



comhairle chontae na mí
meath county council

Chief Executive's Report for Elected Members

Monthly Management Report
March 2021

This Monthly Management Report is prepared in accordance with Section 136(2) of the Local Government Act, 2001, as amended by the Local Government Reform Act, 2014, and provided to the Elected Members for consideration and information.

Introduction by the Chief Executive

To Members,

This Monthly Management Report gives an overview of the on-going governance of Meath County Council at what is a very challenging time for the Council, the county and the country more generally. This report is being provided for your information and consideration.

As you will be aware, most of our services are defined as essential and we have remained open for business during the period of Level 5 restrictions and will continue to do for as long as these restrictions remain in place. As there is an opening of the economy and society more generally, then Meath County Council will follow the various protocols, as we have done on previous occasions.

We will continue to monitor and review how we operate and we will continue to respond to the public health advice as it evolves.

I am hopeful that we will conclude the current phase of the review of the County Development Plan later this month. This has been an intensive period of work for everybody, the elected members, management, the planning department staff and staff from a number of other departments. While it has taken longer than initially envisaged, my view is that the process was rigorous, complied with all statutory obligations despite the challenges of Covid-19 and the requirements on us to do our business in a different way and that all submissions and motions were dealt with in an open and fair manner. The meetings held to date have worked well and the use of the online platform also really increases the transparency of the process, with much higher levels of participation by members of the press and the public.

I look forward to your continued cooperation as we work through the current period of restrictions with a sense of hope that the vaccination programme will be delivered within or sooner than the timeframes announced and that the country as a whole will return to a semblance of normality soon afterwards.

Thank You,

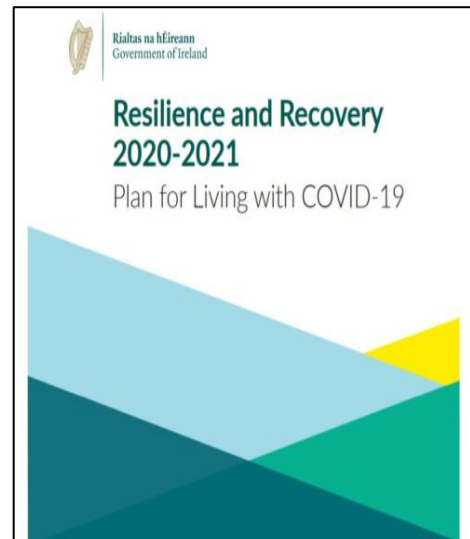
Jackie Maguire
Chief Executive

Covid-19 – Response to Restrictions

Level 5 Restrictions

The Government announced on January 6, 2021 that the restrictions to combat the increasing numbers of confirmed cases will be increased.

As Local Authorities are recognised under the Government's Resilience and Recovery Plan for Living with COVID-19 as being an essential service, there are only minor variations in the current services to be provided, mainly around construction activity. Effectively all other services provided by Meath County Council will remain unchanged.



Impact on Council Services

Public Counters

We are operating a restricted service at our public counters. Customers are recommended to conduct their business online where possible and if not to make an appointment to meet with one of our Customer Service Team.

Service	Opening Hours – Monday to Friday
Customer Service Counters (Buvinda House)	By Appointment – call 046-9097000 or email
Cash Desk (Buvinda House)	Open for Payments
Planning Counter (Buvinda House)	9am-1pm (queuing system in place)
Motor Tax	Online or by appointment in exceptional cases
Municipal Civic Offices	Closed

Motor Tax

Motor Tax renewals should, in the first instance, be done on-line: www.motortax.ie or by post.

Planning Services

Any member of the public wishing to view a current planning file is advised in the first instance to do so online at: <https://www.meath.ie/council/council-services/planning-and-building>

Only in the event that they cannot, they should make a prior request with the Planning Department to view the file at the public counter in Buvinda House. Customers may have to wait and work with the measures in place to facilitate physical distancing and ensure customer and staff safety. Planning applications and submissions can be made by hand.

Housing Services

The majority of Housing Department services are being provided at regular levels, whilst adhering to physical distancing requirements. All Housing assessments/appointments by Housing Officials,

including Housing Officers, Settlement Officers and Social Worker, will continue to be conducted by telephone, negating the need for customers to attend in person to Buvinda House.

Libraries

All library branches across the county will close under Level 5.

The Council's library service will continue to operate its online services see: www.meathlibraries.ie

Swimming Pools

The Kells, Navan and Trim swimming pools will be closed for the duration of the Level 5 restrictions, as will the gyms in Navan and Trim..

Other Services

All other services remain operational, with some impact on service level arising from the Level 5 restrictions.

Corporate Services

Meetings Administration

Online Meetings: All Council meetings will continue to take place as an online-only format for the foreseeable future.

In line with the decision of the Council when it adopted the revised Standing Orders for remote meetings in November 2020, a review of the Standing Orders will commence with a view to any revisions being presented to the Council at the April Monthly meeting for consideration and approval. It is also intended to similarly revise the Municipal District Standing Orders.

Ethics Declarations Reminder: The deadline for the Annual Ethics Declaration is the end of February.

Events - Communications

Social Media activity – As outlined in the February Report, the Council continues to grow its number of subscribers and followers on our various social media platforms. However, how our followers and subscribers engage with us is extremely important. When we post content, we are starting a conversation with our followers, when they like, share or comment they are talking back and engaging with us, this means people are interacting with the Council and what we have to say. Engagement will continue to be built into our social media strategy going forward.

The table below shows our overall engagement on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram in the last year (compared to 2019).

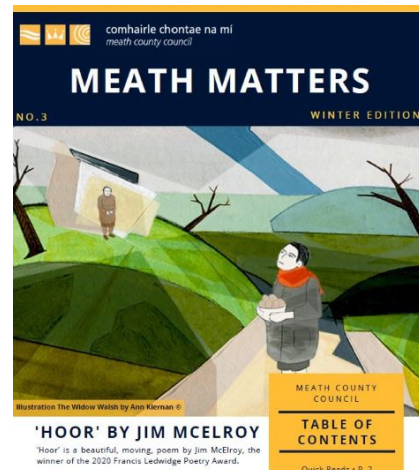


These platforms have proved to be particularly effective during the pandemic, in providing up-to-date and timely information, running various information campaigns and in reaching various cohorts of the population, The Council will continue to grow its subscriber base but also to focus on high quality, accurate and engaging content in 2021.

Meath Matters Publication: The third edition of 'Meath Matters', a newsletter to inform citizens of Meath about a mix of news, information and stories on Council services and activities, has been published. The focus on the new edition will be the national 'Keep Well' campaign.

To view the digital version please click the following link:
<https://mailchi.mp/d65ba08c6020/meath-matters-spring-2021>

If you require hard copies please email the Corporate Service team with your request. Hard copies will also be distributed to local libraries, through the Old Persons Council, Active Retirement groups, Men Sheds and Teach Mná.



Housing Services

Capital Programme

Summary Profile of Approved Direct Construction Projects

PROJECT NAME	NO. OF UNITS	APPROVED BUDGET €	ESTIMATED START DATE	ESTIMATED COMPLETION DATE
DESIGN PHASE				
Blackhill Crescent, Donacarney	2	563,166	Q3 2021	Q1 2022
Nangle Court, Navan	6	1,096,600	Q3 2021	Q3 2022
Church View, Rathmoylon	22	5,476,215	Q3 2021	Q3 2022
Haggard Street, Trim	4	931,870	Q2 2022	Q1 2023
Kildalkey Road, Athboy	10	4,358,112	Q2 2022	Q1 2023
Carrick Street Regeneration, Kells	43	10,225,755	-	-
Totals	87	22,661,718		
PART 8 PLANNING PROCESS				
Ashbourne	76	19,730,587	Q3 2021	Q1 2023
Kells Archdeaconary	20	3,826,010	Q3 2021	Q3 2022
Farganstown	84	24,630,457	-	-
Totals	180	48,187,054		
TENDER FOR CONSTRUCTION				
Donore	21	4,524,250	Q1 2021	Q2 2022
Lagore, Dunshaughlin	42	9,850,185	Q3 2021	Q1 2023
Totals	63	14,374,435		
CONSTRUCTION STAGE				
Lagore, Dunshaughlin	26	5,813,948	Q1 2020	Q2 2021
Totals	26	5,813,948		
PROJECTS COMPLETED				
Bettystown (Phase 1)	16	3,437,478	Complete	N/A
Athboy (Phase 1)	32	8,850,320	Complete	N/A
Proudstown Road Navan	4	819,737	Complete	N/A
Summerhill	19	3,854,980	Complete	N/A
Ratoath	17	3,662,700	Complete	N/A
Cortown*	10	6,922,971	Complete	N/A
Kilmainhamwood*	4		Complete	N/A
Oldcastle*	16		Complete	N/A
The Belfry, Trim	3	560,000	Complete	N/A
Carlanstown	13	2,719,237	Complete	N/A
Bettystown (Phase 2)	15	3,426,308	Complete	N/A
Kells	40	8,555,683	Complete	N/A
Totals	189	42,809,414		
GRAND TOTAL	545	134,205,254		

* Rapid Build Delivery Projects

Summary of 2021 Approved Funding Submissions

PROJECT NAME	PROJECT TYPE	NO. OF UNITS	FUNDING APPROVED €
Athboy	Turnkey	7	1,598,475
Enfield	Part V	1	255,000
Totals		8	1,853,475

Summary of Current Funding Submissions

PROJECT NAME	PROJECT TYPE	NO. OF UNITS	FUNDING SOUGHT €
Donacarney	Turnkey	1	322,700
Kilcock	Part V	13	3,394,991
Stamullen	Part V	5	1,282,577
Stamullen	Part V	3	812,353
Totals		22	5,812,621

Expression of Interest for Turnkey Schemes and/or Lands

There is currently a call for proposals regarding the supply of development sites or completed housing schemes that are fit for purpose for social housing within the County. Details regarding same and required forms can be found on www.etenders.gov.ie. or via the following link on Meath.ie <http://bit.ly/EOIHouseSchemesAndOrLand>

Affordability Measures

Nine low cost private sites were advertised (Lagore, Dunshaughlin), with closing date of December 21, 2020. A total of 67 applications were received. 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. The nine successful applicants have been notified.

Local Authority Vacant Units Currently Unavailable for Allocation

Outlined below is a summary per Municipal District of the number of vacant properties that currently require works before they can be re-tenanted, as at 16th February 2021. For the period from 18th January 2021 to 16th February 2021, works were completed on 8 vacant units; while 11 units became vacant during this period.

	No. of Units Vacant < 3 Months	No. of Units Vacant 3-6 Months	No. of Units Vacant > 6 Months	No. of Vacant Units Currently Subject to Works	No. of Vacant Units not with Contractors
Ashbourne	2	0	2	4	0
Kells	7	0	0	7	0
Laytown/Bettystown	2	1	**2	5	0
Navan	7	1	0	8	0
Ratoath	3	1	0	4	0
Trim	5	0	**2	7	0
TOTALS	26	3	6	35	0

Note: **Includes two pre-lets with major renovations aiming to upgrade BER rating to B2.

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

Grants to the value of €289,201 were awarded to 44 Households under the various Grants schemes in January 2021

Local Authority Adaptation Works Scheme

Two projects have been completed to date in 2021 (€22,772), with a further 4 task orders issued to contractors (€42,549).

Summary Profile of Approved Housing Body Approved Projects 2017-2021

PROJECT NAME	NO. OF UNITS	AHB	DELIVERY
PIPELINE DELIVERY			
Slan Duff, Kentstown	2	Cluid Housing	Delivery Due – Q2 2021
Gort Fionnbarra, Navan (Phase 2)	20	Tuath Housing	Delivery Due – Q2 2021
Frederick Manor	11	Cluid Housing	Delivery Due – Q2 2021
Narrow Ways Bettystown	12	Tuath Housing	Delivery Due - Q2 2021
Maydenhayes, Donacarney	12	Cluid Housing	Delivery Due - Q2 2021
Whitefield Hall, Bettystown	2	Tuath Housing	Delivery Due - Q2 2021
Ashewood Ashbourne	11	Cluid Housing	Delivery Due - Q3 2021
Athboy Road, Navan	63	Respond	Delivery Due - Q4 2021
Ledwidge Hall, Slane	28	Oaklee Housing	Delivery Due – Q4 2022
Royal Oaks, Enfield	30	Cluid Housing	Delivery Due – Q4 2021
Gort Fionnbarra, Navan (Phase 3)	49	Tuath Housing	Delivery Due – Q4 2021
The Willows, Dunshaughlin	96	Cluid Housing	Delivery Due – Q4 2021
Effernock, Trim	16	Cluid Housing	Delivery Due – Q4 2021
Beaufort Place, Navan	21	Tuath Housing	Delivery Due – Q3 2022
TOTAL UNITS TO BE DELIVERED	373		
UNITS DELIVERED			
Churchfields, Ashbourne (Part V)	8	Tuath Housing	Complete - 2017
Grangehall, Dunshaughlin	6	Tuath Housing	Complete - 2017
Ardmore, Bettystown	1	North & East Housing	Complete - 2017
Royal Oaks, Enfield (Part V)	4	Cluid Housing	Complete - 2017
Seabury Lawns, Mornington	6	Cluid Housing	Complete - 2018
Kellets Grove, Dunshaughlin (Part V)	6	Tuath Housing	Complete - 2018
Milltown Meadows, Ashbourne	67	Cluid Housing	Complete - 2017
Emmet Street, Trim	11	North & East Housing	Complete - 2018
Dunville, Navan (30 units Part V)	64	Tuath Housing	Complete - 2018
Ceamach Close, Donacarney	16	Cluid Housing	Complete - 2018)
Blackcastle, Navan	26	Tuath Housing	Complete - 2018
Grangehall, Dunshaughlin	8	Tuath Housing	Complete - 2018
Ashewood, Ashbourne	12	Cluid Housing	Complete - 2018
Churchfields, Ashbourne	18	Tuath Housing	Complete - 2018
Fitzherbert Wood, Navan	22	Tuath Housing	Complete 2018/2019
Churchfields, Ashbourne (Part V)	25	Tuath Housing	Complete – 2018/2019
Eastham Square, Bettystown(Part V)	5	Cluid Housing	Complete – 2019
Station Road, Dunboyne	24	Respond	Complete – 2019
Dunville, Navan	6	Tuath Housing	Complete – 2019
Commons Road , Navan	12	North & East Housing	Complete - 2019
Gort Fionnbarra, Navan (Phase 1)	20	Tuath Housing	Complete - 2019
Maudlins, Duleek	20	Respond	Complete – 2019/2020
Dun Eimear, Bettystown	23	Cluid	Complete – 2019
Dunville, Navan	54	Tuath	Complete – 2020
Athboy Road, Trim	25	Oaklee	Complete – 2020

Whitefield Hall, Bettystown	29	Tuath	Complete – 2020
Royal Oaks, Enfield	4	Cluid Housing	Complete - 2020
Gort Fionnbarra, Navan (Phase 2)	18	Tuath Housing	Complete - 2020
The Bungalows, Dunshaughlin	8	Circle	Complete - 2020
Fitzherbert Wood, Navan	5	Tuath Housing	Complete - 2020
Flowerville, Navan	12	Tuath Housing	Complete - 2020
Oldbridge Manor, Drogheda	29	Tuath Housing	Complete - 2020
Maudlins, Duleek	30	Tuath Housing	Complete - 2020
TOTAL UNITS DELIVERED	624		
GRAND TOTAL	997		

Homelessness

	SINGLE ADULTS/COUPLES	HOUSEHOLDS WITH CHILDREN	TOTAL HOUSEHOLDS
Placements at 31th December 2020 (Previous Reported Figure)	134 (141)	31 (47 Adults, 75 Children)	165
Placements at 31th January 2021	137 (142)	28 (43 Adults, 67 Children)	165

Of the 28 households with children, 14 families are placed in short term private rented accommodation (house/apartment) through Settlement Team’s intervention and 5 Families in PMVT Family Hubs.

Reasons for emergency accommodation placement in order of frequency: Primary reason is Notice to Quit & unable to a find property to rent; followed by family breakdown; addiction; mental health and young person leaving Tusla aftercare.

A total of 13 tenancies were secured through the support provided by the Homeless HAP Placefinder Service for the period January 1st to January 31st 2021

Social Housing Supports

A total of 72 new applications for Social Housing Support were received for the period January 1st to 31st January 2021.

Outlined below is the number of households that have had their accommodation needs met by Meath County Council in the period January 1st to 31st January 2021.

Allocations/Housing Supports	Number
MCC Direct Allocations	34
Approved Housing Bodies	22
RAS	0
HAP	47
TOTAL	103

Planning Services

Planning Applications

A total of 324 planning applications were received in the period 01/01/2021 to 19/02/2021. This is compared to 199 in the same period last year. This represents an **increase of 61%** year-on-year.

Development Contributions

Development Contribution receipts for January 2021 were €522,556. This is compared to €530,012 in January 2020. (Figures are not inclusive of Irish Water receipts)

Special Planning Meeting

The schedule for the Special Planning Meeting as agreed by the Council on February 6th is as follows:

Day/Date	Time	Topic
Wednesday, March 3	2pm - 5.30pm	Tiers 5
Thursday, March 4	2pm - 5.30pm	Tiers 5
Friday, March 5	10am - 1pm, 2pm – 5pm	Tier 6
Saturday, March 6	10am to 1pm	If required

Transportation

1. National Roads 2021 funding from TII confirmed - €7,629,918

N51 Dunmoe Phase 2	Main construction & consultancy services contract tender competitions ongoing. Advance hedge/tree removal contract ongoing.
N2 Slane Bypass	RPS progressing Phase 3 design. Site Investigation Contractor laboratory testing complete, preparation of final reports ongoing. Seasonal Ecology (Wintering Birds) survey ongoing. Landowner meetings ongoing
N2 Rath Roundabout to Kilmoon	ROD/AECOM are progressing Phase 2 - Options Selection assessments. The Emerging Preferred Option to be published in March via an online virtual consultation room.
N52 Grange to Clontail	Part 8 CE report issued to members Jan 2021. Decision due in Q1 2021. Atkins progressing Phase 3 design.
NS Resurfacing	Pavement designs and tender document preparation on-going for 2021 schemes.

2. (a) Non- National Roads 2021 funding from DoT – €26,145,367 in total

R150 Laytown to Bettystown Spine Road	Works commenced on 4 th August 2020 & are currently expected to take circa 12 months. Works progressing on site. Provision of Electric Vehicle charge points being reviewed for inclusion in the public car park.
Road Works Programme	2020 schemes complete. Preparation has commenced for the 2021 schemes. SMDW passed by each of the 6 Municipal Districts at the February meetings listing roads to be funded under the Restoration Maintenance Grant (Surface Dressing) and the Restoration Improvement Grant – Tender process set to commence in March

2. (b) Safety Improvement Works on Regional & Local Roads - DoT Grant Allocation for 7 new Safety Improvement schemes for 2021 – €356,000

2020 Schemes	Road	MD	Status
Kells Town	R164	Kells	Complete
Newhaggard Road	R161	Trim	Waiting on Traffic Lights to be installed by Sub Contractor
Oberstown Cross Skyrne	L1005	Ashbourne	Signage to be installed by end of February by Sub Contractor

Preliminary work for the design of safety improvement schemes allocated funding in 2021 has commenced.

2. (c) Bridge Rehabilitation Works Regional & Local Roads – DoT Grant Allocation for 7 new Bridge Rehabilitation Schemes for 2021 - €555,000

2020 Schemes	Status
Clonard, Anne's & Cornmill bridges	Complete
Stoneyford Bridge	Works ongoing – road closure required to complete the works. Closure dates from 1 st to 12 th March 2021.
Kilmainhamwood and Donaghmore	Design of repairs to retaining walls and embankments are ongoing

Maudlin Bridge	Works suspended until May 2021
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Tender documentation for the appointment of consultants for the design of remedial works to bridges allocated funding in 2021 has commenced.

3. Sustainable Transport Measures Grants 2021 from NTA – €12,885,000

Navan Town Scheme (Navan 2030)	Works on-going. Road works and road closures as follows: Bridge St - Mon 15th Feb until Fri 26th of Feb - Hours 6pm to 7am each night Circular Rd - Mon 15th Feb until Sat 6th of Mar – Hours 7pm to 7am each night Abbey Rd - Mon 1st Mar until Fri 26th of Mar – Hours 7pm to 7am each night.
Navan Town Bus Stops	Appointment of Contractor for main bus stop installation has not yet been finalised. Subject to lifting of current COVID restrictions, it is anticipated that a Letter of Appointment will issue on Friday 5 th of March.
Athlumney to Trim Road Cycle and Pedestrian Scheme	Topographical and GPR survey data has been processed and completed. The geometric design of Phase 1 & 2, using the new topographical survey, is underway. Tender documents for drainage CCTV survey drafted and expected to issue shortly, subject to current COVID related restrictions.
N51 Park & Ride	CE Report on the Part 8 Report presented to the Navan MD Members 20 th January and is currently under consideration.
Ratoath Cycle Network	Part 8 withdrawn due to the number of submissions/objections received. An alternative layout for the contentious tree removal section adjacent to Woodlands was presented to Ratoath MD members at the February meeting. MCC will continue to liaise with the Members to see if a successful resolution to this issue can be reached with the locals.

NTA Jobs Stimulus Programme 2020 (€3,105,000): Of the 38 schemes, 25 schemes are complete. The remaining 13 schemes are on hold due to the current Covid Level 5 restrictions.

4. Non- National Roads & Sustainable Transport Schemes 2021 - Funding other than DoT & NTA

Ratoath Outer Relief Road (RORR), LIHAF Scheme	Works on the R125 and Moulden Bridge Estate interface ongoing. Works expected to be complete end Q1 2021.
LDR6 Kentstown junction to Farganstown, LIHAF Scheme	Works recommenced on site on 15 th February 2021 to try and complete the signalised junction and associated pedestrian crossings at the Kentstown Road junction. Substantial completion for the scheme expected by end Q1 2021.
Boyne Greenway and Navigation Restoration scheme (Navan to Oldbridge)	Public consultation in relation to potential greenway route options for the circa 26.5km long walking and cycling greenway commenced in February 2021. Works also progressing re assessing the feasibility of restoring the river / canal Boyne navigation between Oldbridge Guard Lock and the canal harbour in Navan.
Athboy Town Centre Project	MCC appointed Tobin Consulting Engineers in February 2021 to commence work on a scheme to provide improved bus stop facilities and associated ancillary works in Athboy. The review, prelim design and statutory planning phases are currently expected to be completed in Q1 2022.

RORR Progress Photos (on February 1, 2021)



RORR School Road Junction looking north to R125



R125 looking east (Moulden Bridge estate on the Left, RORR on the right)

5. Other Actions/ Projects

<p>Risk Mitigation – Footpath Improvement Works</p>	<p>Kells MD – Schemes in Kells, Fr McCullen Park, Moynalty Rd to Fr McCullen Park, Gardenrath Rd & Nobber (O Carolan Park)-at contractor appointment stage, due to commence Mar 2021 if restrictions lifted. Athboy (Church View & St Joseph Villas estates) at contractor appointment stage, due to commence Mar 2021 if restrictions lifted.</p> <p>Ashbourne MD – Proposed Schemes in Ardcath (Church View Housing Estate); Stamullen (Mountain View Housing Estate entrance); Bellewstown (Woodview Estate) Tender assessment complete, appointment of contractor underway, due to commence March 2021 if restrictions lifted.</p> <p>Trim MD – Footpath extension from Baynefield to Industrial Estate, Enfield complete. Summerhill; Rathmolyon Rd, Awaiting ESB to remove poles before footpath works can be completed. Section of footpaths to be replaced in Kildalkey Road Trim, Mornington Estate, Trim out to tender.</p> <p>Ratoath MD - Scheme from Arkle House to Supervalu on R-125 (Dunshaughlin Rd) & R-155 (Well Rd) complete. Dunshaughlin- Path from Supple place to Entrance to Industrial Estate on Dublin Road, currently in design stage. Intention to go to tender end of Feb.</p> <p>Laytown/ Bettystown MD - Coney Hall Mornington – due to commence in early March when restrictions are lifted. Sections of path in Abbey View and Stanley Height in design stage, intention to go to tender end of Feb.</p>
<p>Public Lighting Capital Programme</p>	<p>Programme of Capital Public Lighting Schemes - Works on the schemes selected in 2020 are 75% complete</p>
<p>Milltown Rd/Ashbourne-Rd Safety Improvement Scheme</p>	<p>Construction works substantially completed before Christmas – on track to be finished snagging and off-site by the end of February</p>
<p>R135 Cycle Network Design</p>	<p>Received approval from the NTA to proceed with the detailed design. Letter of intent issued to contractor for the CCTV surveys of the existing drainage</p>
<p>Town & Village Renewal Scheme</p>	<p>Ramparts Boyne Walk Refurbishment Scheme – Works commenced at the beginning of February and are ongoing.</p>

Navan Rail Line

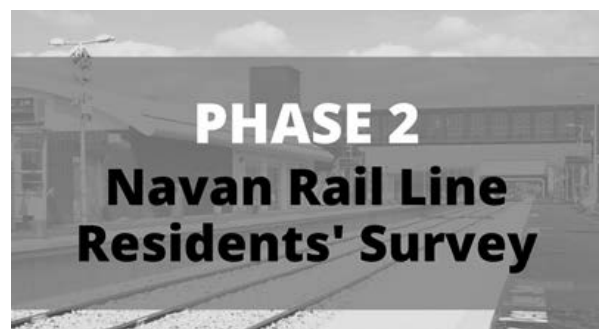
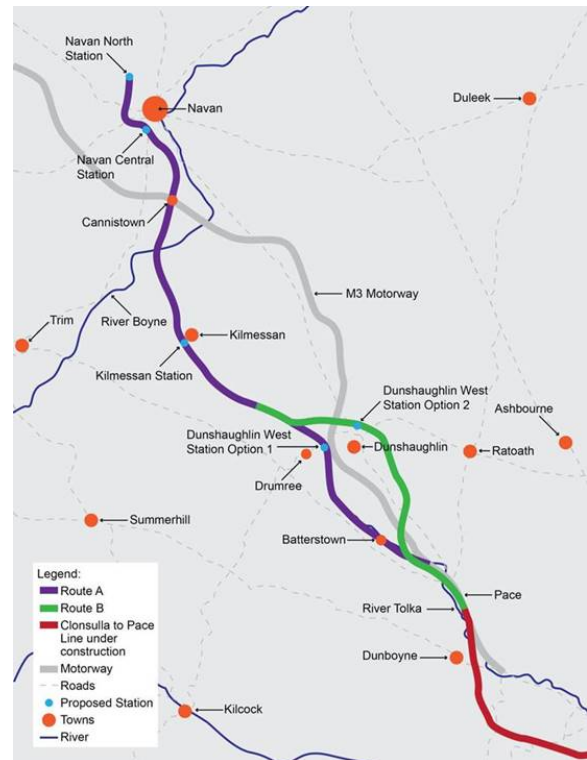
The National Transport Authority (NTA) has commenced work on reviewing the Greater Dublin Area Transport Strategy and intends to publish a draft Transport Strategy covering the period 2022 to 2041 around mid-2021. The NTA has appointed Consultants to develop an assessment study in relation to the potential extension of the existing rail line from M3 Parkway, close to Dunboyne, to Navan.

The provision of a rail line from the M3 Parkway to Navan is a critical component of Meath County Council's vision for the county. Strong population growth in recent years and under-investment in public transport services within the county has led to unsustainable levels of outbound commuting by way of private car usage. Recognising the unsustainability of these commuting patterns, the Council is fully committed to the advancement of a Rail Line which will result in significant economic opportunities reduced carbon emissions and societal benefits for citizens across the county.

Dialogue between the Council and NTA continues on the various aspects of the Navan Rail assessment study. A formal stakeholders meeting took place on Thursday, February 25th, to take stock of progress.

The Council is also working with its team of specialist consultants to ensure that the study is rigorous in its consideration of all the relevant matters and uses the most up-to-date data.

In this regard, a second resident's survey on the needs and benefits of the proposed railway is currently open. The aim of the survey process is to generate as much feedback as possible and to highlight the demand that exists in our communities for the extension of the rail line from Dunboyne to Navan. Survey Link: <https://t.co/ZWnd76PhML>



Environment

Waste Prevention, Reduction and Litter

Green Kilometre Scheme for Meath: Meath County Council is aware that there are many groups and individuals around the county who wish to contribute to their local community, especially during the Covid pandemic.

An increase in walking and cycling since the lockdowns began has made many people aware of both the litter that may be seen along the roadside, but also the wildlife that exists in the hedgerows and roadside margins. People may also notice built heritage features such as old gates, water pumps etc. As a response to this the Council has created the Green Kilometre scheme. With over 3,600 kilometres of roads in the county, there are plenty of opportunities for all to get involved.

The scheme invites individuals/groups to choose approximately a kilometre (or longer) stretch of road/loop in their area- preferably a quiet, local road in terms of safety. The group or individual would then commit to maintaining the chosen stretch over the course of the year.

Incentives of some native trees, litter pickers, bags and gloves are on offer for all participating individuals/groups and if desired the Council will arrange for an adviser (when restrictions allow) to visit to give advice in relation to planting, care of heritage features etc, where applicable.

So far over a hundred groups, individuals and sports clubs have signed up and have undertaken litter picking in their local areas, from small family 'walk & litter pick', to whole community clean ups producing van loads of bags. The scheme will run throughout the year.

Anti-Dumping Campaign: The Minister for the Environment, Climate and Communications launched a new campaign titled "Your Country -Your Waste" on November 13, 2020, as part of the fight against illegal dumping. The Campaign has been developed as part of the 2020 Anti-Dumping Initiative and includes a tailored suite of information and awareness messaging for use by local authorities, community and voluntary groups during 2020 and 2021.

Anti-Litter and Anti-Graffiti Awareness Grant (ALAGS): Meath County Council received €22,700 in support for Anti-Litter activities that took place throughout 2020. It is envisaged a similar sum will be available for 2021.

Sustainable Gardening Course: A sustainable gardening course designed by horticulturalist and environmentalist Aoife Munn to support the work of Tidy Towns Groups begins on Tuesday, February 23rd and will run for 5 weeks. It has proven to be hugely popular with groups and a second course is planned for later in the year.

ReLove Fashion: The final for this competition was held on 25th February by Zoom, hosted by the Rediscovery Centre. The students of Mercy Navan and Scoil Mhuire Trim represented Meath in the final.

River Basin Management Plan (RBMP)

Drafting of the 3rd cycle River Basin Management Plan (for the period 2022 – 2027) is underway. The draft plan which will be published by the Department of Housing, Local Government & Heritage (DHLGH) imminently, will be subject of extensive public consultation before the final plan is published in December 2021. The EPA provides technical input and advice to DHLGH on the plan content, for example in updating the characterisation of pressures and impacts on water status.

Whilst recognising the real challenge to attaining good status for waters in Meath by 2027 and being aware of the economic implications of same, the Council has commenced drafting an appropriate work plan for the RBMP 3rd Cycle consistent with our recent submission to the EPA.

Revised grant scheme for Domestic Waste Water Treatment Systems (Septic Tanks etc) and Private Water Supplies (Wells)

Grants for DWWTS (National Inspection Plan) - grant scheme towards remediation, repair or upgrading works to, or replacement of, a domestic wastewater treatment system under the EPA's National Inspection Plan.

Grants for DWWTS (Prioritised Areas for Action under the RBMP) - grant scheme towards remediation, repair or upgrading works to, or replacement of, a domestic wastewater treatment system situated in a Prioritised Area for Action in accordance with the River Basin Management Plan 2018-2021.

Grants for DWWTS (High Status Objective Catchment Areas under the RBMP) - grant scheme towards remediation, repair or upgrading works to, or replacement of, a domestic wastewater treatment system in a High Status Objective Catchment Area in accordance with the River Basin Management Plan 2018-2021.

General rules applying to the DWWTS Grants schemes - Grant rate of 85% of the eligible costs of remediation, repair or upgrading works, or replacement of any such system or €5,000, whichever is the lower. Means test requirement removed.

Grants for Private Water Supplies (Wells): Revised grant scheme towards the carrying out of improvement works to a private water supply. Provision of a new well: 85% of the approved costs for the provision of a new well, subject to a maximum of €5,000. For rehabilitation works: 85% of the approved costs for rehabilitation works, subject to a maximum of €3,000. For treatment works: 100% of the approved costs for works that, in the opinion of the housing authority, are necessary to treat the water to meet the water quality standards specified in the regulations, subject to a maximum grant of €1,000. Examples of such treatments are filtration or Ultra Violet treatment.

Climate Action

Decarbonisation Zones as per Action 156 of the Climate Action Plan 2019 (CAP2019) is picking up momentum. Nominated town/area must be made by April 30, 2021 and an implementation plan submitted by December 31st. Innovation, partnership and citizen/stakeholder buy-in will be critical to success. Local authorities are expected to take up a strong leadership role. Pilot project already

underway in Portlaoise and nationally the DZ are to be seen as 'living labs' i.e. constant learning and applying this to other towns/villages/communities. Projects very much evidence based and we must be able to showcase carbon savings from baseline year.

Dialogue has commenced with Louth, Kildare and Wicklow regarding to setting up an Energy Bureau. This would be an inward looking initiative initially to set us on the path to meet our energy targets and then with a view of collaboratively on larger scale projects. There is initial match funding by SEAI to provide an Energy Officer.

EU Climate Pact Ambassador virtual meet up planned for March and EU Climate Pact team currently compiling support tools for ambassadors.

URBACT application for a pilot project to localise the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) submitted with Trim being the nominated town. Selected cities will be notified by mid-March.

MCC presented at Sustainable Energy Communities (SEC) Lead Authority Webinar, SEAI reported there are now 500 SEC nationally – very much on target to meet the CAP19 2030 ambition of 1500 nationally. Strong presentation on the co-benefits to communities and councils. Agreed to set up an informal working group to share ideas and experiences.

Climate Action Training for Senior Management and Councillors is to commence in Q1 2021 via the CAROs. Training under 6 pillars will be provided to 29,000 council staff and councillors.

Climate Action & Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) Team collaborating with Community and Library Section on a number of #KeepWell campaigns including on social prescribing.

Engagement has taken place with Meath Chambers and they are keen to collaborate on SDG projects, of particular note is the number of renewable energy businesses in the county and opportunity to link these to SDGs. It is likely that collaboration will take place on training on the SDGs and sustainability.

The Climate Action Team and Age Friendly Team are going to further collaborate with ICRAAG on the 'Purls of Wisdom' project. This will connect older people with scientists to start a climate conversation while producing climate related wool craft pieces. The initial pilot was very successful with a lot of external interest in the project.

The Low Carbon and Climate Action Bill is being progressed to enactment, this will put specific obligations on local authorities to create a Climate Action Plan within 18 months, addressing both mitigation and adaptation. Currently seeking clarification, through Dublin CARO, on the need to do another CAP as Meath and Dublin authorities address both mitigation and adaptation in their plans. It is expected the new legislation will be enacted before or after the publication of the national Climate Action Plan 2021 in June.

Public Sector Innovation Fund application being made to publicise the SDGs across the county and provide citizen training on same.

National Environmental Enforcement Priorities 2021

The National Waste Enforcement Steering Committee has agreed the following as being the priorities for 2020:

- Waste collection – Household & Commercial – Household and Commercial Waste Segregation;
- Construction and Demolition Activity -unauthorised disposal of C & D waste, Article 27 Notifications & Skip Operators;
- End of Life Vehicles Directive and Metals Industry -inspection of both authorised ELV sites and unauthorised operators, storage of immobilised Vehicles;
- Tackling significant illegal waste activity –illegal dumping, unauthorised operators, man in the van activities;
- Multi Agency Sites of Interest -where there are reasonable grounds to believe that there is on-going illegal activity.

Public Consultation on proposed ban on the sale and burning of smoky coal.

The Minister for the Environment, Climate and Communications, has launched a public consultation in respect of the imposition of a nationwide ban on the sale and burning of smoky coal and the regulation of other fuels, as part of a drive to combat air pollution and protect public health. The consultation seeks the views on the further regulation of solid fuel use for domestic home heating, and is inviting the public, health professionals, other experts, NGOs and those involved in the industry to partake.

The consultation document and submission options are available on gov.ie with Friday 2nd April being the closing date

Rooske Road Burial Ground Extension Dunboyne

Work is continuing on the extension to the Rooske Road Cemetery in Dunboyne, with additional capacity to be available by the end of April. Further expansion is planned which involves the acquisition of some adjoining lands which will facilitate the provision of parking and other associated facilities. Some development will be the subject of a Part 8 planning process in the coming months.

Community

Governance Structures

Local Community Development Committee (LCDC)

Next meeting is scheduled to take place on February 26, 2021 where the LCDC will consider the recommendation to approve the 2020 SICAP End of Year report. The LCDC will receive details of the 2020 Annual Report.

LEADER Programme 2014-2020

Meeting of the LAG is scheduled to take place on February 26, 2021. The LAG will receive details of the LEADER annual progress report 2020 and receive a list of EOIs.

Joint Policing Committee

The next Meeting of the JPC is scheduled for March 8, 2021.

Age Friendly County programme (AF)

Meath Age Friendly continues to work with the Library, Arts, Sports Partnership, Climate Change and Biodiversity Teams to roll out initiatives under the Keep Well national campaign which will continue until the end of March. Meath Age Friendly received a grant to purchase tablets to donate to a number of Nursing Homes to enable residents to keep in contact with their families. These tablets have now been delivered to the Nursing homes. Meath Age Friendly has commenced the roll out of the Age Friendly Business initiative in Athboy. This initiative encourages businesses to get involved and ensure their property is easily accessible both inside and out to older persons.

Meath Public Participation Network (PPN)

Meath PPN Spring Training 2021 Programme was launched on February 5th. A range of courses will be available online over the coming weeks to support the work of Meath PPN members and build the capacity of groups in the network. The courses are free and will be delivered by experienced trainers from Social Justice Ireland and the Carmichael Centre. The classes cover a wide range of areas: from finance, to communication and what the PPN is itself. The programme is an also an opportunity to support groups and work together.

Comhairle na n'Óg

Two members of Meath Comhairle made a 10-minute presentation on its new topic of "Community Facilities for young people" to the Full Council Meeting at the February Meeting. This was well received, and an article appeared in the Meath Chronicle. Co-ordinator training took place in February for Comhairle Co-ordinators.

Grant Schemes

Carranstown Grant Scheme

The scheme is now open to receive applications with a closing date scheduled for February 26, 2021.

Outdoor Recreation Infrastructure Scheme 2020

The Council is still awaiting a decision by the Department for Rural and Community Development on the 3 applications submitted under Measure 2 and one under Measure 3 of the ORIS scheme.

Community Amenity Project Scheme

Reminders have issued for submission of claims for 2019 & 2020 schemes. Some groups are experiencing delays due to Covid 19 restrictions.

Community Enhancement Programme

A total of €72K has been paid to date and reminders have been issued as some groups have been delayed completing their projects due to the current level of restrictions. An extension for the submission of claims to June 2021 has been granted by the Department for the CEP for Community Buildings only.

The Community Grant Scheme 2021

The Community Grant Scheme launched on Tuesday 26th January, closing date is Friday 12th March 2021. Application forms and details are available from the Community Section and on www.meath.ie

Covid-19 Emergency Fund – 2nd Round

The closing date for the receipt of completed application forms was Wednesday 27th January 2021. 42 applications were received; the draft allocations will be presented to the LCDC for approval at their meeting on Friday 26th February 2021.

Other Policy Areas

National Broadband Plan- BCPs

New sites for BCPs in Kilskyre and Ballinlough were surveyed for wireless point-to-point connections on February 15th. Other sites are subject to contract discussions between NBI and the wireless link provider along with 679 schools nationally of which 30 are in Meath. The list of these schools is available at <https://nbi.ie/primary-schools-list/>

WiFi4EU

Delivery of WiFi4EU has been delayed due to Covid19 restrictions on accessing some buildings.

Healthy Ireland - Keep Well Campaign

The campaign is being co-ordinated at a local level by Meath County Council and the Meath Healthy Ireland co-ordinator. An allocation of funding has been provided by the Department of Health to help fund local initiatives. The campaign will run until the end of March.

Libraries Service

Library Services Overview

Due to Level 5 restrictions all twelve branches in the county remain closed for browsing and lending. Online services will continue to be available. It is possible to:

- join the library online;
- download eBooks and eAudiobooks;
- read magazines and newspapers
- take eLearning or language courses;
- watch or listen to storytimes; or,
- take part in other activities like online quizzes.

Borrowbox Service

Any registered library user can sign up for the Borrowbox service, download the app, and begin to borrow eBooks and eAudiobooks from the national eBook collection. Stock is selected by a purchasing team of two librarians from two local authorities, and staff in local authorities can make recommendations on content purchasing based on user requests. Library users have an allocation of five loans across both eBooks and eAudiobooks. Titles are loaned for up to three weeks. The allocation of five loans can be used for reserving titles currently on loan also, for example a user could divide and use their allocation as one eBook loan, one eAudiobook loan and three eBook reserves.

As of February 2021, Meath borrowers have access to the national collection comprising of:

- 46,872 eBooks
- 35,224 eAudiobooks

Titles are also available in non-English languages – Irish, French, German, Russian, Spanish, Polish, Italian, and Swedish.

Digital Content

All staff are very actively engaged in creating and curating digital content to meet the high demand for online events and activities. Courses delivered with funding from the 'Keep Well' programme have proven to be particularly popular with large numbers registering for both the 'Creative Writing' and 'A Short History of the Irish Revolution' courses. These courses are provided in addition to the online content delivered through the 'Healthy Ireland at Your Library' programme and the weekly library programming.

The following is a sample of events in February

- Weekly Storytime
- Harry Potter night
- Launch of World Book Day competition for schools-design a mascot
- Valentine's Competition - Library Love Story

Ireland Reads

Ireland Reads is a new library campaign to encourage as many people as possible to get reading. The campaign runs throughout February, leading up to 'Ireland Reads Day' on February 25th.



What's it all about? Ireland Reads is about promoting the power of reading for enjoyment and wellbeing, combatting lockdown by encouraging everyone, young and old, to get back into the habit of reading and regularly setting aside time to sit and read a book, a poem, a comic, a newspaper, whatever works for them!

What is planned so far? A full programme of online events will be delivered over the course of February 25th. Meath County Library will stage a 'takeover' of the Meath County Council Facebook page and share locally produced reading related content and promotions. Guest authors including Manchán Magan and Monica McInerney will share their favourite reads.

- Adult Book Clubs in the 4 larger libraries will resume their meetings in February via Zoom.
- A new virtual Adult Book Club is being established.
- A new virtual Young Adult Book Club is being established.

Interviews and readings with guest authors including Nicola Pierce, Paddy Smith and Manchán Magan will form just part of an exciting and varied programme.

Laptop for Loan – Update

The Laptop for Loan initiative is continuing to meet the needs of second level students especially during the current phase of school closures.

To date 832 laptops have been distributed to 18 Post Primary Schools, the Mosney Accommodation Centre and LMETB. A further 70 laptops are on order for distribution to organisations working with those that are educationally/economically/socially disadvantaged or excluded.

Age Friendly Libraries

Meath County Library is participating in a national Digital Library Ambassadors Project aimed at increasing BorrowBox use among older people while we are closed to the public. The pilot was developed by Age Friendly Ireland and Libraries Development.



The project was launched by Ms. Mary Butler TD Minister of State with responsibility for Mental Health and Older People at the end of January. The publicity and general social media activity around the project has succeeded in reaching new audiences and library staff in Meath are now trained and equipped to run this new service in accordance with Age Friendly guidelines.

Colmcille 1500

The library service is working in partnership with Donegal County Council to devise and deliver a

- Colmcille Education Pack
- Colmcille Digital School Folklore project

The timelines for the delivery of the projects will be determined by school openings and timetabling considerations.

Multiple copies of *Exploring the world of Colmcille* have been purchased for classroom use in Kells schools and copies have also been added to our countywide classroom lending service.

There is on-going collaboration with the local Colmcille 1500 committee in the delivery of the above and related projects.



Decade of Centenaries

Meath History Workshop has been commissioned to research and write a new biography of Eamon Duggan. The new work *Eamon Duggan – counsellor to the revolution* will be published in November to coincide with the commemoration of the signing of the Anglo–Irish Treaty.

From his joining of the Irish Volunteers in 1914 through to his final days campaigning in the local elections in 1936, Eamon Duggan was both a witness and a participant in most of the seminal events linked to the formation of the state. These included the Easter Rising, the 1918 election and the founding of the First Dáil, the attempts to administer a ‘shadow state’ between 1919 and 1922, the War of Independence, the truce of July 1921 and the signing of the Treaty. His commitment to the cause was not without cost, both physical and mental. Imprisoned twice, and on the run for many months between 1918 and 1921, he was obliged to abandon his busy legal practice. Through the 1920s he served in a variety of senior roles in Cumann na nGaedheal governments and, of course, as TD for Meath having been first elected for Sinn Féin 1918.

Although born in Armagh, Eamonn Duggan’s links to Meath were deep and enduring. His mother, Margaret, was a member of the Dunn family with roots in the Longwood area going back generations. Starting with childhood visits to his mother’s relations, Duggan maintained close contact with the area throughout his life, especially with the Giles family, his cousins, in Brackinrainey. By the time of his sudden death, aged 58, in 1936 he was regarded as a son of the county.

This publication marks the centenary of the Anglo-Irish Treaty of which Eamon Duggan was a signatory. It records his role in the turbulent years up to 1922 and assesses his contribution to the new state in the years that followed. This volume forms a key part of Meath County Council’s *Decade of Centenaries 2013-2023* programme and will be required reading for students, academics and the general public.

The final publication will build on research conducted by the Duggan family. Dr Peter Connell will lead the Meath History Workshop in the preparation of the new work.

Grants - Spring 2021 Funding Cycle

The 2021 Spring Funding Cycle includes five individual grants and bursary streams, featuring a combination of new funding opportunities and previous grant schemes:

- Professional Artists Development Fund;
- Annual Arts Grant; and
- Festival Grant Scheme;

Two new schemes:

- Digital Equipment Purchase Scheme;
- Arts Sector CPD Fund.

This funding cycle has been devised in direct response to the challenges faced by the local arts sector owing to the Covid-19 pandemic. The individual funding streams cover a wide range of disciplines, arts practices and activities and are intended to enable artists continue to develop their work and projects which may have been impacted by the current public health restrictions.



This funding cycle also aims to assist arts communities, groups and organisations adapt their activities to meet the demands of this new environment.

The Arts Office Spring Funding Cycle forms part of a suite of supports provided to artists in the county. These supports have been strengthened in 2021 with additional funding from the Arts Council of Ireland and Creative Ireland. A further number of funding opportunities will be announced in the coming months.

In addition to the introduction of new funding streams, the funding application process has been moved online for 2021. Once again, responding to the change in current environments, the new online application process aims to make applying for arts office support an easier task. Inviting artists to complete application forms and submit these and support materials digitally, the process eliminates the need for printing and posting applications, thus greatly reducing risk and work for applicants. Information on funding streams and the new digital application process can be found at: <https://www.meath.ie/council/council-services/arts/meath-county-council-arts-funding>

The closing date for applications is Wednesday, 24th March 2021 @ 1pm.

National Funding Initiatives

The Arts Office has been active in pursuing funding opportunities for artists and creatives in Meath and has made submissions under a number of new national initiatives including the Arts Council 'Grand Stretch' programme, Creative Ireland and the Department of Rural & Community Development BCP Thematic Programme - Arts & Culture.

Music Generation Meath - Update

Music Generation Meath (MGM) has gotten off to a great start in 2021. Schools programmes have continued in three schools and one Youthreach centre, providing tuition in Early Years, Violin, Guitar and Ukulele. These are provided by a combination of pre-recorded videos and live Zoom sessions and engage with approximately 425 students across these centres.

MGM has also started a Meath Youth Choir, taking people from all over the county, who rehearse weekly – and currently has 28 members. A county wide weekly Music Production Course provides both beginner and intermediate lessons to 18 students. A midterm break Song Writing course was booked out with a waiting list for cancellations.

In February, the MGM lockdown sessions began for parents and babies in partnership with Meath Libraries. These are live Zoom sessions run weekly for the duration of lockdown and will be extended if the lockdown also extends. This has received an incredible response with approximately 100 people from all over Meath applying for 48 spaces. This is an area MGM hopes to expand on and have been providing some CPD opportunities to their musicians interested in this area.

Economic Development

Overview of Activity

Activity	Approvals
Mentoring Assignments	35
Trading Online Vouchers Approved	4
Training Courses Attended (online)	81
Trading Information Seminars Attended (Online)	30
LEO Fund Grants Approved	4

National Enterprise Awards

Qualitas Electronics, Duleek, won the overall NorthEast Region category at the National Enterprise Awards in February. Qualitas Electronics is a Meath LEO client.

Meath Business Owners Network

The MBON (Meath Business Owners Network) **was** launched in January 2021. **It's a relaxed** opportunity to get to know others within the network, discuss enterprise and build strong, supportive business relationships. The Meath Business Owners Network is a partnership between County Meath Chamber and Meath Local Enterprise Office, and meets on the third Friday of each month.

Training Brochure

New LEO Meath Training Brochure launched and available at:

<https://www.localenterprise.ie/Meath/Image%20Library/Training-Courses-Brochure-2021.pdf>

Local Enterprise Week

Dates for Local Enterprise Week announced March 1st – 5th Details available at

<https://www.localenterprise.ie/Meath/Enterprise-Development/Local-Enterprise-Week/>

All local, regional and national events will be online event this year.

Meath Women in Business Network will launch during Local Enterprise Week, with Minister Helen McEntee T.D Minister for Justice.

Finance Section

Commercial Rates

Commercial Rates Waiver Scheme: Progress has been made regarding the waiver for Quarter 1, 2021 and is virtually complete. At present 2006 businesses have had the waiver applied to their Commercial Rates account totalling €2,972,831.

It should be noted that this waiver scheme has different eligibility criteria in comparison to previous waiver schemes. The waiver will be seen on Commercial Rates demands as an adjustment (which will contain information on the waiver) and on statements that will issue approximately 2 weeks later. This information is on the Council's website at <https://www.meath.ie/council/news/commercial-rates-waiver-quarter-1-2021> and has already been advertised on our social media channels.

Business Support Scheme 2020: This has been applied to 2006 customer accounts that qualified under the terms of the scheme. A total of €376,224 of credit was applied to these accounts.

Housing Loans

The 3 month mortgage payment break has been extended to a possible 12 month payment break. The assessment, processing and engagement with customers is on-going. 43 loan customers have availed of the scheme at present and are at various stages of the process. The deadline of availing of the first 3 month break has been extended to the 31st March 2021.

Loans Data 1st February 2018 to 16th February 2021	
Applications Received	400
Applications Returned	16
Applications awaiting further information not Submitted to Housing Agency	1
Applications Submitted to Housing Agency for Assessment/Recommendation	383
Applications Awaiting Assessment /Recommendation by Housing Agency	6
Applications Awaiting Decision by Meath County Council Credit Committee	4
Applications Approved by the Meath County Council Credit Committee	232
Applications Refused by the Meath County Council Credit Committee	141
	383
Approvals Drawdown by Customer for House Purchase (includes restructuring)	154
No of customers in MARP	34