projects is €470,668, with an extension of the current programme deadline for project commitments to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2021.

**7.2 Public Participation Network (PPN)**

There are currently over 1000 groups now registered to the PPN. These groups received regular updates on funding, consultations and events through e-bulletins, face-book and the website. At the start of 2020 the PPN held workshops in the 6 Municipal Districts to seek feedback and collate information that will feed into the national Community Well Being Vision Programme Under the "Our County, Our Voice" network brand.

As part of the Community Response Forum for Covid the PPN facilitated community mobilization by creating a response map of supports available across the county. This map has been continually updated to reflect the number of volunteers and services still available throughout the pandemic. Several virtual workshops were hosted which included Sustainable Development Goals and a Finance workshop. Both were well attended by the various community and voluntary groups of the PPN.

The national PPN handbook guidelines was launched virtually by the Department on November 19, which sets out the role of the PPN and its representatives.

## 7.3 Meath Age Friendly Initiative

Under the current Age Friendly strategy 2017-2020, the Council has been working in partnership with other relevant agencies on a number of initiatives as follows:

- Age Friendly coordinated the distribution of over 1200 wellbeing packs to the most vulnerable and isolated during the pandemic in collaboration with members of the community response forum.



**Wellbeing pack for Older Persons**

- The local authority through Age Friendly set up an Older Persons Committee (OPC) who have been working on rolling out initiatives such as compiling bi-monthly newsletters and circulating these through the PPN.
- OPC members through their communities distributed packs to locals and their neighbours who were cocooning.
- A donation of Age Friendly ACORN tablets specifically designed for the older person was made to the residents of Nursing Homes to enable them to keep in contact with their families.



**Donation of Age Friendly Acorn Table to Nursing Home in Athboy**

- The Age Friendly programme in collaboration with the Climate Action section launched the “Purls of Wisdom” knitting initiative using the colours of the changing climate for yarn crafting. These knitted and crocheted blankets were displayed in the Solstice Arts centre and to be donated to Alzheimer and Dementia groups at a later date.
- The OPC also attended a virtual workshop on Climate Change where members volunteered to receive training on Climate Change and in turn spread this message to their groups and community.
- During Positive Ageing week, the OPC collaborated and organised virtual events such as music/singing through Trim Library, Bio-Diversity talks through the Heritage section along with Tai Chi & Meditation classes organised by an OPC member.
- A report was launched by the Cathaoirleach and Minister McEntee of the Age Friendly accessibility audit carried out in Athboy which included a dementia audit, and which was shortlisted in the Chambers Ireland awards.
- A total of €608,250k was awarded under the RRD fund for the design of Athboy’s public realm which will include recommendations from this Athboy Age Friendly/Dementia project.
- Eureka Transition year students won the National Garda Youth Awards for their intergenerational project “Never Home Alone” which raises awareness about the impact of loneliness amongst older persons.
- Under the Keep Well campaign, Age Friendly co-ordinated in collaboration with the community guards the delivery of hampers and Christmas dinners to the most vulnerable and isolated older persons.

## 7.4 Comhairle na nÓg

The coordinator role for Meath Comhairle na nÓg, is the Youth Council for County Meath, Youth Work Ireland Meath. They have a service level agreement to co-ordinate the programme until end of 2020. The Comhairle committee continued meeting virtually during the pandemic and worked on their topic for 2018/2020, which was sexual health, body image and identity. The Comhairle were successful in securing funding in the amount of €2,717.97 for a laptop, printer and video equipment under the DCYA ICT grant. Their AGM was held virtually on 23<sup>rd</sup> October 2020 where 90 young people participated and some elected members. The Comhairle Showcase took place online on Saturday the 5<sup>th</sup> of December 2020 where all 31 Comhairlí showcased the work they completed in the past year.

## 7.5 Other Committees

### Joint Policing Committee (JPC)

The JPC and sub-groups met several times virtually and face to face adhering to Covid guidelines. The annual report 2019 was adopted in February by the committee. A Community CCTV policy was also adopted by the group where it was noted under the policy that a steering committee shall be established to oversee the management of CCTV systems in Co Meath. Due to Covid 19 restrictions the annual public meeting was cancelled.



### **Unity Centre, Windtown, Navan**

The Unity Centre provides a space for community activities as well as training and leisure activities. Due to the Covid-19 pandemic and resulting restrictions the centre closed a number of times throughout the year. In line with public health guidance the centre operated on a reduced capacity to continue to host several organisations and bookings including; the preschool, HSE, Prosper Meath, Praxis, Navan Schools Completion Service, Springboard Family Support, Comhairle na nÓg, Youth groups, Addiction support groups and Meath Partnership.

### **Meath Local Sports Partnership**

The Council continues to increase, year-on-year, its support for the local Sports Partnership, which works in partnership with the main sporting bodies. In parallel, the Council supports the engagement of development officers for the three main sporting bodies in the country.

### **Community Wellbeing initiative**

The Pride of Place initiative did not proceed in 2020 due to Covid 19 restrictions in place. A Community Wellbeing Initiative was rolled out instead for during the year. The purpose was to recognise the great work all groups have undertaken in direct response to supporting their communities during the Covid-19 crisis such as small-scale maintenance of planted areas in estates during the restrictions, keeping in contact with older persons, arranging delivery/collection of groceries for those in your estate/village/area. A virtual awards event took place in December where over 40 prizes were awarded.



**Community Wellbeing Initiative**

Prosper Meath Trim and Duleek Revival project were entered in the National Co-operation Ireland Awards. Judging took place with the groups through virtual interviews with a virtual awards event held in November.

## 7.6 Grant Schemes

The following grant schemes were processed in 2020:

- Covid 19 Government grant scheme phase 1 - €88,912 allocation to Meath. 32 applications awarded funding totalling €37,000 under the scheme with the remaining amount allocated towards Covid initiatives. Phase 2 of the scheme was launched at year end with a fund of €52,730.
- Community Grant Scheme 2020 - A total of 479 applications approved under the various categories with a total fund of €165,500 allocated.
- Carranstown Grant Scheme - 33 applications were approved with a total fund of €252,000.00 allocated.
- Knockharley Grant Scheme - Works continued at the Kentstown Village project with the walking track opening in late 2020 for the public to utilise.
- Regional Festivals and Participative Events, Small Grants Scheme 2020 - A fund of €11,000 was allocated for eligible applicants.

### The Community Amenity Project Scheme

The Community Amenity Scheme was available to new projects or refurbishment of existing facilities/amenities. There was an allocation of €100,000 per Municipal District, with a minimum grant application of €10,000 and the maximum of €100,000. No match funding was required for projects however the scheme was not intended to match fund or top-up other grant schemes. It was a requirement that all applicant groups must be registered with the PPN. 19 projects were recommended for approval for funding for 2020.

### Community Enhancement Programme

The scheme is administered by the LCDC under the remit of the Local Authority with an allocation of €62,883 under the normal scheme with flexibility to use this fund on COVID-19 related capital expenditure, where this is a priority. 47 grants were approved under the scheme.

A separate fund under this scheme was announced which provides capital grants towards improvement works to community centres and community buildings with Meath allocated €157,594. The LCDC approved 15 projects under the fund.



**Nobber Greenway – The funding for this project came from many funding schemes including Town & Village, Community Enhancement and ORIS schemes.**

### Healthy Ireland Fund Scheme 2019-2021

This fund is administered by the LCDC under the remit of the Local Authority. The fund runs over two years from 1st July 2019 to 30th June 2021 with 5 actions approved. Additional funding was awarded by the Department of Health for a Mental Health theme where 3 projects under this theme were approved. Projects are progressing albeit using new methods of delivery due to Covid 19 restrictions.

### Healthy Ireland - Keep Well Campaign

This campaign was launched by the Department of Health and is being coordinated at a local level by Meath County Council. The themes of the Keep Well Campaign are;

- Your County
- Switching Off/Being Creative
- Staying connected

An allocation of funding has been provided by the Department of Health in the amount of €107,560 through Healthy Ireland to help fund some local initiatives.

A new joint Healthy Ireland coordinator for Meath/Louth commenced work in late November and is working on initiatives under the Keep-Well campaign and the Healthy Ireland programme.

### Outdoor Recreation Infrastructure Scheme

The Outdoor Recreation Infrastructure Scheme (ORIS) provides funding under 3 separate measures. Three applications were successful under Measure 1 namely: Girley Bog Loop walk, Oldcastle cycling routes and Nobber Greenway Amenity park, total funding approved €49,565. The proposals submitted under Measure 2 and 3 have still to be announced.

### Town & Village Renewal Scheme

The department introduced 3 accelerated funding measures under the scheme due to Covid 19.

These measures are to assist communities with small capital works in order to continue with their activities due to Covid restrictions.

- Accelerated Measure 1, the following projects: Cormeen, Kells, Meath Hill and Moynalty were approved total funding €89,849.38.
- Accelerated Measure 2 saw Ballinabrackey/Castlejordan, Ardraccon, Gibbstown and Drumconrath receive approval totalling €105,714 in funding.
- Under Accelerated Measure 3, 6 applications were approved total funding of €210,000 for projects in Slane/Kells, Nobber, Donore/Duleek, 31 towns & villages App, Navan and Bettystown.

Under the standard Town & Village Scheme, the following four applications were successful, Nobber awarded a grant of €200k, Baltrasna awarded a grant of €100K, Stamullen awarded a grant of €100k, Kells awarded a grant of €100K.



## CLÁR 2020

Two applications were approved by the Department, namely €50k to Ballinacree Community Association and €30k to Kilskyre NS & Hurling Club.

## 7.7 Broadband

Work continued on the implementation of the National Broadband Plan and related initiatives in County Meath. The Council have secured support for the delivery of nine Broadband Connection Points in the County and sought approval for an additional five sites. Six of the approved sites Cormeen Sports Complex, Meath Hill GAA, Teach Raithneach, Castletown GAA, Meath GAA Centre of Excellence and Boardsmill GAA, Syddan GAA and Drumree GAA were activated in 2020 providing free public WIFI outdoors.

The Meath Digital Strategy Implementation Committee met and continue to implement the plan. SORD Data Systems won the tender to deliver the WIFI4EU Project in Meath. New connections and the equipment for the WIFI4EU initiative in Kells has been installed and are live. Due to COVID 19 the European Commission have granted an 8-month extension to the deadline for delivery of the programme with a review of the plans for delivery in other locations in Meath to take place.

## 7.8 Access Officer

The Access Officer works with Council departments and agencies to address any accessibility issues and promote awareness and the importance of accessibility. The main event held during the year included the launch of a video for "Make Way Day" on 25<sup>th</sup> September which is a National Public Awareness Campaign to highlight the issues people with disabilities face getting around their local communities. "*Hey, this blocks my way!*" was the message for 2020.

## 7.9 Joint Migrant Strategy 2019-2022

Meath and Louth County Councils completed a joint Migrant Integration Strategy. Projects identified for funding by both councils lead partners will link into the actions identified in the strategy. The joint strategy was launched by Minister Helen McEntee on October 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2020 in Kells where both Counties were in attendance. The inaugural meeting of the Joint Louth Meath Migrant Integration Forum took place virtually on 20<sup>th</sup> November to discuss the joint strategy and agree actions to progress in 2021. Funding was secured from the Department of Justice to roll out a number of actions over the next 3 years.



Minister McEntee launches Joint Migrant Strategy

## 7.10 Public Sector Duty

Section 42 of the Irish Human Rights & Equality Commission Act 2014 imposes a statutory obligation on public bodies to have regard to the need to:

- Eliminate discrimination
- Promote equality of opportunity and treatment for staff and persons to whom it provides services
- Protect the human rights of staff and service users.

The 2014 Act requires a public body to assess human rights and equality issues that is relevant to the functions of the organisation, address the issues by setting out what plans and policies already are in place or propose to put in place and report on developments and achievements in its annual report.

The implementation process commenced with a working group set up at the start of the year to assess human rights and equality issues. The working group continued its work by virtual workshops throughout the year. A workplan was finalised by year end to roll out to the organisation thereafter.

# Age Friendly Ireland

## 8.1 Age Friendly Ireland - Local Government Shared Service

The importance of the Age Friendly Programme was accentuated during 2020 because of the pandemic and the particular responses required to support older people during this time. Throughout all local authority areas, local Age Friendly Programmes were involved in the community response to the pandemic, providing direct supports to older people such as care boxes, information packs, and IT supports such as technology and training to help older people access meetings and services online. They supported the Community Call Helplines and linked older people into the range of other services available through the local authorities, such as Sports Partnership, libraries, arts and heritage programming. The Keep Well funding announced by government as part of their Living with Covid plan in October 2020 had a strong focus on Age Friendly initiatives, including befriending and information supports.



**Age Friendly Ireland and members of Older People's Councils supported the national Hold Firm campaign during 2020**

Age Friendly Ireland put out a daily Covid-19 newsletter to support older people in the community with up to date, positive information. This newsletter reached thousands of people during the pandemic and has been retained as a weekly electronic publication that can also be printed and distributed locally. The shared service also escalated policy issues from older people to national organisations for resolution.

Age Friendly Ireland compiled a national report on Age Friendly responses to Covid-19 documenting work across the local authority sector and other stakeholders. The shared service also supported a strong response from Ireland to an international survey on Covid-19 administered by the World Health Organization.

With restrictions on face to face meetings in place during the year, there was a marked emphasis in the AFI work programme on communicating with older people. Members of Older People's Councils were trained in Age Friendly Communication, and many members reached out to older people in their communities through radio shows, interviews and one to one phone calls.

New Age Friendly websites were developed for all local programme areas in 2020, linked to the national portal [www.agefriendlyireland.ie](http://www.agefriendlyireland.ie) and training was provided to programme staff to manage content.

### Staffing and Structures

The shared service staffing structure expanded during 2020 with additional administrative staff and a new Health and Wellbeing role. Following an evaluation of the pilot phase, funding was secured from the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage to place the six Regional Age Friendly Manager roles on a full-time basis. Collectively the shared service now consists of six core staff based in the shared service office, six Regional Programme Managers.

Two Principal Advisors in Housing and Public Realm & Age Friendly Business support the shared service on a contractual basis.

The shared service supports national networks including the National Network of Older People’s Councils, National Network of Programme Managers, National Network of Chairs of Alliances, National Network of Age Friendly Housing Advisors and the AFI NGO Forum.

There are 31 Age Friendly Programme Managers across the 31 local authorities, and 31 Age Friendly Housing Technical Specialists who are assigned to support Age Friendly Programming.



### Age Friendly Business

The Age Friendly Business Initiative accelerated during the year, with commitments from national chains to become age friendly businesses, such as Vodafone, Cara Pharmacy, The Delata Hotel Group, and FBD Insurance. The Age Friendly Business training was revamped, and the groundwork was prepared for local roll out of the programme. This programme provides training for businesses and supports them to better meet the needs of older customers.

### Age Friendly Housing and Public Realm

Housing and Public Realm training is delivered to local authorities every two years, and more recently to other stakeholders including voluntary housing providers and private sector bodies. Traditionally the training was delivered in person, but during 2020 a change management process was introduced to make the training available on online platforms. Professional recordings were made of inputs from the Principal Advisor on Housing, An Garda Síochana and the Centre for Excellence in Universal Design to be integrated to in person delivery in future.

AFI worked with the National Transport Authority, the National Disability Authority and An Taisce /Green Schools to develop a Universal design walkability tool, which was informed by the existing age friendly walkability tool. The new tool was piloted in Kilrush, County Clare and will be used in walkability audits in future.

### **Age Friendly Housing Advisors**

One of the significant milestones during the year was the launch of the Age Friendly Housing Advisors by Minister Peter Burke in December. These technical staff are assigned the role of Age Friendly Housing advisor to support local authorities in meeting the housing needs of our ageing population. They provide support internally to local authorities preparing housing for older people regarding design, location, and rightsizing and they support and advise older customers and private developers in relation to Age Friendly Housing. This initiative was developed in response to an action in the national policy Housing Options for our Ageing Population.



**Chief Executive Jackie Maguire, Minister Peter Burke TD and Chief Officer of the Age Friendly Shared Service Catherine McGuigan at the launch of the Age Friendly Housing Technical Advisors in 2020**

Other actions under the joint policy were progressed during the year, including the completion of research on older people's perceptions and experiences of rightsizing, the development of an Age Friendly Homes Rating Tool, a site selection tool for Age Friendly Housing developments and the development of Age Friendly Guidelines for Primary Care Centres.

### **Age Friendly Digital Library Ambassadors**

A new project was developed during the year which involves older people helping their friends and relatives to use online library services, especially relevant because of Covid-restrictions. One to one support was delivered remotely by older volunteers who were trained by Age Friendly Ireland and Libraries Ireland to help people use the Borrowbox app.

### **Health and Wellbeing Role**

A local Age Friendly Programme Manager was seconded into the shared service in 2020 with funding from the HSE to undertake a health and wellbeing role. A need was identified for the HSE to coordinate its health and wellbeing response in supporting older people during COVID-19. This work will involve reviewing initiatives, building on existing evidence-based programmes and advising on which ones should be supported and extended, locally and nationally.



### Research and Evaluation

A special workshop with NUI Maynooth and Age Friendly staff in November 2020 cemented an existing relationship and developed a proposal to jointly employ a Research Manager. This new role will commence in 2021 and will support research on Age Friendly issues across the university as well as enhancing the monitoring and evaluation role of the shared service.

### Other Supports

The shared service provides technical guidance and other resources to all 31 local Age Friendly Programmes, who work to develop Age Friendly Communities at local level. Typical initiatives include Age Friendly Walkability Audits, Age Friendly Parking, Age Friendly Housing, safety and security initiatives and ongoing consultation with older people at local level. Data returns at the end of 2020 showed that 74% of older people's Councils undertook computer skills training in 2020, and 46% did communications training. There are 29 Age Friendly Towns in the country, with a further 31 in process or planned. Fifty-three walkability audits have been carried out, and 189 Age Friendly Car Parking Spaces have been developed.

Age Friendly Ireland won the National Impact Award in February 2020 at the LAMA IPB All Ireland Community and Council Awards which took place in Croke Park Conference Centre. AFI was shortlisted for the EU Innovation in Politics Awards in 2020 for the Age Friendly Housing Advisors.



**Age Friendly Ireland Local Government Shared Service (Meath County Council) won the National Impact Award at the All Ireland Community and Council / IPB Insurance and Local Authority Members Association Awards in 2020.**

Age Friendly Ireland works closely with partners such as the HSE's Dementia: Understand Together Campaign, Safeguarding Ireland and the National Rural Safety Forum. As an affiliate member of the World Health Organization's global Age Friendly network, Age friendly Ireland continues to work with international partnership to share knowledge and learn from good practice.

# Library Services

## 9.1 Achievements in 2020

Nobber library re-opened after being reconfigured and extended by Facilities Management allowing access to new services, meeting room and welfare facilities. The total cost of the project was €360,000 with the Department of DRCD contributing 50% of the funding. The DRCD contribution was in respect of the 'My Open Library' works and the introduction of the 'Magic Table'.



**Refurbished library in Nobber**

Completed the installation of 'My Open Library' technology at Kells, Nobber and Slane. Funding was secured from the Department of DRCD for the installation of the new service at all three branches.

Oldcastle library was upgraded with funding secured from the Small-Scale Capital Works scheme in the Department of DRCD and a contribution from Oldcastle Credit Union. The fabric of the building was upgraded with the heating system replaced, new insulation and repairs to windows also completed. The branch was redecorated with new services introduced and upgraded public meeting facilities included the addition of kitchen facilities.



**Oldcastle Library**

- Secured funding from the DRCD Small Scale Capital Grants scheme to upgrade the heating and ventilation system in Ashbourne library.
- Established an alternative facility for Trim library to cover the duration of works on the new Library and Cultural Centre.
- Contributed to the design of the new Bettystown library and community facility.
- Delivered the 2020 annual plan for **Creative Ireland** in partnership with national, local and community stakeholders.
- Devised and delivered **Cruinniú na nÓg** on the 13<sup>th</sup> of June in partnership with national, local and community stakeholders. The programme was delivered fully online through a dedicated Meath Cruinniú na nÓg YouTube channel in partnership with the arts office. The programme was a major success with total views of 1541 with a watch time of 75.3 hours.
- Decade of Centenaries – published ‘*Trim, September 1920*’ to mark the centenary of the tumultuous events that occurred in the town of Trim a century ago.
- Supported Hinterland to deliver the Hindsight history festival. The festival was delivered fully online in March 2020.
- Completed the roll-out of Magic Tables/Tovertafels to eleven of the twelve libraries in the county with installation in Duleek library scheduled as part of wider works in early 2021.
- Secured funding to deliver a range of new Sensory facilities. Sensory Pods were installed in Ashbourne and Oldcastle libraries. Sensory walls will be introduced at a number of branch libraries. All libraries will receive Sensory pop-up facilities and a range of sensory toys.
- The Traveller Genealogy project funded under the Dormant Accounts Fund in 2019 was shortlisted for a Chambers Ireland Award.
- Funding has been secured under the Dormant Accounts Fund 2020 to provide online access to literacy supports for a thousand users. Library users will enjoy access to the software TTRS – Touch, Type, Read, Spell.
- Delivered a range of online events under the **Healthy Ireland @your library** initiative.
- Supported the delivery of the Ashbourne 2020 programme including the publication of the commemorative volume ‘*Ashbourne; Landscape, Lives and Lore*’
- The annual **Children’s Book Festival** in October went fully online for the first time. Thirty five videos of author readings were programmed enabling thousands of children access to events through their local schools.
- 737 children participated in the annual Summer Reading Challenge despite the restricted access to branches with lending services only operating on a ‘Contact and Collect’ basis.
- Annual ‘Summer Programme’- 48 videos from 11 external facilitators achieved 692 views.
- Received the ‘Right to Read’ award from the LGMA.
- Secured funding from Facebook Community Action grant scheme to deliver STEAM events for adults and families.
- Introduced lending scheme for ‘Home Energy Saving Kits’ in partnership with the climate action team.

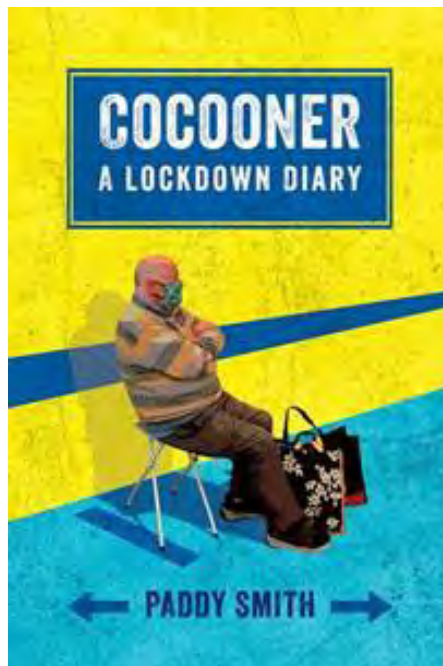
### Covid -19 – Response

- Promoted online offering, eBooks, eMagazines and eLearning
- Created new online content via online story times etc.
- Programming successfully switched online – Cruinniú na nÓg, Summer Stars, Children’s Book Festival
- 8,500 views of our YouTube videos ranging from STEAM experiments to author workshops to parenting talks.
- Staff re-purposed the 3D digital printer to make face shields as part of a national initiative.



**Mark McLoughlin, librarian with the masks he made from the library 3D printer**

- Housebound service piloted in Kells and Trim.
- Online services promoted with 20% of our September loans accounted for by e-issues.
- Secured funding of €809,000 from Facebook to deliver an innovative 'Laptop for Loan' scheme to second-level students. 900+ laptops are on loan to date and the take-up from schools is very high. A community strand for the scheme is currently being developed.
- Navan was the first branch in the country to re-open for browsing. This was achieved with the support of Facilities Management, Human Resources and Health & Safety.
- 100% of our branches re-opened on full hours compared to 71% nationally and all branches offered internet and photocopying services. Branches remained on full hours during the Level 3 restrictions with services delivered via the 'Contact and Collect' model.
- Awarded funding from Creative Ireland under the Positive Ageing initiative to publish '*Cocooner: A Lockdown Diary*' by Trim native Paddy Smith.



**Cocooner Publication**

- Awarded funding by Healthy Ireland to introduce a new library APP which will enable users to interact with the service and reduce the amount of contact with library equipment.

# Arts Office

## 10.1 Overview

The Meath County Council Arts mission statement as per the County Arts Development Plan 2019 – 2024 is:

*To work closely with artists, individuals and communities to increase access to, awareness of and participation in the arts across all disciplines and sectors of society. To act as a facilitator for arts organisations and play a major role in the development of good practice for the county. To provide opportunities across disciplines intended to support the Local Authority policy of supporting quality artistic endeavour, provision of employment opportunities for artists and long-term sustainability and durability for the arts in the county.*

In implementing key aims and objectives as per the County Arts Development Plan, in 2020 the Arts Office had to adapt and respond to the circumstances presented by Covid 19. In doing so it adopted a proactive approach in reimagining the 2020 Arts programme and engaged with creative partners, artists, groups, organisations and the greater creative community. It has also engaged with the Dept of Culture, *Heritage and the Gaeltacht* the Arts Council and Creative Ireland in Covid 19 Response development.

## 10.2 Arts Programme highlights 2020



Lisa Lambe, *In The Middle of The Fields*, an evening in celebration of the works of Mary Lavin curated by Deirdre Kinahan – January 2020

- Mary Lavin Season events** Delivery of 'In The Middle of the Fields' Mary Lavin new music and literature commission and performance programme January 2020 with sell out performances in Kells and Dublin. Artists included award winning playwright Deirdre Kinahan, bestselling author Sinead Moriarty, musicians Steve Wickham, Lisa Lambe, Michael Brunnock and Saramai Leech.



**Deirdre Kinahan, award winning playwright & Meath Arts Office Associate Artist. In The Middle of The Fields, an evening in celebration of the works of Mary Lavin.**

**Re-imagining of Arts Office programme in response to Covid 19:** New Arts Office online programme devised. Events included:

**Theatre Tuesday** Award-winning playwright and MCC Associate Artist Deirdre Kinahan commissioned to record a series of readings from a selection of her works.

**Ceol Comfort** A new music series featuring the music of artists who have or are currently supported by the Arts Office through our various programmes. Featuring works by Perlee with a song from their recently released debut EP *Slow Creatures* and video made by Kells natives filmmakers Mark Smyth & Jass Foley in and around Kells. *The Landing* by Michael Brunnock, musician, video filmed by Mark Smyth in and around north Meath. Other commissions and musicians include Caitlín Nic Gabhann Concertina, Bernadette Nic Gabhann Fiddle and Brenda Castles Concertina (winner of the 20/21 MCC Arts Office/Centre Cultural Irlandais Paris International Residency Award) Antóin MacGabhann and the Michael Fortune/Aileen Lambert *Songs for Our Children* Song Project.

**Toradh Thursday** Toradh Gallery Ashbourne and Toradh2 Kells visual arts exhibitions moved online with eight exhibitions facilitated.



Toradh Gallery Kells Type Trail online exhibition

**The Co Club short film collaboration** Featuring works by Sean Ruane poet, Kyle Riley musician, Gillian Tuite singer/songwriter and artists profile Ann Meldon Hugh, sculptor.

The above initiatives were intended to provide alternative means of supporting those artists and creatives who saw their work, performances and engagements cancelled or postponed for the foreseeable future, whilst providing greater access to the wider community to quality creative and cultural experiences. All the artists under the initiatives above were paid a fee for their work or for rights to broadcast. Viewing figures for this initiative very strong (70,000 views t.d.) with very positive public response. The Arts Office also contributed to the local and national *In This Together, Minding your Mood, Keep Well; Healthy Ireland* and *To Be Irish @ Christmas* Covid Response initiatives.

**To Be Irish @ Christmas**

As part of the national **To Be Irish...** campaign the Arts Office presented 2 new film projects '**Hoor**' and '**The Christmas Parcel**' in December 2020.



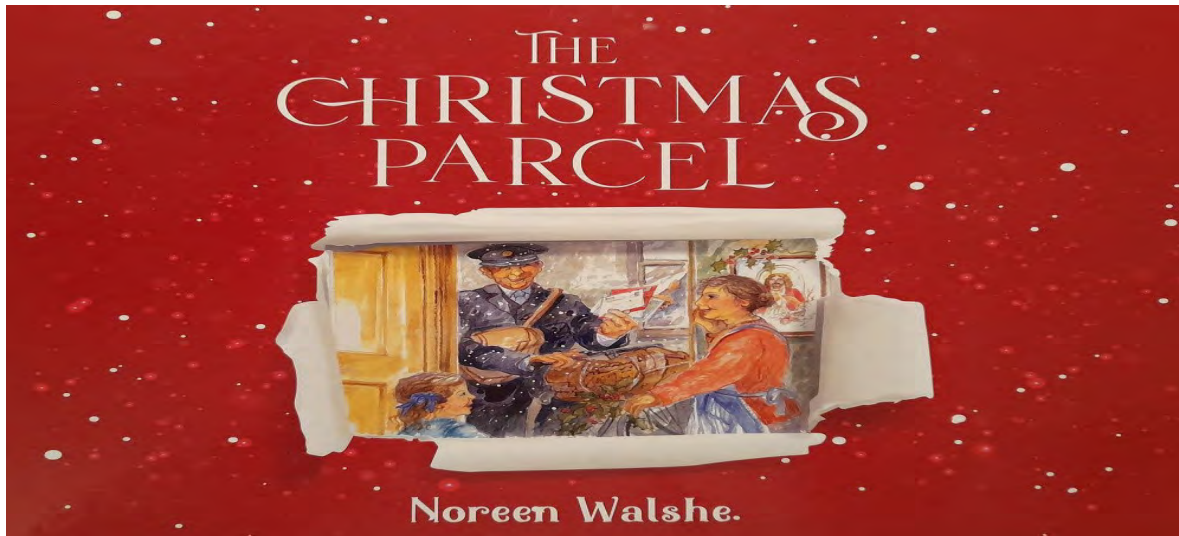
Illustration *The Widow Walsh* by Ann Kiernan ©

**‘Hoor’ by Jim McElroy, illustrations by Ann Kieran.**

**Hoor** was a text and image commission that combined poetry with visual art, bringing together the work of two award-winning Irish artists: Francis Ledwidge Award winning poet Jim McElroy and Meath born, Berlin based illustrator Ann Kiernan; winner of the Moira Gemmill Illustrator of the Year .

**The Christmas Parcel – by Noreen Walsh**

A collection of short films adapting the illustrated book: *The Christmas Parcel*, written & illustrated by Meath artist Noreen Walshe. Featuring memories painted in words and images, the charming series beautifully evokes a little girl’s world at Christmas time in Limerick in the 1950s.



**Meath Artists Meet Up**

MAMU initiative introduced by Arts Office for independent artists in Meath to meet other artists, theatre makers, dancers, writers, producers, freelancers etc in an informal setting over a cup of tea/coffee. The first meeting took place in the Courthouse Cultural Hub, Kells in February with further meetings scheduled every six weeks. 30 professional artists attended the first meeting. As in-person meetings had to be cancelled due to Covid, an online mentoring programme was agreed with MAMU facilitator Aisling O’Brien and rolled out over the summer/autumn with strong participant engagement. A new MAMU newsletter was also introduced keeping participants up to date on developments and initiatives.



**Meath Arts Meet Up professional artists network event**



### Sightless Cinema - White Cane Audio Theatre

During lockdown the Arts Office supported White Cane Audio Theatre in the delivery of a pilot series of 6 weekly 'Sightless Cinema' radio drama devising online workshops with blind and visually impaired people in co-operation with the National Council for the Blind of Ireland Navan office.

### FÉACH training

The **FÉACH Training Notes Programme – Music in a Healthcare Setting**, delivered by Kids Classics through our healthcare partners Beaufort Nursing Home, Navan and St Joseph's Nursing Home Trim, was reimagined to present an online version. An online mentorship and CPD programme agreed with Kids Classics to enable the apprentices complete training.

### Act Out Youth Theatre

Detailed action plan devised by AOYT to allow alternative delivery of their programmes. This plan was drawn up in consultation with Youth Theatre Ireland. The Navan AOYT Branch – junior and senior is thriving. A new branch was launched in Dunshaughlin in February (as per County Arts Plan Strategic Priority 3, Action 7) and both junior and senior are at capacity.

### Festival Support

We worked with our Creative partners Hinterland Festival, Guth Gafa International Documentary Film Festival & Type Trail in supporting alternative programme delivery due to Covid 19. This included Hinterland online, Type Trail creation and installation of work and the development of a new Type Trail website.

### Music Generation Meath

Ongoing liaison with and support of Music Generation Meath.

### Cruinniú na nÓg 2020

Delivered in partnership with County Library Services, we successfully moved the 2020 programme online with over 40+ events taking place for children and young people 2 – 18yrs. The programme encompassed a wide range of activities and disciplines – Arts, Heritage & STEM - and contained a balance of passive and interactive events. Some events took place on the day only, others had a workshop/engagement element running over a six-week Cruinniú lead in time. The newly established dedicated Cruinniú na nÓg Meath YouTube channel received 1541 views with a total view time of 75.3 hours between June 12<sup>th</sup> – 14<sup>th</sup>.



### Meath Cruinniú na nÓg 2020 EVENTS PROGRAMME

**Cruinniú na nÓg 2020, Ireland's national day of free creative activities for children and young people takes place on Saturday June 13th.** Meath County Council Arts Office & Library Services, supported by the Meath Creative Ireland Programme, have put together an exciting range of activities for children, young people and their families to get involved in. All events are fun, free and creative and available online so you can enjoy and take part from the comfort of your own home!

Full details available on MCC Facebook & Twitter, and at [www.meath.ie/events](http://www.meath.ie/events) <https://cruinniú.creativeireland.gov.ie/> and a dedicated Meath Cruinniú na nÓg YouTube channel



### Kells Creative Placemaking

Works as funded under the RRDF programme continued in line with public health guidelines and restrictions. Restoration of printing presses progressed in 2020.

### Creative Ireland

Continued implementation of the Creative Ireland Meath Five Year Strategy in collaboration with Cultural Services Team.

**Meath County Council Art Collection** Acquisition of the Thomas Ryan PRHA, Ashbourne series of artworks.

## 10.3 Arts Grants, Awards & Bursaries Schemes



- **MCC Francis Ledwidge Poetry Award 2020** Launched on April 30<sup>th</sup> – National Poetry Day. The *Meath County Council Francis Ledwidge Poetry Award* promotes the conception of new works, the completion of ongoing projects and the regeneration of creative thinking through the provision of a creative residency and financial reward. The winner of this award in 2020 was Belfast poet Jim McElroy.
- **Meath Arts Office/ Words Ireland Mentorship Award** a new Words Ireland Meath Mentorship Award supporting new, emerging or recently published writers in Meath.
- **Arts Grants, Awards and Bursaries Schemes** Applications under the Annual Arts Grants; Community Arts Awards; Professional Artists Development Fund; Tyrone Guthrie Centre Regional Bursary Award, Festival Grant Scheme and Schools Musical Instrument Purchase Scheme (SMIPS) assessed and processed with additional funding support from Creative Ireland. 55 Awards were made supporting the work and practice of 60+ professional artists in the county. 16 Awards made under the SMIPS enabling schools creatively adapt existing music programmes and establish new structures to facilitate practical music engagement safely within the school environment.

### Meath County Council Arts Grants, Awards & Bursaries Schemes 2020



- **55** Arts Grants Awards made
- **60+** artists supported
- **16** Schools supported under the Schools Musical Instrument Purchase Scheme
- **1900+** primary & secondary school children benefit from SMIPS programme

# LEO and Economic Development

## 11.1 LEO

The Local Enterprise Office (LEO) continues to be the First Stop Shop for businesses in County Meath and has been widely promoted as such by the Government on TV and radio. The economy has suffered a severe shock in 2020 with the advent of Covid 19 and the LEO is at the forefront of the response to the small business community during this crisis. In extraordinary circumstances the LEO is delivering a suite of supports which will be critical to ensuring the survival of many small local businesses.

To respond to the crisis, several new business support schemes have been rolled out in a very short time frame. The staff of the LEO - with the very welcome additional resources temporarily assigned by Meath Local Authority – have ensured that these supports are made available in a timely manner to the business community in County Meath.

The headline comparison between 2019 and 2020 shows the enormous growth in grant and training support delivered. In all of 2019 grants totalling €575k were awarded by the LEO, while in the ‘Covid’ year of 2020 over 1000 grants totalling over €2M were awarded to Meath companies. Comparing training, more companies have availed of specialised training during the Covid period as did during all of 2019. The LEO team during this period also moved all training on-line – a first for LEO Meath.

Some details of the business support delivered during this period include:

- Feasibility, priming and Expansion Grants. These continue to be processed in the normal way. Approximately €500k has been awarded under these schemes. The LEO has noticed a marked increase in uptake for start-up grants.
- Business Continuity Vouchers. These vouchers were introduced to assist companies access specialised support to re-imagine and restructure their business. They are worth €2500 each. The LEO has processed 576 applications with 481 being awarded to a value of €1.14m.
- TOVs (Trading on-line vouchers). These are available to companies who wish to trade on-line. It pays for the development of websites and e-commerce solutions. The LEO has processed 664 applications with a value in excess of €1m.





**An Cathaoirleach David Gilroy, Minister Damien English, Chief Executive Jackie Maguire and staff from the Local Enterprise Office and Enterprise Ireland are joined by local company Interactive Displays at the launch of the national 'Look for Local' campaign to highlight local businesses when shopping on-line.**

- Training: The LEO has moved all training and mentoring on-line or virtual. Over 2,500 companies have availed of these services, along with a constant stream of one-to-one business advice sessions.
- New training courses have been developed and released in the following areas:
  - Managing through the COVID Emergency
  - Business through Zoom
  - BREXIT – Export opportunities
  - Resilience and Positivity
  - Preparing a brief for web developers
  - Specific service sector business focus
  - Book-keeping & Sage
  - Food-Academy
- The LEO continues to act as a signpost and strategic resource to companies wishing to avail of the various other supports that are administered by other organisations – Restart Grants, COVID loan schemes etc.

## 11.2 Economic Development

The Economic Development team continues to support the wider business community in Co. Meath. The flagship programme for 2020 was “The Shop Front Scheme’ launched in October 2020 as a direct assistance to retailers and business’ affected by Covid 19 closures, to provide financial assistance when carrying out any improvements to the front façade of the premises. This funding is being provided from Economic Development, “Make It Meath” fund, in recognition of the fact that a building’s facade makes a big impact on our town centres. They help form people’s first impressions of a shop & the town centres they occupy, so their condition can really have an impact of a town’s image.

Smart shop fronts will make a town feel more prosperous, improve its image and contribute towards a stronger sense of identity and pride within our centres.

The Scheme has attracted 50 applications to date with hugely positive feedback and praise being received from applicants who are otherwise struggling during these difficult times for independent businesses.

## 11.3 Tourism

### Boyne Valley Flavours

Boyne Valley Flavours initially began when a group of passionate food producers and hospitality providers came together to support and promote the local food offering across the region. Since then the movement has grown significantly and in 2013 the Boyne Valley Food Series was born, a unique calendar of events which celebrates our land, our heritage, our people and of course of produce, which helped cement the region as a leading player on the national food stage. This new milestone in food tourism in the Boyne Valley saw the network work together to deliver authentic culinary food experiences to all, embracing the marriage between the landscape and the flavours produced in the region.

Boyne Valley Flavours now encompasses much more than the Boyne Valley Food Series. In 2016 a Boyne Valley Food Strategy was devised, a collaboration between both Meath and Louth County Councils, to help support all existing initiatives and introduce new innovative aspects, which have been structured, as part of a road map and will help guide all stakeholders in a focused direction. While the strategy sits under the Boyne Valley banner, it has been written with all parts of both counties in mind, on the basis that the tourist or consumer does not necessarily recognise geographic boundaries. Following the successful launch of the strategy and the interest in food in the region growing a new brand was devised, “Discover Boyne Valley Flavours” so that all stakeholders could work together under the one brand. A Food Network was set up, made up of passionate food & drink producers, foodservice providers and food experiences / tourism activities who work together to build and promote the Boyne Valley region as a “Foodie Destination”. This initiative continues to grow and grow.

Discover Boyne Valley Flavours is a Food Network with members from across counties Louth & Meath who are passionate about telling our local Food Provenance story. This new brochure is packed with information about our amazing members from local Producers, Foodie Experiences, Restaurants/Cafés who support local producers and Accommodation Providers to help you plan your Gastronomic Adventure in the Boyne Valley.

# PLAN YOUR GASTRONOMIC ADVENTURE

Discover all the wonderful Flavours of the Boyne Valley by using our beautiful map as a guide to help plan your visit.

### PLACES TO EAT

- 01 Anna Coffee
- 02 Babalicious
- 03 Brabazon at Tenbrathstown House
- 04 Bridge Restaurants at Newgrange Hotel
- 05 Carlingford Arms Restaurant
- 06 Carls by Slane
- 07 Five Good Things Cafe
- 08 Garden House Restaurant & Museum's Bar at Slane Castle
- 09 Harvest House Bakery
- 10 Mac Nanny's Tearoom
- 11 Last Beachside Restaurant at the Mill Inn
- 12 Scholara Restaurant & Gastro Lounge
- 13 Simple Harvest Cafe
- 14 The Arkway
- 15 The Beehive
- 16 The Castle Arch
- 17 The Central Mason
- 18 The Cross House
- 19 The Duckley Hotel Restaurant
- 20 The Mountcharnock Inn
- 21 The Square Dog
- 22 The Square Dunsink
- 23 Vanilla Pod at the Headfort Hotel
- 24 The Smugglers Rest

### PLACES TO STAY

- 25 An Grange
- 26 Carlingford Arms Hotel
- 27 Hideaway at Fox Hollows
- 28 Arklow Holiday Homes
- 29 Newgrange Hotel
- 30 Scholara Townhouse
- 31 Tenbrathstown House
- 32 Tenbrath Country House B&B
- 33 The Ardarae Hotel
- 34 The Castle Arch Hotel
- 35 The Cottage Ireland
- 36 The Nettle Inn
- 37 The Headfort Arms Hotel
- 38 Rack Farm Sleepings

### LANDMARKS

- 39 Slane Castle
- 40 Hill of Tara
- 41 Loughmeane Cross
- 42 Kells High Crosses
- 43 Woodfinn Millway
- 44 Stone Circle
- 45 St. Laurence's Stone
- 46 King John's Castle
- 47 Fuchsia's Castle
- 48 Slane Castle
- 49 Slane Castle

### FOOD EXPERIENCE

- 49 All-Right Pumpkin
- 50 An Grange Cookery School
- 51 Bee Wine Tours
- 52 Carlingford Oyster Experience
- 53 East Coast Cookery School
- 54 Farm & Food Experience at Slane Farm
- 55 The Other Mill
- 56 Ireland's Ancient East Organic Farm Tour at Rack Farm Slane
- 57 Atlas Estate
- 58 Farm Tours Ireland
- 59 Loughmeade School
- 60 Market at Rack Farm Slane
- 61 Merry Mill
- 62 Meet the Cheek Maker
- 63 New Barn Farm
- 64 Rashed Graham
- 65 Shallemore Organic Farm
- 66 Skelton's Local Market & Coffee Shop
- 67 Slane Food & Wine Experience
- 68 Slane Whiskey Distillery Tour
- 69 The Wolf's Head
- 70 The Cottage Market Drogheda
- 71 Viking VR & Seafood Experience
- 72 24 Mile Coffee House
- 73 Ugly & Madam Wine & Cheese

### PRODUCERS

- 74 A Bit on the Side
- 75 Anna Coffee Roasters
- 76 Babalicious
- 77 Ballymanning Farm
- 78 Bee Wine
- 79 Bee Yields
- 80 Birkdale Farm
- 81 Broom Distillery
- 82 Broom Distillery
- 83 Broom Distillery
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### DUBLIN

All businesses listed are proud members and supporters of Discover Boyne Valley Flavours. Find Itineraries & Routes on our website [www.boynevalleyflavours.ie](http://www.boynevalleyflavours.ie)

- 100 Anna Coffee
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## Boyne Valley Tourism Strategy 2016-2020

The 5-year Boyne Valley Tourism Strategy is in its final year. With the plan almost complete, the Covid 19 pandemic hit and has been strongly felt by the tourism industry. Due to this, an interim marketing plan was devised to focus on short term measures to support the tourism industry through marketing activity, while adhering to the latest government advice in relation to restrictions.

### Marketing and Promotion

In the early part of 2020, Boyne Valley Tourism promoted Meath at CMT Stuttgart, Belfast and Dublin Holiday World Shows. Attendance at the Incoming Tour Operator workshops provided an opportunity for the Tourism Officer to meet travel buyers. However, from mid-March onwards, all international travel ceased due to the pandemic and Boyne Valley Tourism pivoted its plans to supporting local tourism businesses to survive through destination marketing by targeting domestic and Northern Ireland markets. During the Summer 'The Escape to the Boyne Valley' campaign in conjunction with Boyne Valley Flavours involved competitions promoting itineraries to inspire travel to the Boyne Valley, while radio advertising on 2FM supplemented the campaign message. Social Media Influencer Janet Newenham with 100k followers was invited to visit and produced a video and blog articles on the Boyne Valley. New town brochures were supported for Trim and Kells.

Meath County Council supported the filming of *Ireland in Music* which captured some of the country's top musicians performing at Ireland's most spectacular locations. It included footage of Kila at Newgrange and The Stunning at Trim Castle and was aired on RTÉ in December. It will be broadcast on 30 US channels and 10 European channels over the coming year, highlighting Meath to an international audience.

### Boyne Valley Tourism Recovery Taskforce

Meath County Council is a stakeholder on the Taskforce led by Fáilte Ireland which has been meeting virtually on a monthly basis throughout the Pandemic. Leading the Marketing subgroup, Boyne Valley Tourism Officer drafted a marketing plan with Fáilte Ireland and their mentor team to aid recovery in the destination. The result was the Rediscover the Boyne Valley Campaign which ran over 7 weeks and had a reach of 350,000 through itineraries and social media advertising.

### Business Supports

Tourism businesses were supported throughout the lockdown with virtual communication emails and collaborative meetings. Boyne Valley Tourism identified a need for new evening entertainment product and Evening Economy workshops were held in January across Trim and Drogheda. This will be revisited once businesses can begin a recovery. A networking event was held in March attracting over 40 businesses to engage in a workshop.



Boyne Valley Tourism Industry Networking Session



An Cathaoirleach David Gilroy

### Royal Canal Greenway

Meath County Council is committed to working with Waterways Ireland and the three Local Authorities along the new Royal Canal Greenway to create a world class Greenway offering and raise awareness through a launch and marketing campaign. Signage and ancillary infrastructure along the Royal Canal Greenway were completed during 2020 by Transportation while the tourism section completed mapboards and storyboards along the Meath stretch. New signage and picnic areas will be installed to complete the longest off-road greenway in Ireland with 130kms passing through Enfield, Longwood and Hill of Down. The launch will take place in March 2021.



**Royal Canal Greenway – Boyne Aqueduct**



**Royal Canal Greenway – Hill of Down**

### Púca Halloween Festival

A virtual festival took place and a new film was released on 31<sup>st</sup> October. A PR push was undertaken across 13 markets Germany, France, Italy, Belgium, Netherlands, Nordics, Austria, Switzerland, US, Canada & GB through a virtual event of local Boyne Valley food producers.



# Water Services

## 12.1 Overview

In 2020, Meath County Council completed the 7th year of the 12 year Service Level Agreement (SLA) with Irish Water, under which the Council continued to provide reliable, high quality water supplies and wastewater collection and treatment services to the majority of residents, businesses and institutions throughout the county.

Under the Service Level Agreement, Meath County Council continued to operate and maintain all water services facilities and networks within County Meath and to project manage capital programmes on behalf of Irish Water. In this capacity, throughout 2020 the Council continued to play a critical role in the provision of essential Water and Wastewater Services to existing residents and businesses, whilst also planning and delivering further major capital upgrading, to facilitate the continued planned economic and residential development and growth of county Meath.

**Drinking Water Supply and Conservation:** In 2020, over 45 million litres of drinking water was produced by the Council daily at 64 treatment plants across the county and distributed to customers through a network of over 2,000 km of watermains. All water was produced to EU Drinking Water Regulation Standards with annual compliance consistently in excess of 99%. Modern, state-of-the-art mechanical, electrical and computer systems in place throughout the County monitored and measured water quality and quantity 24/7, with data transmitted wirelessly back to the Council on an ongoing basis. The quality of water in the networks was also manually tested by the Council daily, in order to ensure consistent quality.

Water Conservation is key to the sustainable use of drinking water and to the reliability and level of service provided to users. Throughout 2020 the Council continued to proactively identify and fix leaks on the network, with over 750 leaks repaired and several Km's of troublesome water main replaced reducing burst frequency and associated disruptions to supply.

**Wastewater:** Wastewater from residents and businesses throughout Meath was collected via a network of more than 1,000 km and processed at over 40 treatment plants operated and maintained by the Council across the County. Treated water was discharged back to the environment in compliance with EPA required standards. In 2020, all wastewater treatment plants in Meath were consistently compliant with the Urban Wastewater Treatment Directive standards.

**Capital Development:** During 2020, the Council project managed and delivered a number of major Water Services capital projects, including;

- Navan Trunk water main replacement.
- Ashbourne Trunk water main replacement Phases 1 & 2.
- Water mains rehabilitation at several locations countywide.
- Trim and Kells Waste Water Treatment Plants – aeration upgrades.
- Disinfection Programme upgrades at several Water Treatment Plants countywide.

This, coupled with the Council's on-going commitment to water conservation and continued close engagement with Irish Water to secure further capital investment for critical Water Services infrastructure, will serve to facilitate the planned development and growth of Meath going forward.

**Meath County Council as WSA:** Irish Water does not have responsibility for storm water, storm flooding, group schemes, Private Regulated Water Supplies, well grants or lead piping replacement grants, hence, the Council continues to have direct responsibility for these matters. Meath County Council remains the Water Services Authority for Private Regulated Water Supplies (ie private Group Water Schemes, Hotels with own wells, premises serving the public with own wells, etc) and yearly performance is measured by NOAC (National Oversight and Audit Committee). There are almost 200 Private Regulated Water Supplies in Meath which are monitored by the Water Services Department. In 2020 overall compliance for these supplies in Meath was 98%.

**Financial:** The Council's 2020 Budget made provision for Water Services staff payroll, directly incurred costs and a representative proportion of the Central Management Charge, which were recouped on a monthly basis from Irish Water during the year.

Irish Water budgeted directly for the provision of the goods and services (including Energy) associated with the provision of Water Services. Irish Water is regulated by the CRU (Commission for the Regulation of Utilities) to ensure that Customer service, Budget and Efficiency Targets are being met.

**The Council progressed the planning and construction of several other major projects in 2020, including:**

- Liscarton Water Treatment Plant upgrade.
- Navan & Mid Meath / East Meath Water Supply Scheme.
- Windmill Hill Reservoir expansion and Trunk main to Ratoath replacement.
- Ashbourne Trunk main replacement – Phases 3 & 4.
- Trim Water Treatment Plant Upgrade.
- Drumconrath Water Supply – new source development.
- Stamullen Sewerage Scheme.
- Enfield Waste Water Treatment Plant Expansion.
- Navan Waste Water Treatment Plant Expansion.



**Upgrade works at Liscarton Water Treatment Plant , Navan.**

# Finance

## 13.1 Overview

The first quarter of 2020 saw the Finance section prepare and complete the 2019 Annual Financial Statement, issue the 2020 rates demands and continue day to day work in our accounts payable, procurement, rents, loans and NPPR sections.

In March the impact of COVID-19 altered the focus of the finance teams as we responded to the various government schemes and incentives aimed at supporting the business community, individuals and the wider community during the global pandemic. These supports include the six- and three-month commercial rates waiver, the various Business Restart Grant schemes, mortgage repayment breaks, rent adjustments.

As well as processing and implementing the above measures the Finance Department continued to focus its efforts on effective expenditure controls with the overall objective of ensuring that the Council operates within its allocated Budget.

### Commercial Rates

- The global pandemic and the associated public health measures have presented immediate and severe financial challenges for the business community as they deal with the economic impact and restrictions on their business activities.
- The six-month **commercial rates waiver** announced by Government in July and the additional 3-month waiver provided for in the October budget were very much welcomed by both business and the Council. Through the rates waiver schemes Meath County Council have supported 3,628 businesses and waived rates to the value of €17.6m.

### Business Restart Grant

Businesses in Meath have also been supported through the various **Business Restart Grant Schemes**. To date Meath has processed and paid €17.9m under the Restart Grant schemes.

### Rents

Bi-annual statements are issued to all tenants. This enables tenants to monitor and confirm their payments. To date approximately 235 tenants contacted the rents section regarding a change in their circumstances due to COVID-19. Tenants continue to submit rent review forms and assessments are ongoing for tenants with changing circumstances.

### Loans

The global pandemic has greatly impacted our loans section with the number of new loans issued significantly down on last year. The Loans team has been very proactive engaging with customers and dealing with enquiries and adjustments to loan account repayments as mortgage holders avail of the 3 month, 6 month and 9 month repayment breaks.

### NPPR

Despite Covid-19 the housing market remained quite buoyant during 2020 with Meath County Council receiving 1,550 requests for compliance and exemption certificates.

### **Accounts Payable**

- Accounts payable processed and paid €199m in the 12 months ended 6<sup>th</sup> November 2020.
- In 2019 a new Purchase to Pay Policy was adopted and implemented to further improve the supplier payment process
- Regular monitoring and reporting along with continuous business process improvements have resulted in increased efficiencies and prompt payment with 99% of invoices paid within 15 days

### **Procurement**

- The Procurement Department continues to support, promote and guide the Corporate body in all aspects relating to Procurement.
- Procurement actively manage many central contracts and provide administration support for systems such as SupplyGov and e-Tenders
- Procurement are an integral part of the purchase to pay cycle, providing a management overview function for all procurement related acquisitions.
- Lighthouse card system was introduced by Procurement to manage the LVP Cards for the organisation which allows for a live integration with Agresso MS4.

### **Key Objective**

The significant issues of increased COVID costs and loss of income from rates and goods & services will continue to have an impact on our revenue account during 2021. Budgetary control will continue to be the key objective for the Finance section as Meath County Council strives to maintain a sustainable rate base while also providing the current level of essential services into 2021 and beyond.

# Human Resources

## 14.1 Achievements in 2020

The HR department commenced the year with a detailed work programme to include the implementation of a number of initiatives outlined in the HR People Strategy for Meath County Council including: the continued development of workforce planning, identifying emerging requirements and continued focus on recruitment, selection and retention of staff with a particular focus on marketing Meath County Council as an employer of choice; a renewed focus on staff learning and development and the promotion of a culture of Continuous Professional Development; a continued focus on staff wellbeing and engagement, and; a continued support to line managers.

However, the impact of COVID-19 put planned activities on-hold as it required immediate and sustained response by the HR department to support the organisation in implementing measures to ensure continued delivery of essential services following government restrictions from March 2020. The HR department adapted quickly in response to these immediate requirements placed on the organisation and our staff in particular. This included responding to the significant HR issues arising from the removal of each phase of restrictions and the ongoing change to the operating environment which currently exists as restrictions were reintroduced.

### **Covid 19 Pandemic Response**

The focus for HR during the response to Covid-19 included the following examples:

- Development and management of communication methods including (a) updating the text-alert system, (b) further roll-out of the MCC Connect App, (c) correspondence to staff in relation to returning to the workplace, and (d) managing the phone line to support staff during the period of restrictions.
- Providing advice and guidance to staff in relation to the public health advice on Covid-19 and the impact on the workplace and on individual staff.
- Supporting staff in the high-risk category and liaising with line managers.
- Collaborating with the IT department to support the roll-out of remote access for staff.
- Reviewing Time & Attendance rosters for all staff due to the impact of the restrictions.
- Ensuring business continuity in relation to the Payroll function.
- Continued the process for recruitment to ensure all contracts were completed, competitions for essential staff were completed and all retirements and resignations were processed.
- Continued industrial relations engagement.
- A reviewed focus on staff support and wellbeing.

As part of the Covid 19 response and the need for ongoing workforce planning, the HR department continued to review staffing levels and requirements during 2020. HR has continued its work with senior management and the various service areas of the organisation in order to identify current and emerging requirements so as to be in a position to plan and respond to same in terms of staffing.

The implementation of the ongoing workforce planning process throughout 2020 gave consideration to the following:

- Continued increase in activity both locally and throughout the local government sector in terms of recruitment & selection and staff retention due to continued changing nature, diversification, and national requirements of the sector.
- Continued increase in opportunities throughout the public sector in general and consequent employment and skills mobility.
- Planning for the filling of vacancies and a renewed focus on attracting and recruiting people with the appropriate knowledge and skills – this includes marketing what the Council, and the sector in general, can offer to prospective job applicants/candidates more effectively and having consideration to changing employee expectations and how media is consumed.
- Continued work towards being an employer of choice and the shift towards new recruitment methods arising from the impact of Covid-19.
- Renewed focus on learning and development opportunities for staff with a focus on structured induction for new staff, fostering a fair and healthy working environment, and consideration of other developmental opportunities.

The HR Department has continued to work very closely with staff and unions on a range of issues aside from the impact of Covid-19 on the workplace.

### 14.3 Recruitment & Selection

In 2020 the Recruitment & Selection Team facilitated 15 recruitment competitions, with a total of 302 applications processed and 93 candidates interviewed. The impact of Covid 19 had an initial impact on the recruitment programme due to national restrictions. As the year progressed the Recruitment & Selection Team transitioned from traditional face to face interviews to an online remote interview. This impact has required a significant change in the recruitment process to support and adopt to the new online interviewing procedure.

### 14.4 Learning & Development

Over the past number of years HR has been developing the organisation's approach to staff training. It is now intended to build on this progress in the context of our corporate priorities as outlined in the Corporate Plan 2019 – 2024.

The first visible change in 2020 was the renaming of the 'Training' section to the '*Learning & Development*' Section in order to reflect the new approach. Learning & Development is currently delivered throughout the organisation by way of formal and informal training, mentoring, coaching, collaborations, programmes, knowledge sharing etc. These are all areas which have developed over the period of our CPD journey as an accredited employer.

The main focus going forward is to assist further all staff in their professional development across all grades and to provide greater opportunities for personal development and personal wellbeing while also providing practical learning supports to staff.

The new Learning & Development Programme in 2020 was delivered via 5 headings: Learning Supports, Personal Wellbeing, Professional development, Internal Knowledge Sharing Supports and Mandatory Training.

The Learning & Development Section continued to review requirements throughout the organisation despite the pandemic restrictions. This includes mandatory training as well as new initiatives in terms of the staff wellbeing and health.

Training Figure for January 1 to December 31, 2020	
No. of Course Types Held	76
No. of Training Course/Workshops Held	158
No. of Individual Staff Scheduled for Training	518

## 14.5 Developing Technologies

### Meath Connect App

The MCC Connect App was launch and rolled out to outdoor staff in early 2020 pre-Covid. It was then fast-tracked to indoor staff with the current total number of staff using the app currently 685. The App is an excellent platform for HR and corporate communications. It has been an invaluable tool during 2020 with the regular updates from the Chief Executive during the various stages of restrictions particularly well received.



MCC Connect App launch which took place prior to COVID in early 2020

### HR Analytics Toolkit

Meath County Council was the pilot site, on behalf of the local government sector, for the inception and development of a HR Analytic Toolkit for the sector. The development of this analytics tool, supports and informs HR and senior management on strategic people management and development issues.

### CORE & Departmental Staff Organograms

A reporting platform for organisational organograms was developed by HR in 2020. This has had an immediate benefit in supporting the HR department and senior management in the area of Workforce Planning and resource allocation and distribution.

# Information Systems

## 15.1 Service Area: Information Technology Strategic Actions

- Embed information as a core asset of the organisation which is valued and maintained accordingly, and is easily accessible to support decision making at all levels.
- Support core business processes with integrated software systems that are prioritised on the basis of delivering our strategic objectives.
- Ensure information and services are readily accessible to customers via the most appropriate channels. Use of GIS and roll out of map-enabled on-line services.
- Exploit mobile technology and develop further our infrastructure and systems architecture so that staff and customers can use individually and collectively our information systems in an efficient, secure and ubiquitous manner.

During 2020, the Information Systems department had to redirect a lot of its efforts to enabling and supporting the entire organisation on dealing with the consequences of the Covid-19 pandemic, as well as initiatives and policies regarding same, while maintaining operational stability and information security. In 2020, 8,000 IT Helpdesk requests were addressed, a 35% increase on 2019, including more complex requests due to remote working. Usage of applications also increased, with 25,400 cases on CRM, a 40% increase on 2019. This was accomplished even with a 15% reduction of IT staff.

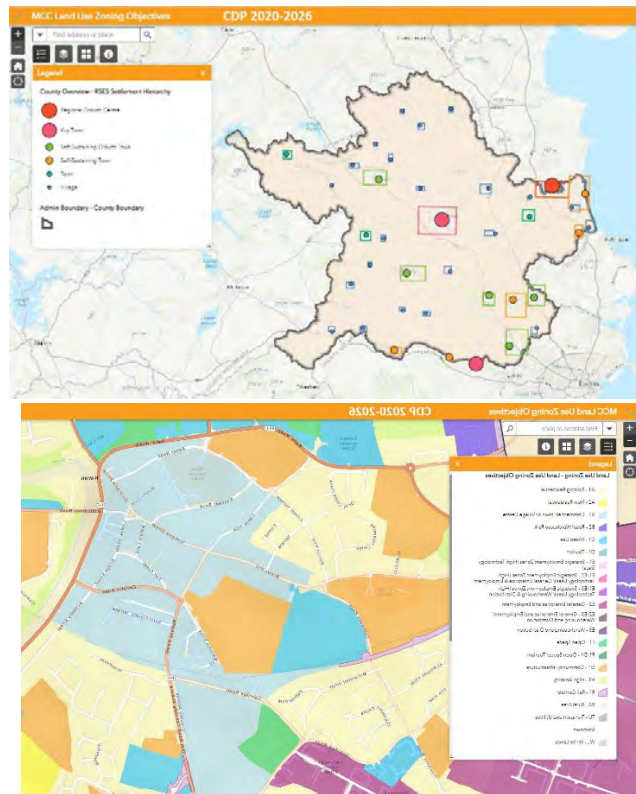
## 15.2 Covid Measures

- A major focus was on enabling employees to work remotely while respecting security standards. Three hundred new client machines were deployed, 3 times more than in any previous years and a “laptop by default” policy has been adopted, which is also good for climate change in terms of electricity consumption.
- The IT Operations team deployed and maintained 3 different ways of connecting securely remotely to MCC’s network, consolidated since June 2020 into 2.
- Client machines, network devices and phones were deployed within and across MCC buildings following desk moves and establishment of rotas to enable social distances in offices.
- Changes to our phones systems and CRM, and an in-house ArcGIS Online Web Map application were implemented to support the National Covid Community Response Framework.
- Zoom was chosen and implemented as our video-conferencing and virtual meeting solution, for its ease-of-use, functionality, scalability and value for money and has been used extensively during 2020, constantly applying best practice (in user awareness, configuration and patch management) to avoid security issues. MS Teams was also used.
- The security information and event management system (SIEM), installed in 2019, continued to monitor 24/7 the network for suspicious events and to report vulnerabilities, which were then addressed.
- Replacement of 27 Windows servers with latest Windows versions.
- 100 client machine operating systems upgraded.
- Build of new MS SQL environment with newer versions of MS SQL and Windows Server. Migration of 43 MS SQL databases to new environment and consolidation or retirement of 47 legacy databases.
- Efforts migrating from the LGMA active directory forest continued but due to the prioritisation of remote-working, it is now expected that the migration will be completed early Q2 2021.

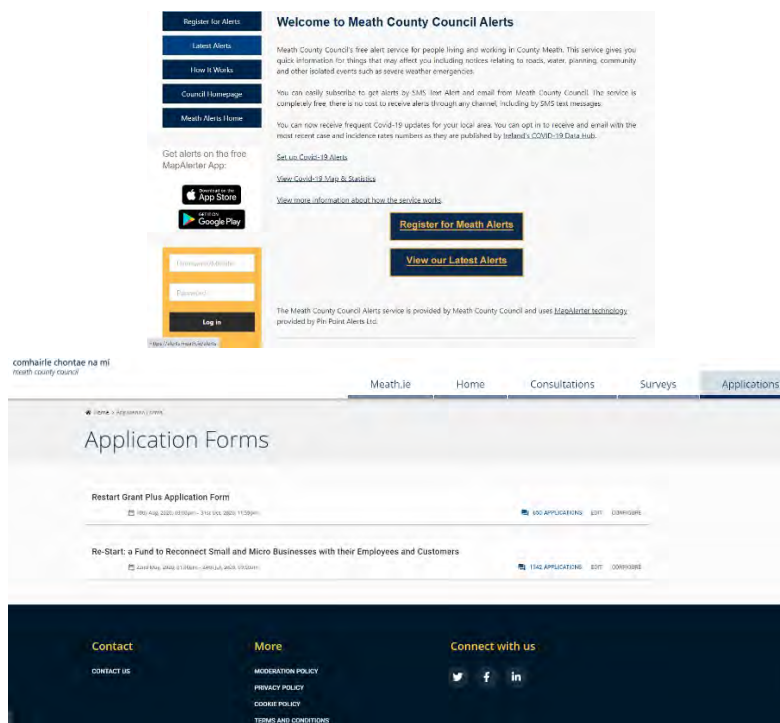


## 15.3 Core Business

- Continued mapping and online submission support were provided to the Planning Department on the County Development Plan Review process, including interactive Land Use Zoning Settlement Maps and Specific Objectives. Consult.meath.ie continued to enable many submissions from the public.
- Our existing Housing Grants System was re-developed, iHouse was upgraded and the DEASP API has been implemented.
- A project to pilot the roll out of a Health & Safety App was successfully completed, allowing Transportation staff to access and complete safety documentation remotely, on tablet devices.
- Substantial progress was made in geographical data preparation for implementation of new corporate Geographic Information Systems (GIS) platform procured in 2019.
- Restart Grant and Restart Grant Plus application forms were designed and published, the backend systems have been implemented and upgraded for processing applications, integrating with Agresso financial management system.
- A Cookie consent management solution has been implemented on the website launched in 2019 [www.meath.ie](http://www.meath.ie), and other secondary MCC websites, to ensure compliance with guidelines issued by the Data Protection Commission.
- An alert service <https://alerts.meath.ie> has been made available on our website.
- A corporate SurveyMonkey solution has been implemented and used for customers and in-house surveys by different departments.
- New hardware and software were deployed to fire stations to cater for new participation to Building Control Management Systems. Switches were also added to enable future wirelesslinks.
- New infrastructure and system were implemented in the Civil Defence new building in Mullaghboy, Navan.
- Remote access to CCTV for Navan was enabled for traffic management.
- The SCADA system was upgraded (new server, new software version) for Water Services.
- An enterprise central database was created (initial tables are users, geographical sites, departments, projects and actions) and bespoke software for administration of same were developed.
- A number of standards for in-house software development were defined (database table templates, field and variable naming convention, front-end template)
- A list of desirable future supplier frameworks was devised and agreed within IT Management and procurement for same will start in 2021.
- The previous procurement campaign for an Enterprise CRM common with two other LAs was concluded without an award made, and documentation prepared for a 2021 campaign specific to MCC.
- A cross-training programme continued early 2020 in the IT Department for the minimisation of knowledge silos.
- A number of business cases were made to increase the staff compliment in specific areas, these were accepted and included in the budget for 2021.
- A more frequent replacement programme of client machines and increased budget, was agreed.
- Participation to the implementation of Meath digital strategy (e.g. chairing workgroup, free public Wi-Fi procurement, knowledge support).
- Participation to a number of best practices and project boards at sectoral level, including Building Control Management System with The National Building Control Office
- Procurement of over 900 laptops for Facebook's sponsorship of laptop loans for schools through MCC's library services.



The IT Department used geographical information systems to illustrate key elements of the County Development Plan (CDP) including land use zoning.



The IT department enabled new online services such subscription to alerts, public consultation for the County Development plan, and restart grants.

# Appendix 1 – Elected Members 2020

## ASHBOURNE



Conor Tormey  
Fianna Fáil



Suzanne Jamal  
Fine Gael



Alan Tobin  
Fine Gael



Joe Bonner  
Non-Party



Amanda Smith  
Non-Party



Aisling O'Neill  
Sinn Féin

## KELLS



David Gilroy  
Non-Party



Paul McCabe  
Fianna Fáil



Mike Bray  
Fianna Fáil



Eugene Cassidy  
Fine Gael



Sean Drew  
Fianna Fáil



Michael Gallagher  
Sinn Féin



Sarah Reilly  
Fine Gael

## LAYTOWN-BETTYSTOWN



Tom Behan  
Fianna Fáil



Elaine McGinty  
Labour



Wayne Harding  
Fianna Fáil



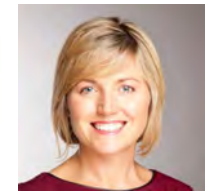
Geraldine Keogan  
Non-Party



Stephen McKee  
Fianna Fáil



Paddy Meade  
Fine Gael



Sharon Tolan  
Fine Gael

## NAVAN



Francis Deane  
Non-Party



Edward Fennessy  
Sinn Féin



Yemi Adenuga  
Fine Gael



Pdraig Fitzsimons  
Fianna Fáil



Alan Lawes  
Non-Party



Tommy Reilly  
Fianna Fáil



Emer Tóibín  
Aontú

## RATOATH



Damien O'Reilly  
Fianna Fáil



Gerry O'Connor  
Fine Gael



Brian Fitzgerald  
Non-Party



Nick Killian  
Non-Party



Maria Murphy  
Fine Gael



Gillian Toole  
Non-Party



Deirdre Geraghty Smith  
Fianna Fáil

## TRIM



Ronan Moore  
Social Democrats



Aisling Dempsey  
Fianna Fáil



Joe Fox  
Fine Gael



Noel French  
Fine Gael



Trevor Golden  
Non-Party



Niamh Souhan  
Fine Gael

## Appendix 2 - Strategic Policy Committee (SPC) Members

### Climate Action, Environment and Emergency Services SPC

<b>Cllr. Eugene Cassidy Chair</b>	<b>Cllr. David Gilroy</b>
<b>Cllr. Tom Behan</b>	<b>Cllr. Suzanne Jamal</b>
<b>Cllr. Joe Bonner</b>	<b>Cllr Geraldine Keogan</b>
<b>Cllr. Mike Bray</b>	<b>Cllr. Ronan Moore</b>
<b>Cllr. Francis Deane</b>	<b>Cllr. Gillian Toole</b>
<b>Karen Mahon</b>	<b>Environmental – Pillar</b>
<b>Thomas Rogers</b>	<b>Community/Voluntary – Pillar</b>
<b>John Curran</b>	<b>Agriculture/Farming – Pillar</b>
<b>Riona Gilroy</b>	<b>Business/Commercial – Pillar</b>
<b>Noel Maguire</b>	<b>Trade Union - Pillar</b>

### Transportation SPC

<b>Cllr. Trevor Golden (Chair)</b>	<b>Cllr. Paul McCabe</b>
<b>Cllr. Noel French</b>	<b>Cllr. Paddy Meade</b>
<b>Cllr. Deirdre Geraghty-Smith</b>	<b>Cllr. Gerry O'Connor</b>
<b>Cllr. Michael Gallagher</b>	<b>Cllr. Amanda Smith</b>
<b>Cllr. Wayne Harding</b>	<b>Cllr. Sharon Tolan</b>
<b>Alan Watson</b>	<b>Community/Voluntary - Pillar</b>
<b>Geoffrey Clarke</b>	<b>Environmental/Conservation – Pillar</b>
<b>John Curran</b>	<b>Agriculture/Farming – Pillar</b>
<b>Damien Hughes</b>	<b>Business/Commercial – Pillar</b>
<b>Alan Brunton (resigned September 2020)</b>	<b>Development/Construction - Pillar</b>

## Planning, Economic Development, Enterprise and European Affairs SPC

<b>Cllr. Pdraig Fitzsimons, (Chair)</b>	<b>Cllr. Stephen McKee</b>
<b>Cllr. Aisling Dempsey</b>	<b>Cllr Aisling O'Neill</b>
<b>Cllr. Brian Fitzgerald</b>	<b>Cllr. Sarah Reilly</b>
<b>Cllr. Joe Fox</b>	<b>Cllr. Tommy Reilly</b>
<b>Cllr Elaine McGinty</b>	<b>Cllr. Alan Tobin</b>
<b>John Curran</b>	<b>Agriculture/Farming - Pillar</b>
<b>Kieran Cummins</b>	<b>Environment/Conservation – Pillar</b>
<b>Gary Plunkett</b>	<b>Development/Construction – Pillar</b>
<b>Sean Boyle</b>	<b>Business/Commercial - Pillar</b>
<b>Michael Wall</b>	<b>Business/Commercial - Pillar</b>

## Housing, Community & Cultural Development SPC

<b>Cllr. Damien O'Reilly, (Chair)</b>	<b>Cllr. Alan Lawes</b>
<b>Cllr. Yemi Adenuga</b>	<b>Cllr. Maria Murphy</b>
<b>Cllr. Sean Drew</b>	<b>Cllr. Niamh Souhan</b>
<b>Cllr. Edward Fennessy</b>	<b>Cllr. Emer Tóibín</b>
<b>Cllr. Nick Killian</b>	<b>Cllr. Conor Tormey</b>
<b>Niamh Bn Ui Loinsigh</b>	<b>Community/Voluntary – Pillar</b>
<b>Gerard Weldon</b>	<b>Community/Voluntary - Pillar</b>
<b>John Regan</b>	<b>Trade Union - Pillar</b>
<b>Sinead Smith</b>	<b>Social Inclusion - Pillar</b>
<b>Michele McCullough</b>	<b>Social Inclusion – Pillar</b>

## Appendix 3 – SPC Activities

### Activities of the Strategic Policy Committees 2020

Strategic Policy Committee	Number of Meetings
Planning, Economic Development, Enterprise and European Affairs	1
Climate Action, Environment and Emergency Services	3
Transportation	3
Housing, Community and Cultural Development	5

## Appendix 4 – Other Committees of the Council

Committee	Name	Party
Local Traveller Accommodation Consultative Committee	Cllr Yemi Adenuga	Fine Gael
	Cllr Nick Killian	Non-Party
	Cllr Elaine McGinty	Labour
	Cllr Aisling O’Neill	Sinn Féin
	Cllr Noel French	Fine Gael
	Cllr. David Gilroy	Non-Party
Meath Comhairle na nÓg Steering Committee	Cllr Mike Bray	Fianna Fáil
	Cllr Ronan Moore	Social Democrats
Regional Advisory Council Teagasc	Cllr Francis Deane	Non-Party
Regional Health Forum	Cllr Tom Behan	Fianna Fáil
	Cllr Aisling O’Neill	Sinn Féin
	Cllr Niamh Souhan	Fine Gael
	Cllr Emer Tóibín	Aontú
	Cllr Gillian Toole	Non-Party
(LCDC) Local Community Development Committee	Cllr Yemi Adenuga	Fine Gael
	Cllr Mike Bray	Fianna Fáil
	Cllr Elaine McGinty	Labour
Audit Committee	Cllr Sean Drew	Fianna Fáil
	Cllr. Gerry O’Connor	Fine Gael
(LMETB) Louth Meath Education Training Board	Cllr Deirdre Geraghty-Smith	Fianna Fáil
	Cllr Wayne Harding	Fianna Fáil
	Cllr Nick Killian	Non-Party
	Cllr Maria Murphy	Fine Gael
	Cllr Damien O’Reilly	Fianna Fáil
	Cllr Emer Tóibín	Aontú
	Cllr Sharon Tolan	Fine Gael

<b>Committee</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Party</b>
<b>Association of Irish Local Government</b>	<b>Cllr Joe Fox</b>	<b>Fine Gael</b>
	<b>Cllr Nick Killian</b>	<b>Non-Party</b>
	<b>Cllr Damien O'Reilly</b>	<b>Fine Gael</b>
<b>LAMA</b>	<b>Cllr Amanda Smith</b>	<b>Non-Party</b>
<b>Irish Public Bodies Mutual Insurances Ltd</b>	<b>Cllr Tommy Reilly</b>	<b>Fianna Fáil</b>
<b>Navan Enterprise Centre Company Ltd</b>	<b>Cllr Yemi Adenuga</b>	<b>Fine Gael</b>
	<b>Cllr Francis Deane</b>	<b>Non-Party</b>
	<b>Cllr Edward Fennessy</b>	<b>Sinn Féin</b>
	<b>Cllr Pdraig Fitzsimons</b>	<b>Fianna Fáil</b>
	<b>Cllr Emer Tóibín</b>	<b>Aontú</b>
<b>East Border Region (Directors)</b>	<b>Cllr Sean Drew</b>	<b>Fianna Fáil</b>
	<b>Cllr Trevor Golden</b>	<b>Non-Party</b>
	<b>Cllr Gerry O'Connor</b>	<b>Fine Gael</b>
<b>Forum of East Border Region</b>	<b>Cllr Tom Behan</b>	<b>Fianna Fáil</b>
	<b>Cllr Paul McCabe</b>	<b>Fianna Fáil</b>
	<b>Cllr Paddy Meade</b>	<b>Fine Gael</b>
<b>Meath Local Sports Partnership Ltd</b>	<b>Cllr Pdraig Fitzsimons</b>	<b>Fianna Fáil</b>
<b>Eastern and Midlands Regional Assembly</b>	<b>Cllr Paddy Meade</b>	<b>Fine Gael</b>
	<b>Cllr Brian Fitzgerald</b>	<b>Non-Party</b>
	<b>Cllr Damien O'Reilly</b>	<b>Fianna Fáil</b>
<b>Board of Meath Arts Centre Ltd</b>	<b>Cllr Yemi Adenuga</b>	<b>Fine Gael</b>
	<b>Cllr Francis Deane</b>	<b>Non-Party</b>
	<b>Cllr Pdraig Fitzsimons</b>	<b>Fianna Fáil</b>
<b>Boyne Valley Tourism Ltd</b>	<b>Cllr Tom Behan</b>	<b>Fianna Fáil</b>
	<b>Cllr Aisling Dempsey</b>	<b>Fianna Fáil</b>
	<b>Cllr Edward Fennessy</b>	<b>Sinn Féin</b>
	<b>Cllr David Gilroy</b>	<b>Non-Party</b>
	<b>Cllr Sarah Reilly</b>	<b>Fine Gael</b>



<b>Committee</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Party</b>
<b>Athboy Social Needs &amp; Recreational Company Ltd</b>	<b>Cllr Mike Bray</b>	<b>Fianna Fáil</b>
	<b>Cllr David Gilroy</b>	<b>Non-Party</b>
<b>Kells Community Enterprise Company Ltd</b>	<b>Cllr Mike Bray</b>	<b>Fianna Fáil</b>
	<b>Cllr Sean Drew</b>	<b>Fianna Fáil</b>
	<b>Cllr Paul McCabe</b>	<b>Fianna Fáil</b>
	<b>Cllr Sarah Reilly</b>	<b>Fine Gael</b>
<b>Meath Heritage Forum</b>	<b>Cllr Edward Fennessy</b>	<b>Fine Gael</b>
	<b>Cllr Noel French</b>	<b>Fine Gael</b>
	<b>Cllr Elaine McGinty</b>	<b>Labour</b>
	<b>Cllr Suzanne Jamal</b>	<b>Fine Gael</b>
	<b>Cllr Paul McCabe</b>	<b>Fianna Fáil</b>
	<b>Cllr Maria Murphy</b>	<b>Fine Gael</b>
<b>Trim Sports &amp; Leisure Centre Company Ltd (Directors)</b>	<b>Cllr Aisling Dempsey</b>	<b>Fianna Fáil</b>
	<b>Cllr Joe Fox</b>	<b>Fine Gael</b>
<b>Navan Sports &amp; Leisure Company</b>	<b>Cllr Edward Fennessy</b>	<b>Sinn Féin</b>
	<b>Cllr Alan Lawes</b>	<b>Non-Party</b>
	<b>Cllr Emer Tóibín</b>	<b>Aontú</b>
<b>Indaver Community Liaison Committee</b>	<b>Cllr Geraldine Keogan</b>	<b>Non-Party</b>
	<b>Cllr Stephen McKee</b>	<b>Fianna Fáil</b>
<b>North East Regional Drugs Task</b>	<b>Cllr Paul McCabe</b>	<b>Fianna Fáil</b>
	<b>Cllr Niamh Souhan</b>	<b>Fine Gael</b>
<b>Meath Age Friendly Alliance</b>	<b>Cllr Gillian Toole</b>	<b>Fine Gael</b>
<b>Knockharley Community Liaison Committee</b>	<b>Cllr Joe Bonner</b>	<b>Non-Party</b>
	<b>Cllr Suzanne Jamal</b>	<b>Fine Gael</b>
	<b>Cllr Aisling O'Neill</b>	<b>Sinn Féin</b>
<b>Joint Policing Committee</b>	<b>Cllr Yemi Adenuga</b>	<b>Fine Gael</b>
	<b>Cllr Tom Behan</b>	<b>Fianna Fáil</b>
	<b>Cllr Francis Deane</b>	<b>Non-Party</b>

<b>Committee</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Party</b>
	CLlr Edward Fennessy	Sinn Féin
	CLlr Pdraig Fitzsimons	Fianna Fáil
	CLlr Noel French	Fine Gael
	CLlr Deirdre Geraghty-Smith	Fianna Fáil
	CLlr David Gilroy	Non-Party
	CLlr Trevor Golden	Non-Party
	CLlr Alan Lawes	Non-Party
	CLlr Paul McCabe	Fianna Fáil
	CLlr Maria Murphy	Fine Gael
	CLlr Aisling O'Neill	Sinn Féin
	CLlr Alan Tobin	Fine Gael
	CLlr Gillian Toole	Non-Party
<b>Community Reps</b>	John Tobin	
	Tinu Achioya	
	Bernard Kenny	
	Conor O'Leary	
	Ronnie Owens	
	Sarah Maher	
	Bill Commerford	
<b>MCC Staff</b>	Jackie Maguire	
	Barry Lynch	
	Fiona Fallon	
<b>Gardai</b>	Chief Superintendent Fergus Healy	
	Superintendent Sean Farrell	
<b>Oireachtas Members</b>	Thomas Byrne	
	Damien English	
	Johnny Guirke	
	Helen McEntee	
	Darren O'Rourke	

<b>Committee</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Party</b>
	<b>Peadar Tóibín</b>	
<b>Protocol Committee</b>	<b>Clr Aisling Dempsey</b>	<b>Fianna Fáil</b>
	<b>Clr Francis Deane</b>	<b>Non-Party</b>
	<b>Clr Edward Fennessy</b>	<b>Sinn Fein</b>
	<b>Clr David Gilroy</b>	<b>Non-Party</b>
	<b>Clr Trevor Golden</b>	<b>Non-Party</b>
	<b>Clr Paul McCabe</b>	<b>Fianna Fáil</b>
	<b>Clr Gerry O'Connor</b>	<b>Fine Gael</b>
	<b>Clr Sarah Reilly</b>	<b>Fine Gael</b>
	<b>Clr Tommy Reilly</b>	<b>Fianna Fáil</b>
<b>CPG</b>	<b>Clr Alan Tobin</b>	<b>Fine Gael</b>
	<b>Clr Eugene Cassidy</b>	<b>Fine Gael</b>
	<b>Clr David Gilroy</b>	<b>Non-Party</b>
	<b>Clr Wayne Harding</b>	<b>Fianna Fáil</b>
	<b>Clr Pdraig Fitzsimons</b>	<b>Fianna Fáil</b>
	<b>Clr Damien O'Reilly</b>	<b>Fianna Fáil</b>
	<b>Clr Trevor Golden</b>	<b>Non-Party</b>
<b>Municipal District Chairs (change yearly)</b>	<b>Clr Conor Tormey</b>	<b>Ashbourne</b>
	<b>Clr Paul McCabe</b>	<b>Kells</b>
	<b>Clr Tom Behan</b>	<b>Laytown/ Bettystown</b>
	<b>Clr Francis Deane</b>	<b>Navan</b>
	<b>Clr Damien O'Reilly</b>	<b>Ratoath</b>
	<b>Clr Ronan Moore</b>	<b>Trim</b>

## Appendix 5 – Payments to Members of Meath County Council

<b>Annual Councillors Expenses (Travel, subsistence, vouched/unvouched element)</b>	<b>€248,914.01</b>
<b>Cathaoirleach and Leas Cathaoirleach Allowances (subject to taxation)</b>	<b>€77,058.79</b>
<b>Allowance Chairpersons of Strategic Policy Committees</b>	<b>€24,000.00</b>
<b>Members Representational Payments (subject to taxation)</b>	<b>€690,213.12</b>
<b>Allowance Municipal District Members (subject to taxation)</b>	<b>€39,560.10</b>
<b>Miscellaneous Expenses</b>	<b>€8,937.42</b>

## Appendix 6 – Conferences Abroad

List of Approved Abroad Conferences and members who attended in 2020 - None

## Appendix 7 – Conferences/Training at Home

### Training

Title	Dates	Members Attended	Travel & Subs Cost	Training Cost	Total Cost
AILG Module 2 Training 2020 – The Development Plan Making Process	13/02/2020	Cllr. Mike Bray	€40.31	€55.00	€95.31
		Cllr. Francis Deane	€79.34	€55.00	€134.34
		Cllr. Maria Murphy	€71.35	€55.00	€126.35
		Cllr. Alan Tobin	€0.00	€55.00	€55.00
	15/02/2020	Cllr. Joe Bonner	€0.00	€55.00	€55.00
		Cllr. Joe Fox	€280.29	€55.00	€335.29
		Cllr. Wayne Harding	€0.00	€55.00	€55.00
		Cllr. Sharon Keogan	€310.75	€55.00	€365.75
		Cllr. Nick Killian	€322.58	€55.00	€377.58
		Cllr. Stephen McKee	€199.82	€55.00	€254.82
		Cllr. Paddy Meade	€341.39	€55.00	€396.39
		Cllr. Damien O'Reilly	€285.67	€55.00	€340.67
		Cllr. Tommy Reilly	€0.00	€55.00	€55.00
		Cllr. Amanda Smith	€326.16	€55.00	€381.16
		Cllr. Emer Tóibín	€303.58	€55.00	€358.58
Cllr. Sharon Tolan	€210.57	€55.00	€265.57		
AILG Annual Training Conference 2020	04/03/2020 – 05/03/2020	Cllr. Francis Deane	€212.21	€140.00	€352.21
		Cllr. Joe Fox	€93.22	€140.00	€233.22
		Cllr. David Gilroy	€0.00	€140.00	€140.00
		Cllr. Trevor Golden	€0.00	€140.00	€140.00
		Cllr. Wayne Harding	€0.00	€140.00	€140.00
		Cllr. Annie Hoey	€0.00	€140.00	€140.00
		Cllr. Suzanne Jamal	€0.00	€140.00	€140.00
		Cllr. Sharon Keogan	€335.68	€140.00	€475.68

Title	Dates	Members Attended	Travel & Subs Cost	Training Cost	Total Cost
		Cllr. Nick Killian	€346.88	€140.00	€486.88
		Cllr. Paddy Meade	€326.27	€140.00	€466.27
		Cllr. Damien O'Reilly	€341.05	€140.00	€481.05
		Cllr. Tommy Reilly	€0.00	€140.00	€140.00
		Cllr. Amanda Smith	€336.57	€140.00	€476.57
		Cllr. Emer Tóibín	€334.78	€140.00	€474.78
		Cllr. Sharon Tolan	€0.00	€140.00	€140.00
		Cllr. Conor Tormey	€360.31	€140.00	€500.31
AILG Module 3 Training 2020 – Moorhead Report – A briefing for Elected Members	25/07/2020	Cllr. Joe Fox	€278.05	€55.00	€333.05
		Cllr. David Gilroy	€0.00	€55.00	€55.00
		Cllr. Geraldine Keogan	€297.76	€55.00	€352.76
		Cllr. Amanda Smith	€297.31	€55.00	€352.31
		Cllr. Alan Tobin	€0.00	€55.00	€55.00
	30/07/2020	Cllr. Sharon Tolan	€78.00	€55.00	€133.00
	08/08/2020	Cllr. Damien O'Reilly	€323.47	€55.00	€378.47
		Cllr. Tommy Reilly	€243.30	€55.00	€298.30
	11/08/2020	Cllr. Wayne Harding	€248.04	€55.00	€303.04
		Cllr. Nick Killian	€147.83	€55.00	€202.83
	Cllr. Stephen McKee	€123.60	€55.00	€178.60	
	Cllr. Maria Murphy	€91.08	€55.00	€146.08	

## Appendix 8 – Meetings of the Council – 2020

<b>Monthly Meetings</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>Special Meetings</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Special Planning Meetings</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>Annual</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Pre Budget and Budget</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Protocol</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>CPG</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>SPC – Climate Action, Environment and Emergency Services</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>SPC - Transportation</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>SPC – Housing, Community &amp; Cultural Development</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>SPC – Planning, Economic Development, Enterprise and European Affairs</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Municipal District –</b>	
<b>Ashbourne</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>Kells</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>Laytown/Bettystown</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>Navan</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>Ratoath</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>Trim</b>	<b>11</b>



## Appendix 9 – Annual Financial Statement

### Meath County Council Annual Financial Report 2020\*

<b>Expenditure</b>	<b>Revenue (€m)</b>	<b>Capital (€m)</b>
Housing & Building	30.575	72.063
Roads Transportation & Safety	44.051	28.535
Water & Sewerage	11.381	0.754
Development Incentives & Controls	31.291	(0.335)
Environment Protection	12.905	5.337
Recreation & Amenity	7.893	3.479
Agriculture, Education, Health & Welfare	0.839	0.318
Miscellaneous	29.147	3.590
<b>Total</b>	<b>168.082</b>	<b>113.741</b>
Income (see funding sources below)	126.139	111.034
Net Transfers		13.576
Net Revenue Cost to be funded from Rates & LPT	(41.942)	
Rates	43.939	
Local Property Tax	14.054	
Transfer from/(to) Reserves	(15.864)	
Surplus/(Deficit) for year	0.187	10.870
Opening Balance (01/01/19)	(0.952)	64.194
<b>Closing Balance</b>	<b>(0.498)</b>	<b>75.063</b>

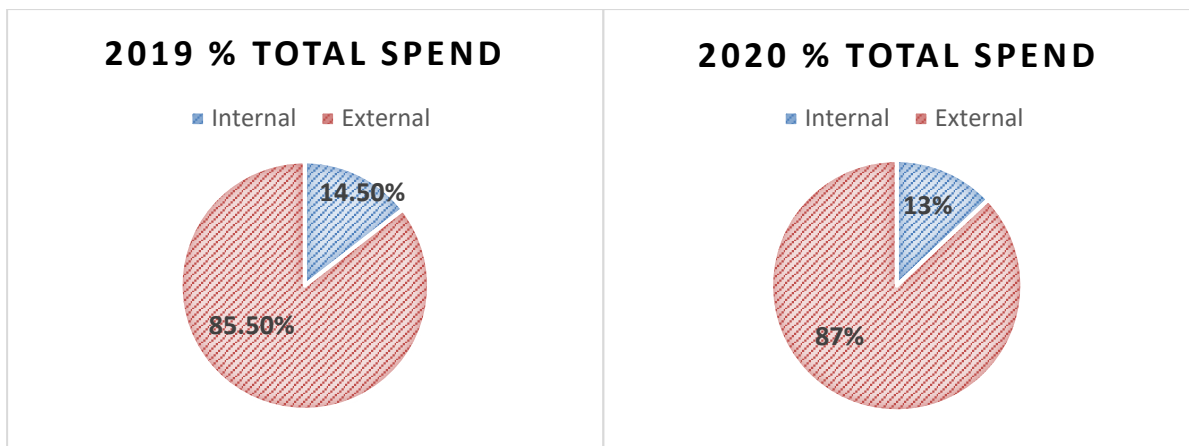
\* Based on draft AFS

## Appendix 10 - Municipal District Allocation 2020

This section of the report provides an overview of expenditure for the overall Municipal District Allocation Scheme for 2020.

### Overview

(a)	Total no. of applications received	577
(b)	No. of applications withdrawn	5
(c)	<b>No. of applications deferred to 2021</b>	<b>11</b>
(d)	<b>No. of valid applications for processing received (a – b &amp; c)</b>	<b>561</b>
(e)	Total annual fund	€600,000.00
(f)	<b>Total fund available in 2020</b>	<b>€600,000.00</b>
(g)	Total amount deferred to 2021	€26,774
(h)	Amount that reverted to MD at year end	€14,750
(i)	<b>Total amount allocated - 2020</b>	<b>€558,476</b>



**Internal Allocations**

<b>Total number of internal applications complete</b>	<b>43</b>
<b>Total internal allocation</b>	<b>€73,791</b>
<b>% of Total Allocation (i)</b>	<b>13%</b>

Department/Project	No. of allocations	Total amount allocated €	% of total allocation (i)
<b>Corporate Services –</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>5,400</b>	<b>1%</b>
• Purple Flag	1	400	-
• Twinning	1	5,000	-
<b>Housing –</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>30,000</b>	<b>5%</b>
• Homeless Services	2	30,000	-
<b>Transportation –</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>38,391</b>	<b>7%</b>
• Benches	2	3,500	-
• CIS	25	23,003	-
• Drainage Works	1	926	-
• Fence	1	1,500	-
• Footpath	1	2,000	-
• Hedge trimming	1	500	-
• Junction safety improvements	1	1,000	-
• LIS	6	4,962	-
• Slí na Sláinte repairs	1	1,000	-

**External Allocations**

<b>Total number of external applications complete</b>	<b>518</b>		
<b>Total external allocation</b>	<b>€484,685</b>		
<b>% of Total Allocation (i)</b>	<b>87%</b>		
<b>Category</b>	<b>No. of allocations</b>	<b>Total amount allocated €</b>	<b>% of total allocation (i)</b>
<b>Sports organisations/facilities</b>	152	155,438	28%
<b>Community development/organisations</b>	67	85,110	15%
<b>Support Services</b>	84	83,972	15%
<b>Residents Associations</b>	93	45,890	8%
<b>Tidy Towns/Pride of Place</b>	39	45,450	8%
<b>Schools</b>	26	21,575	4%
<b>Heritage/Tourism/Environment</b>	24	21,400	4%
<b>Youth organisations/facilities</b>	16	11,700	2%
<b>Festivals/Events</b>	12	9,350	2%
<b>Drama/Culture/Arts</b>	5	4,800	1%

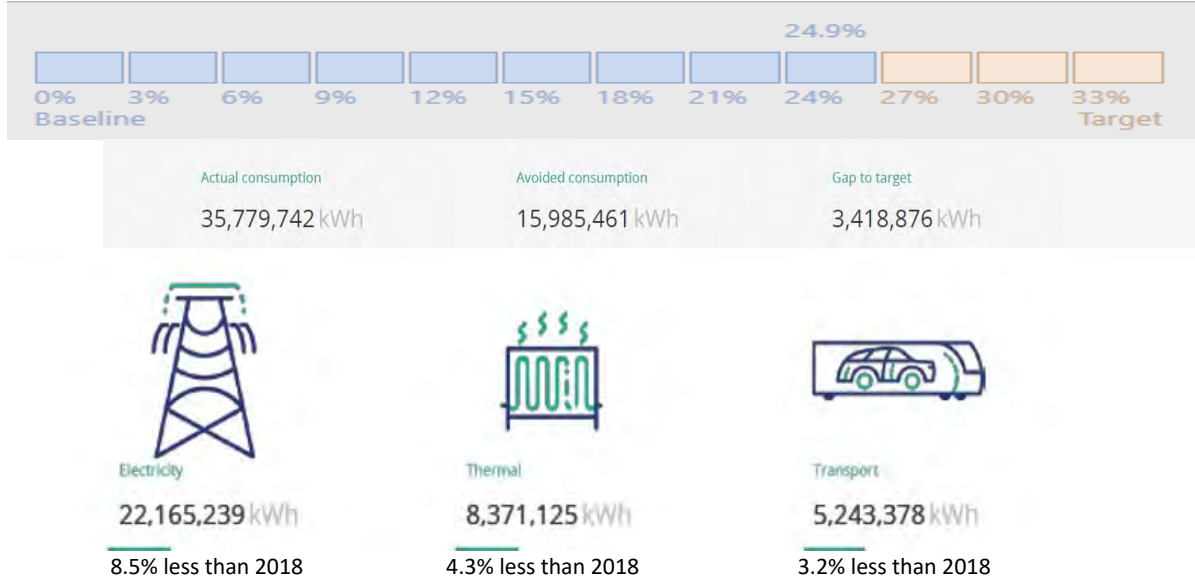
**Number of projects/services & groups that received funding:**

<b>Municipal District</b>	<b>Internal No. of Projects/Services</b>	<b>External No. of Groups</b>
Ashbourne	3	58
Kells	9	93
Laytown-Bettystown	2	63
Navan	5	70
Ratoath	3	52
Trim	6	51
<b>Total</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>387</b>

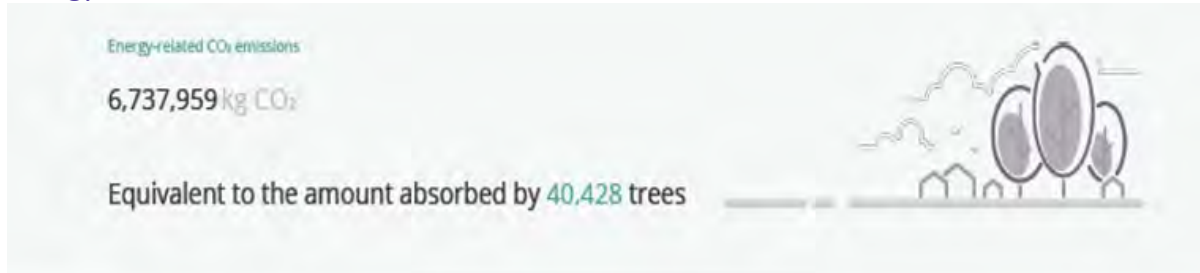
# Appendix 11 – Energy Efficiency Statement 2019

For an explanation on figures and data, see the footnotes below.

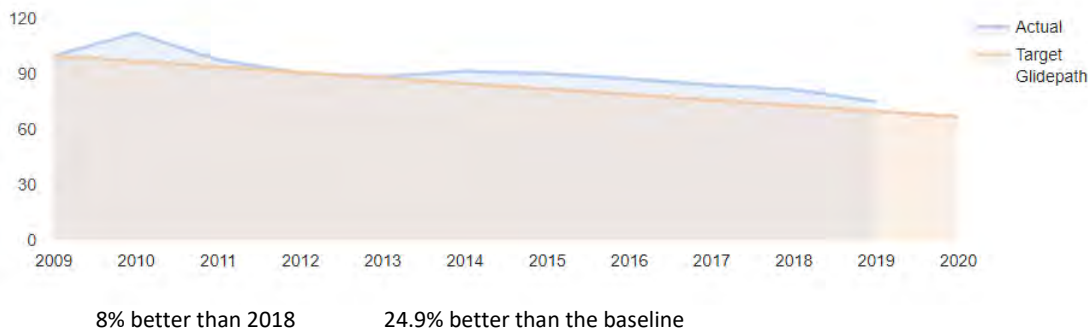
## Energy savings since baseline



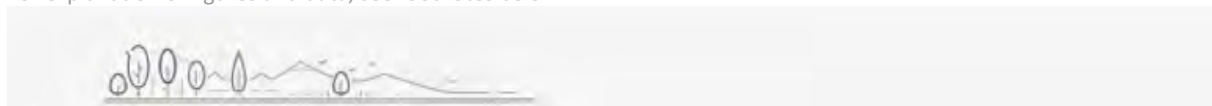
## Energy-related CO2 emissions



## Energy Performance to date



For explanation of figures and data, see footnotes below.



Meath County Council improved its energy performance in 2019 by Improving energy management practices.

### Additional Comments on energy performance

Meath County Council was without a full-time energy officer for a period of about 6 months in 2019, as a result no major energy efficiency projects were undertaken during the reporting period. While the Council did see a modest decrease in energy consumption this was mainly attributable to Kells Swimming Pool not being operational for over 6 months as it was shut down for renovation works. Some energy efficiency upgrade works

(replacement of SONs/SOX lights with LED lighting) were carried out on the Public Lighting network as part of the Councils ongoing maintenance contract and improved energy management across facilities since a facilities team was put in place to manage our building portfolio have resulted in reduced energy consumption.

### Projects Implemented in 2019



Project name	Total savings (kWh TFC)	Total savings (kWh TPER)
2019 Ongoing PL Maintenance	114,522	217,088
<b>Total:</b>	<b>114,522</b>	<b>217,088</b>

### Annual Energy Statement

This annual energy statement contains all the information specified by SWAI for inclusion in an annual statement on a public body's energy efficiency as regulated under Regulations S.I. No. 426 of 2014. The performance results and other data produced in this statement are based on the data reported by Meath County Council for 2019 through SEAI's public sector monitoring and reporting (M&R) system.

### TPER and TFC

Almost all energy values shown above are expressed as primary energy, or total primary energy requirement (TPER). This is the measure of all the energy consumed by the organisation and accounts for the energy that is consumed and/or lost in the transformation and distribution process.

### Energy savings since the baseline (Deterioration in energy efficiency since the baseline)

The percentage savings (or deterioration) shown in the percentage improvement (deterioration) is the energy performance of Meath County Council since its baseline period. The energy performance is tracked between the baseline and 2020 using an Energy Performance Indicator (EnPI)

### Actual Consumption

Actual Consumption is the total energy consumed by Meath County Council in 2019, expressed as primary energy consumption, it includes electricity, thermal (heat) energy and transport consumption.

### Avoided Consumption

Avoided consumption is the amount of additional energy that would have been consumed by Meath County Council in 2019 had it not made the reported efficiency gain since its baseline.

### Gap to Target

The gap to target is an estimate, based on 2019 date, of the additional energy savings required by 2020 to reach the efficiency target. The calculation on this value incorporates several simplified assumptions, including that the organisational activity level will remain constant between 2019 and 2020.

### Energy Performance Indicator

The Energy Performance Indicator (EnPI) is a way of measuring an organisation's energy performance. Each year, an EnPI is calculated by dividing the organisation's energy consumption by a measure of its activity (activity metric). A decreasing EnPI indicates an improvement in energy efficiency because less energy is being used per unit of activity. An increasing EnPI indicates deterioration in efficiency. The EnPI graph shows the actual and target energy performance for Meath County Council since its baseline and out to 2020.

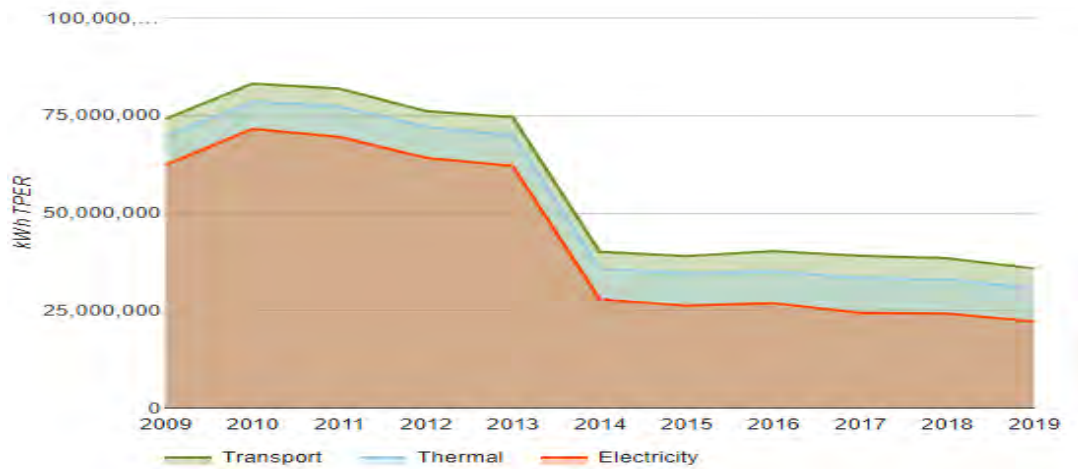
### Project energy savings

The energy savings shown for specific periods are absolute savings per year, as reported by Meath County Council, i.e. they are the reductions in consumption attributable to each project. They do not account for any changes in activity level within the organisation.

For an explanation on figures and data, see the footnotes below.

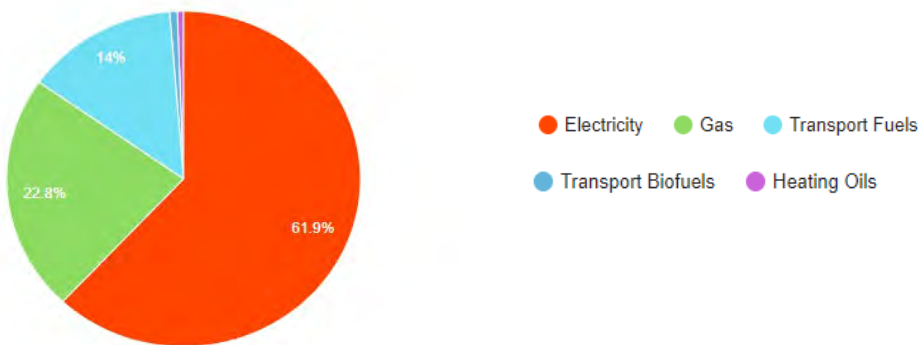
**2019 Energy Consumption**  
Energy Consumption to date

35,779,742 kWh



Note: any apparent drop in consumption between 2013 & 2014 is due, in a large part, to the transfer of water services assets to Irish Water.

**Energy Consumption 2019 (TPER)**



<p><b>6.8%</b> less than 2018</p>	<p><b>2,606,540 kWh</b> less than 2018</p>
<p><b>51.7%</b> less than baseline</p>	<p><b>38,326,046 kWh</b> less than baseline</p>

**Primary Energy**

All Energy values shown are expressed as primary energy, or total primary energy requirement (TPER). This is a measure of all the energy consumed by the organisation and accounts for the energy that is consumed and/or lost in transformation, transmission and distribution process.

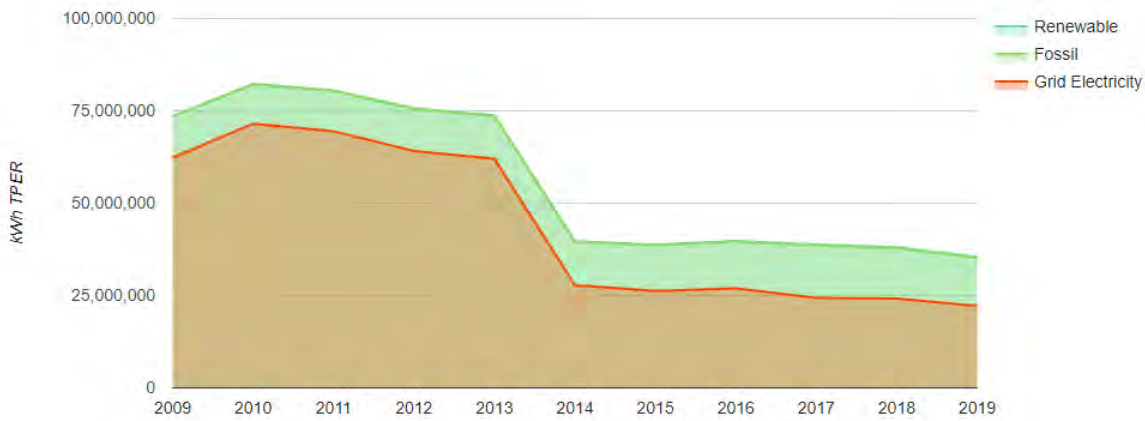
For an explanation on figures and data, see the footnotes below.

**2019 Renewable Energy Consumption**

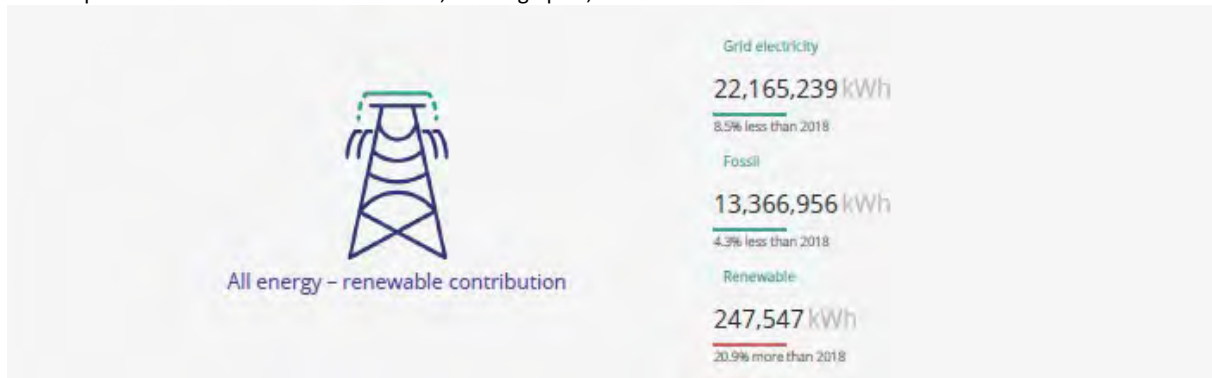
Renewable: 247,547 kWh

Renewable share is 0.7%

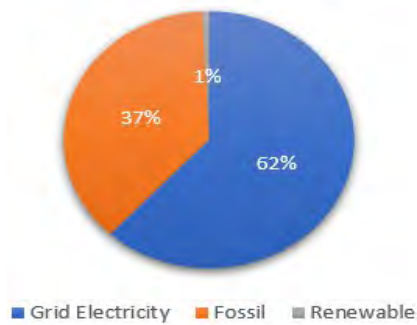
**Renewable energy to date**



Note: The apparent drop in consumption between 2013 and 2014 is due, in a large part, to the transfer of water services assets to Irish Water



Share of energy consumption

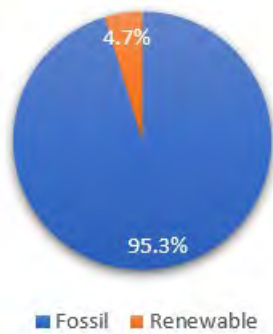




### Share of energy consumption



### Share of energy consumption



#### Primary Energy

All Energy values shown are expressed as primary energy, or total primary energy requirement (TPER). This is a measure of all the energy consumed by the organisation and accounts for the energy that is consumed and/or lost in transformation, transmission and distribution process.

#### Electricity

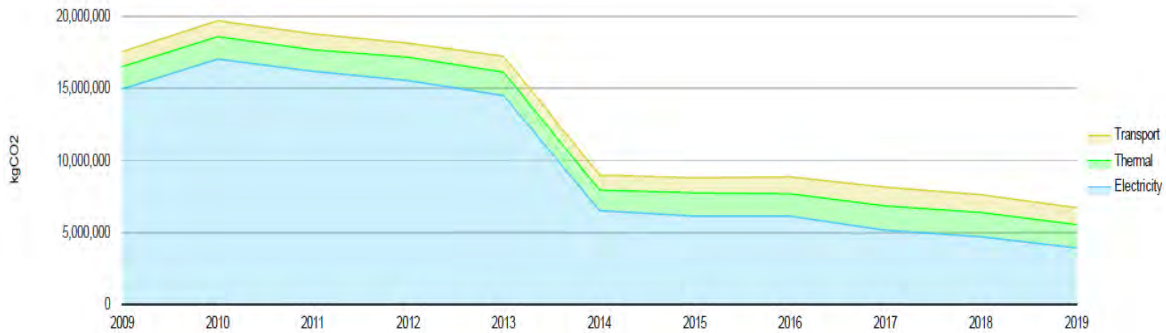
Electricity from the grid is not broken down between renewable and fossil sources, instead all of this electricity consumption is classified as grid electricity. Electricity reported by the organisation as having been generated within the organisation’s facilities from renewable sources (e.g. solar PV) is included in the renewable figures.

#### Biofuel

The vast majority of road transport fuels placed on the market contain a single digit percentage of biofuel. The percentage is calculated annually and is trending upwards over time. The renewable consumption figures shown above include an amount of biofuel consumption for Meath County Council that has been calculated using the national biofuel contribution figure for 2019.

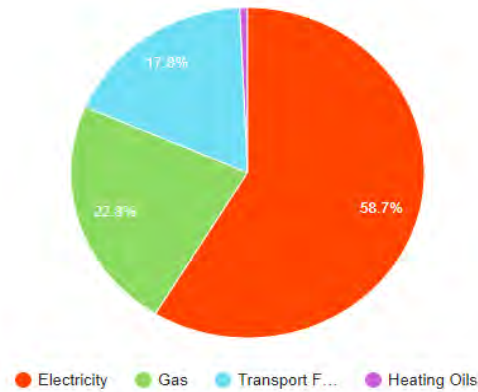
For an explanation on figures and data, see the footnotes below.

2019 CO<sub>2</sub> emissions **6,737,959 kgCO<sub>2</sub>**  
 CO<sub>2</sub> emissions since baseline



CO<sub>2</sub> emissions –

2019



<p><b>11.8%</b> less than 2018</p>	<p><b>901,561 kgCO<sub>2</sub></b> less than 2018</p>
<p><b>61.6%</b> less than baseline</p>	<p><b>10,818,273 kgCO<sub>2</sub></b> less than baseline</p>

**Energy-related CO<sub>2</sub> emissions**

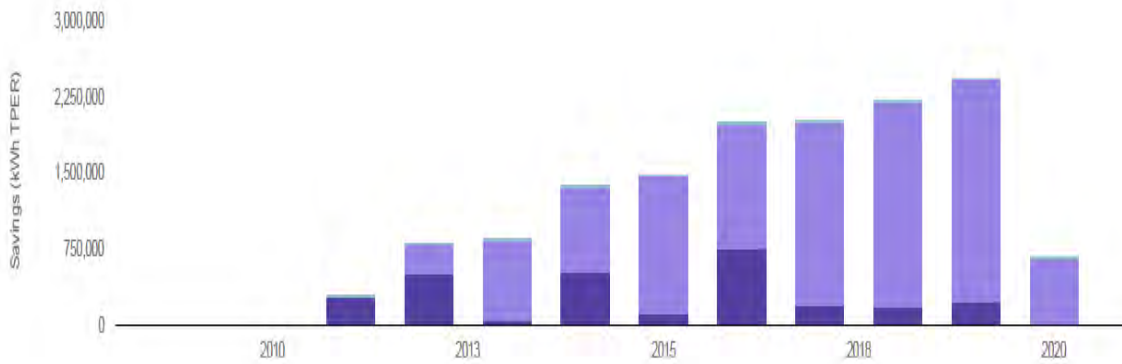
The CO<sub>2</sub> emission values shown are attributable to the energy consumption reported by Meath County Council.

**Electricity-related CO<sub>2</sub> emissions**

The CO<sub>2</sub> emissions attributable to electricity imported from the grid by Meath County Council have been calculated using the average emission factor for electricity generation in Ireland for the relevant year. The electricity consumed by Meath County Council in any given year may have come from a source that was less or more carbon intensive than the national average.

For an explanation on figures and data, see the footnotes below.

**Annual energy savings from reported projects**



The coloured bar above corresponds to one of the coloured stripes in the table headings below. The dark blue/purple bars show savings already achieved in each year from project(s) implemented in that year. The light blue/purple bars indicate savings still being made in each year from project(s) implemented in a previous year. The Dark green indicates savings expected in each future year from project(s) planned for implementation in that year. Light green indicates savings expected in each year from project(s) planned for implementation before that year.

Year	Projects Implemented in Year (kWh TPER)	Projects Implemented in a Previous Year (kWh TPER)	Projects Planned for Implementation in a Year (kWh TPER)	Projects Planned for Implementation in a Previous Year (kWh TPER)
2009	-	-	-	-
2010	-	2	-	-
2011	297,192	2	-	-
2012	504,323	297,193	-	-
2013	44,514	801,516	-	-
2014	522,332	846,030	-	-
2015	110,427	1,368,363	-	-
2016	748,471	1,254,728	-	-
2017	189,545	1,827,848	-	-
2018	187,284	2,017,394	-	-
2019	217,088	2,204,678	-	-
2020	-	672,276	-	-

### Projects Implemented in 2019



Project name	Total savings (kWh TFC)	Total savings (kWh TPER)
2019 Ongoing PL Maintenance	114,522	217,088
<b>Total:</b>	<b>114,522</b>	<b>217,088</b>

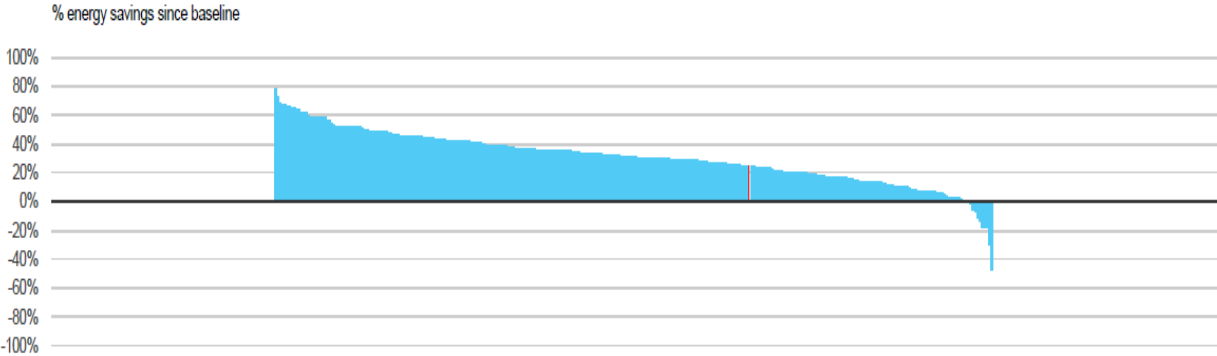
#### TPER and TFC

Most of the energy values shown above are expressed as primary energy, or total primary energy requirement (TPER). This is a measure of all the energy consumed by the organisation and accounts for the energy that is consumed and/or lost in transformation, transmission and distribution processes. The savings values shown for specific named energy projects are also expressed as total final consumption (TFC), which does not account for the energy consumed and/or lost in transformation, transmission and distribution processes.

#### Energy savings

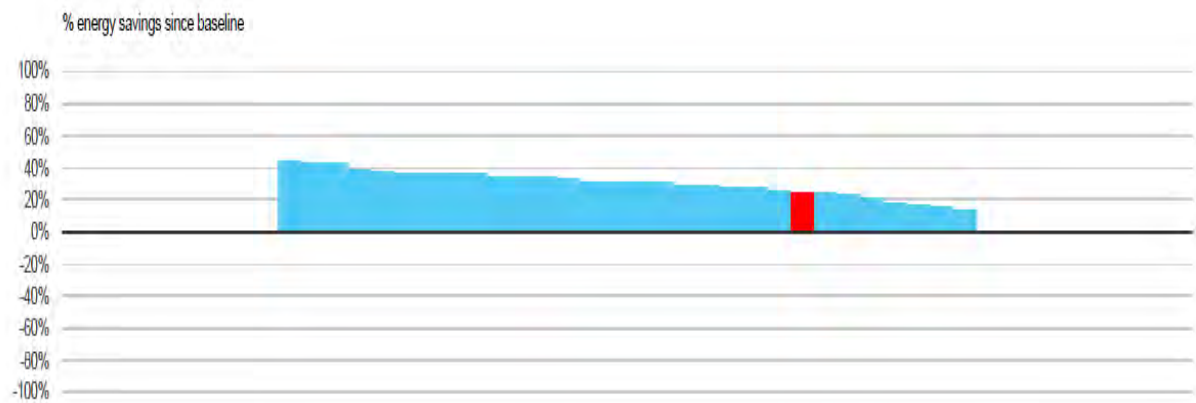
The energy savings shown are absolute savings per year, as reported by Meath County Council, i.e. they are the reductions in consumption attributable to each project. They do not account for any changes in activity level within the organisation.

### Meath County Council savings compared to all public bodies



Meath County Council is the 202nd best performer out of 305 public bodies. Please note that another 46 public bodies were removed from this comparison because they either submitted insufficient data to calculate a savings result or aspects of their data need to be improved or verified.

### Meath County Councils savings compared to others in Local Authority



Meath County Council is the 23rd best performer out of 30 public bodies. Please note that another 2 public bodies were removed from this comparison because they either submitted insufficient data to calculate a savings result or aspects of their data need to be improved or verified.

## Savings of Local Authority public bodies

Public body	2019 Energy consumption (TPER)	2019 Energy savings (since baseline) %	SEAI comment
Cork City Council	52,743,273	44.9	Overall status (2019): more efficient than baseline & on track for 2020 target
Louth County Council	26,027,379	43.6	Overall status (2019): more efficient than baseline & on track for 2020 target
Laois County Council	18,075,410	43.2	Overall status (2019): more efficient than baseline & on track for 2020 target
Tipperary County Council	43,991,463	38.9	Overall status (2019): more efficient than baseline & on track for 2020 target
Kerry County Council	41,317,542	37.9	Overall status (2019): more efficient than baseline & on track for 2020 target
Longford County Council	10,758,624	37.4	Overall status (2019): more efficient than baseline & on track for 2020 target
Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown County Council	46,179,522	37.2	Overall status (2019): more efficient than baseline & on track for 2020 target
Monaghan County Council	12,883,034	37.1	Overall status (2019): more efficient than baseline & on track for 2020 target
Dublin City Council	172,254,159	36.5	Overall status (2019): more efficient than baseline & on track for 2020 target
Fingal County Council	51,951,608	34.5	Overall status (2019): more efficient than baseline & on track for 2020 target
South Dublin County Council	47,365,440	34.4	Overall status (2019): more efficient than baseline & on track for 2020 target
Kilkenny County Council	22,741,894	33.9	Overall status (2019): more efficient than baseline & on track for 2020 target
Offaly County Council	16,035,645	33.5	Overall status (2019): more efficient than baseline & on track for 2020 target
Irish Water	1,076,953,062	32.1	Overall status (2019): more efficient than baseline & on track for 2020 target
Galway City Council	23,024,650	31.6	Overall status (2019): more efficient than baseline & on track for 2020 target
Carlow County Council	11,806,046	30.9	Overall status (2019): more efficient than baseline & on track for 2020 target
Galway County Council	27,516,333	30.8	Overall status (2019): more efficient than baseline & on track for 2020 target
Roscommon County Council	18,207,414	29.4	Overall status (2019): more efficient than baseline, but not yet on the path for 2020 target
Mayo County Council	35,934,698	29.3	Overall status (2019): more efficient than baseline, but not yet on the path for 2020 target
Wexford County Council	33,630,170	28.7	Overall status (2019): more efficient than baseline, but not yet on the path for 2020 target
Limerick City & County Council	41,171,562	27.6	Overall status (2019): more efficient than baseline, but not yet on the path for 2020 target
Sligo County Council	15,455,581	26.3	Overall status (2019): more efficient than baseline, but not yet on the path for 2020 target
Meath County Council	35,779,742	24.9	Overall status (2019): more efficient than baseline, but not yet on the path for 2020 target
Kildare County Council	42,758,493	24	Overall status (2019): more efficient than baseline, but not yet on the path for 2020 target
Waterford City & County Council	38,576,629	23.5	Overall status (2019): more efficient than baseline, but not yet on the path for 2020 target
Cork County Council	69,743,445	22.3	Overall status (2019): more efficient than baseline, but not yet on the path for 2020 target
Donegal County Council	52,349,947	17.8	Overall status (2019): more efficient than baseline, but not yet on the path for 2020 target
Clare County Council	29,278,677	16.9	Overall status (2019): more efficient than baseline, but not yet on the path for 2020 target
Wicklow County Council	34,060,008	16.2	Overall status (2019): more efficient than baseline, but not yet on the path for 2020 target
Cavan County Council	14,478,287	14	Overall status (2019): more efficient than baseline, but not yet on the path for 2020 target



comhairle chontae na mí  
*meath county council*