



comhairle chontae na mí
meath county council

Chief Executive's Report for Elected Members

Monthly Management Report
April 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 remains a 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. We are awaiting further information from Government on the relaxation of the public health measures and we will respond accordingly.

The Covid-19 case numbers in Meath during March were very high, with the Navan and Ashbourne MDs experiencing significantly higher than average 14 day incident rates. At regional level, we have been working with the HSE, An Garda Síochána and others to address the current situation, with a specific focus on Meath. Over half of all cases in the North East in recent weeks have occurred in Meath. This multi-agency cooperation is well established and will continue as implementation of the national vaccination programme ramps-up in the coming weeks.

I look forward to your continued cooperation as we work through the current situation with a sense of hope that there are better days ahead later this year.

Thank You,

Jackie Maguire
Chief Executive

Covid-19 – Response to Public Health Measures

Level 5 Restrictions

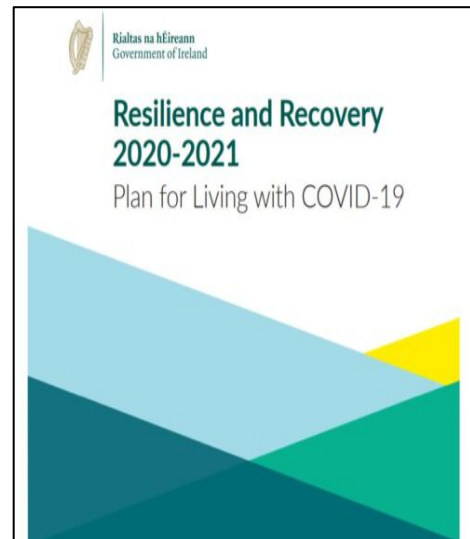
The decisions of Government at the end of March regarding the easing of public health restrictions will have little direct impact on the Council or its services.

As Local Authorities are recognised under the Government's Resilience and Recovery Plan for Living with COVID-19 as being an essential service, the Council will continue to operate as it has done since the beginning of the year.

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 has commenced with a view to revisions being presented to the Council at the May Monthly meeting for consideration and approval. It is also intended to similarly revise the Municipal District Standing Orders.

Call to Establish a Local Women's Caucus: The Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage has issued a call for proposals to all local authorities to establish a local caucus of women councillors. A meeting for all 14 female members of Meath County Council took place at the end of March to discuss the merits of establishing such a caucus in Meath, how it might work and the activities it would undertake. The deadline of submissions is April 14th and it is intended to make a proposal to establish a caucus in Meath.

Events - Communications

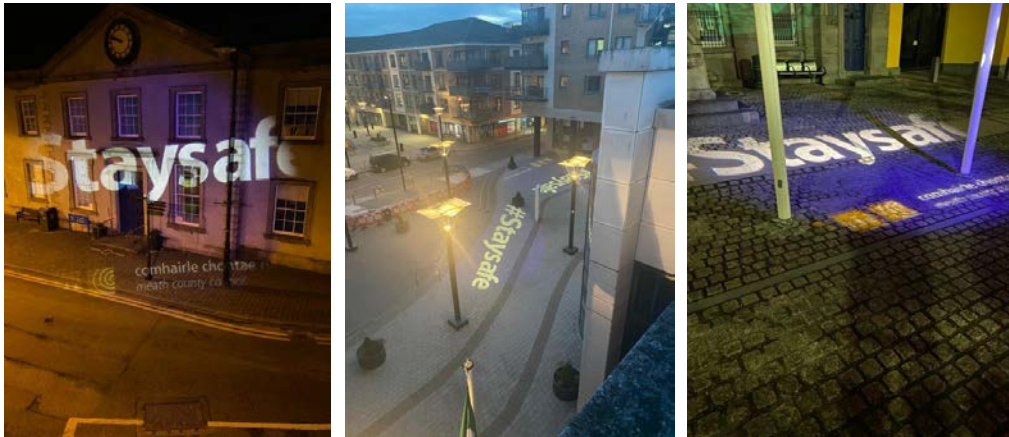
Covid-19 Communications – The Council has worked closely with the HSE and An Garda Síochána in strengthening some of the public health messaging locally on Covid-19. During the month of March the 14 day incidence rates in parts of the county were some of the highest in the country. These levels of positive cases bring a higher risk of exposure to the virus, which prompted the HSE to establish a pop-up, walk-in test centre in Navan, from April 1st.



The Council's Communications Team is implementing a programme of local messaging across social media, newspapers and local radio, in association with the HSE and AGS, to encourage higher levels of compliance with the guidelines, especially during the Easter period and as the case numbers remain high.

Lighting of Public Buildings and Spaces – To help reinforce the public health messaging locally a number of public buildings and open spaces across the county have been illuminated with the

#staysafe message. These will remain in place for a number of weeks. Buildings were also illuminated in Green and with shamrocks for the St. Patrick's Day holiday period.



Illuminations in Trim, Ashbourne and Kells

Meath Alerts – Free Alert Service – Open for Subscribers

Meath County Council's free alert service for people living or working in County Meath is being rolled-out to the public this month. This service gives people timely information on things that may affect their daily lives including notices relating to road works and traffic, water outages, planning applications in their community, community activities and other isolated events such as severe weather emergencies.



The service is completely free, there is no cost to receive alerts through any channel, including by SMS text messages. Log onto: <https://alerts.meath.ie/en/> and subscribe to get alerts by SMS Text Alert and email from Meath County Council.

Staff Retirements

The following staff members have retired from the Council in Q1 of 2021:

- Thomas McGuinness – Water Services – Retired 10/01/2021.

Building Facilities

Buvinda Chamber - The Council's Design Team met with a representative group of Councillors on March 22nd, and discussed the proposed layout and functionality of the proposed Chamber to be constructed at Buvinda House. At this meeting Councillors had queries relating to the layout of the Council Chamber, public seating, Councillors' meeting rooms, AV equipment and alternative uses. The Design Team responded to all queries and will consider the comments made by the Councillors in the preparation of the final layout, being prepared for the planning process.

It was agreed that the Design Team would arrange a pre-planning meeting with An Bord Pleanála, to get their view prior to finalising the design. If there are no major design changes following the pre-planning meeting, the design of the proposed project will be presented to a Full Council meeting.

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	Q4 2021	Q2 2022
Nangle Court, Navan	16	2,961,862	Q4 2021	Q4 2022
Church View, Rathmoylon	22	5,476,215	Q4 2021	Q4 2022
Haggard Street, Trim	4	931,870	Q2 2022	Q1 2023
Kildalkey Road, Athboy	20	4,358,112	Q2 2022	Q1 2023
Carrick Street Regeneration, Kells	43	10,225,755	-	-
Totals	107	24,516,980		
PART 8 PLANNING PROCESS				
Ashbourne	76	19,730,587	Q3 2021	Q1 2023
Kells Archdeaconary	20	3,826,010	Q4 2021	Q4 2022
Farganstown	84	24,630,457	-	-
Totals	180	48,187,054		
TENDER FOR CONSTRUCTION				
Donore	21	4,524,250	Q4 2021	Q3 2022
Lagore, Dunshaughlin	42	9,850,185	Q4 2021	Q2 2023
Totals	63	14,374,435		
CONSTRUCTION STAGE				
Lagore, Dunshaughlin	26	5,813,948	Q1 2020	Q3 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	565	136,060,516		

* 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
Duleek	Part V	2	458,675
Stamullen	Part V	3	812,353
Totals		13	3,124,503

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
Totals		19	5,000,268

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

Two LIHAF Cost Reduced Units (Ratoath) have been advertised. Closing date for receipt of applications was 26th March 2021.

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

On the 1st March 2021, The Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage announced an allocation of €2,541,833 to Meath County Council for 2020 under the Housing Adaptation Grant Schemes for Older People and People with a Disability. A sum of €508,367 of this allocation must be provided by Meath County Council from its own resources.

Grants to the value of €663,474 have been awarded by Meath County Council to 95 Households under the various Grants schemes to date in 2020.

Local Authority Adaptation Works Scheme

A total of 4 projects completed to date in 2021 (€42,139), with a further 8 task orders issued to contractors (€72,383)

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 March 2021. For the period from 16th February 2021 to 16th March 2021, works were completed on 8 vacant units; while 8 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	8	0	0	8	0
Laytown/Bettystown	3	1	**2	6	0
Navan	6	0	0	5	1
Ratoath	4	0	1	5	0
Trim	4	0	**2	6	0
TOTALS	27	1	7	34	1

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

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
Bridge Street, Ashbourne	20	Peter McVerry Trust	Delivery Due – Q4 2022
Tailteann, Navan	8	Meath Women’s Refuge	Delivery Due – Q1 2023
TOTAL UNITS TO BE DELIVERED	401		

Homelessness

	SINGLE ADULTS/COUPLES	HOUSEHOLDS WITH CHILDREN	TOTAL HOUSEHOLDS
Placements at 31st January 2021 (Previous Reported Figure)	137 (142)	28 (43 Adults, 67 Children)	165
Placements at 28th February 2021	134 (138)	27 (41 Adults, 62 Children)	161
<p>Of the 27 households with children, 14 families are placed in short term private rented accommodation (house/apartment) through Settlement Team's intervention and 6 Families in PMVT Family Hubs.</p> <p>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.</p>			

Some 25 tenancies were secured through the support provided by the Homeless HAP Placefinder Service for the period January 1st to February 28th 2021

Social Housing Supports

A total of 169 new applications for Social Housing Support were received for the period January 1st to 28th February 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 28th February 2021.

Allocations/Housing Supports	Number
MCC Direct Allocations	70
Approved Housing Bodies	27
RAS	0
HAP	98
TOTAL	195

Planning Services

Planning Applications

A total of 538 planning applications were received in the period 01/01/2021 to 23/03/2021. This is compared to 392 in the same period last year, a 37% increase in the number of applications.

Development Contributions

Development Contribution receipts for February 2021 were €1,208,346. This is compared to €730,139 in the same period last year. (Figures are not inclusive of Irish Water receipts)

Planning Enforcement Complaints

A total of 50 planning enforcement cases have been opened up to 23/03/2021. A total of 316 cases were opened in 2020. Complaints have increased and this is attributed to people out walking more due to lockdown measures.

Elected Members are reminded that the Planning Enforcement Section is unable to provide details with regards to enforcement cases. The advice from our Law Agent states that to do so could prejudice the outcome of any legal case the Council takes.

County Development Plan

In the region of 300 changes were made to the Draft Plan as a result of Councillor's directions. These are being sent to our consultants to determine whether they are material or not. Approximately 100 changes related to mapping and zoning. It is anticipated that the material alterations will be placed on public display on 26th May for a period of 4 weeks.



Transportation

National Roads

2021 funding from TII confirmed - €7,629,918

N51 Dunmoe Phase 2	Main construction & consultancy services contract tender assessment ongoing. Advance hedge/tree removal contract complete
N2 Slane Bypass	RPS progressing Phase 3 design. Site Investigation Contract complete. Seasonal Ecology (Wintering Birds) survey ongoing. Landowner meetings ongoing
N2 Rath Roundabout to Kilmoon	The third public consultation is currently ongoing by means of an online virtual consultation room which displays the Emerging Preferred Options (EPO) for the scheme. Affected landowners and residents can book a meeting with the design team through the website to discuss the EPO. PC3 has been extended and submissions on this EPO will be accepted up to 22nd April 2021
N52 Grange to Clontail	Part 8 CE report has been accepted by the members and the project, subject to TII approval, will proceed to Phase 4 – Statutory Processes. Atkins finalising Phase 3 design.
NS Resurfacing	Pavement designs and tender document preparation ongoing for 2021 schemes.

Non- National Roads

2021 funding from DoT – €26,145,367 in total

R162 Kilberry Traffic Calming	Phase 1 works expected to be substantially complete within 3 weeks of being allowed to reopen the site post Level 5 Covid lock down. Section 38 non-statutory public consultation re proposed next phase (Phase 2) ongoing from 17th March to 14th April 2021.
Road Works Programme	Preparation ongoing for the 2021 Restoration Maintenance Grant (Surface Dressing) and the Restoration Improvement Grant schemes. Surface Dressing contract & one Restoration Improvement contract at Tender Assessment stage. One further Restoration Improvement contract out to Tender

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
Newhaggard Road	R161	Trim	Traffic Lights installed - waiting on ESB to complete connection
Oberstown Cross Skyrne	L1005	Ashbourne	Flashing lights installed – works complete

2021 Schemes	Road	MD	Status
Newgate	R147	Navan	At Design Stage
Liscarton	R147	Navan	At Design Stage

Cabinhill	L-1006-0	Ratoath	Consultation with Landowners
Clonguiffin, Longwood	L-4020 / L-80142-47/ L-2226-0	Trim	Consultation with Landowners
Donaghpatrick	L-3409-18 / L-7414-12	Kells	At Design Stage
Kilmore Moynalvey	R-156 / L-62161	Ratoath	At Design Stage
Cabinhill Reask Junction	L-5006-25 / L-5024-8	Ashbourne	Landowner issues – safety works scheme may not proceed

Bridge Rehabilitation Works Regional & Local Roads

DoT Grant Allocation for 6 new Bridge Rehabilitation Schemes for 2021 - €555,000

2020 Schemes	Status
Stoneyford Bridge	Works due for completion by start of April
Kilmainhamwood and Donaghmore	Design of repairs to retaining walls and embankments are ongoing

2021 Schemes	Status
Clavens Bridge (R147)	Tender docs for appointment of consultants for design of repairs being prepared
Julianstown Bridge (R132)	Tenders assessment underway for design of the remedial works
Gibber Bridge (L-7400), Breakey Bridge (L-2805), Johnstown Culvert (L-5050) & Ashfield Bridge (L-8029)	Consultants appointed to design remedial works

Sustainable Transport Measures

Grants 2021 from NTA – €12,885,000

Navan Town Scheme (Navan 2030)	Surfacing works complete at Abbey Rd roundabouts, Circular Rd & Bridge St. Signage & road marking complete. ESB overhead cables removed from Bridge Str and undergrounded. The signalisation of Bridge St/ Ludlow St/ Academy St junction was completed and new pedestrian crossings activated. Paving works & bases for art features to the roundabout islands commenced.
Navan Town Bus Stops	Letter of Acceptance (appointment) has issued to the Contractor for the main bus stop installation works, which are expected to commence on 12 th April.
Athlumney to Trim Road Cycle and Pedestrian Scheme	Athlumney to Trim Rd Cycle & Pedestrian Scheme is currently in Phase 4 - Detailed Design and Tender Stage. The geometric design for both Phase 1 (Beechmount to Solstice Roundabout) and Phase 2 of the scheme has been completed. Design team currently working on drainage and Traffic signal design. Procurement of Ground Investigation Contractor, CCTV Contractor and Land Valuation Consultant undertaken in March
N51 Park & Ride	The six week period has passed and no special meeting or amendments have been made to the Part 8 proposal. Tender documents have issued for the archaeological investigation works for the site.
R154 Kiltale Traffic calming and junction improvement scheme	Works recommenced on site on 8th March and expected to be substantially completed by end of May 2021.

Ratoath Cycle Network	Meeting held with Cllr & reps of the Woodlands Road Residents, alternative design layouts for the Woodlands road section discussed – locals don't want segregated walking & cycling facilities as it will involve tree removal and shrub / overgrowth removal on the South West side of the road. Alternatives discussed showed 11 no trees to be removed. An alternative option to reduce the loss further is to be developed – a topographical survey & Autocad works required to rearrange carparking etc. NTA agreement on the reduced level of service for cyclist/pedestrians will be required before agreeing to any alternative layouts
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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.

Non- National Roads & Sustainable Transport Schemes 2021

Funding other than DoT & NTA

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 ran from 26 th February to 22 nd March 2021. Assessment of routes to identify emerging preferred route ongoing.
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Other Actions/ Projects

Risk Mitigation – Footpath Improvement Works	<p>Kells MD – Athboy (Church View & St Joseph Villas estates) at contractor appointment stage, Construction works commence on the 29/03/2021</p> <p>Ashbourne MD – Proposed Schemes in Ardcath (Church View Housing Estate); Stamullen (Mountain View Housing Estate entrance); Bellewstown (Woodview Estate) due to commence construction works on 12/04/2021.</p> <p>Trim MD – Kildalkey Rd and Mornington Heights at contract award stage</p> <p>Laytown/ Bettystown MD - Coney Hall Mornington – due to commence construction works on 29/03/2021</p> <p>Navan MD – Blackcastle Estate – works commenced on site on 24/03/2021. 8-10 week programme.</p> <p>Works proceeding on survey and measure of next projects including Clonmagadden Rd.</p>
Public Lighting Capital Programme	Programme of Capital Public Lighting Schemes - Schemes selected in 2020 are 75% complete – on hold while maintenance works are progressed
Milltown Rd/Ashbourne-Rd Safety Improvement Scheme	Construction works complete - crew of 2 on site working on snag items – due to be fully off site by the end of March
R135 Cycle Network Design	Received approval from the NTA to proceed with the detailed design. CCTV contractor to be appointed for the CCTV surveys and on site by end of March.
Town & Village Renewal Scheme	Ramparts Boyne Walk Refurbishment Scheme – Works complete on 22 nd Mar 2021

Environment

Waste Prevention, Reduction and Litter

Green Kilometre Scheme for Meath - The Green Kilometre Scheme continues to attract interest and participation from many groups and individuals around the county who wish to contribute to their local community, especially since Covid. 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.

Over 170 groups are now taking part and comprising of small family 'walk & litter pick', to whole community clean-ups producing van loads of bags. Such has been the increase in participation that a second collection service truck has had to be engaged and at this stage over 4,000 bags of rubbish have been collected



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.

Notice of Intention to commence preparation of the National Waste Management Plan for a Circular Economy - Notice in respect of the preparation of the above plan was recently published in national newspapers and on social media including at www.mywaste.ie where a briefing note and the current Regional Waste Management plans can be viewed. This plan which will replace the current three plans will be subject to a Strategic Environmental Assessment and an Appropriate Assessment. Written submissions in relation to the preparation of the plan can be made to info@srwmo.ie or by post to Southern Region Waste Management Office, Lissanalta House, Dooradoyle Road, Limerick V94 K6PO. The closing date for such submissions is the 6th May 2021.

Anti-Dumping Campaign - The Minister for the Environment, Climate and Communications launched a new communications 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-Dumping Initiative - It is expected that details of this scheme will be announced shortly by the Department of Communications, Climate Action and Environment. Under this scheme Government funding is provided to Local Authorities who in collaboration with local community groups and other state agencies arrange for the clean-up of locations which are subject to continual dumping. If the Elected Members are aware of any location which might qualify under this scheme, please advise the Environment Section of same.

Anti-Litter and Anti-Graffiti Awareness Grant (ALAGS) - Meath County Council received €22,700 in support for Anti-Litter activities which 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 commenced on Tuesday 23rd March 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 – 30 Community Groups attended the first session.

Code of Practice for Domestic Waste Water Treatment Systems.

The EPA in association with the Minister for the Environment, Climate and Communications and the Minister for Housing, Local Government and Heritage have issued a code of practice for domestic wastewater treatment systems and replacing the 2009 code of practice serving single houses.

The Code of Practice establishes an overall framework of best practice in relation to the development of domestic wastewater treatment systems, in unsewered rural areas, for protection of our environment and specifically water quality and human health.

The [2021 Code of Practice for Domestic Waste Water Treatment Systems](#) (Population Equivalent ≤ 10) applies to site assessments and subsequent installations carried out on or after June 7, 2021.

The Code of Practice sets out a methodology for site assessment and selection, installation and maintenance of an appropriate domestic wastewater treatment system. It includes information on:

- policy and legal background;
- wastewater characteristics and loadings;
- how to characterise a site and decide on the type of domestic wastewater treatment system;
- required minimum separation distances, depths of unsaturated soil and/or subsoil above the bedrock and the water table, and percolation values; and
- design, installation, operation and maintenance.

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 the subject of extensive public consultation before the final plan is published in December 2021. The EPA provides technical input and advice to the 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.

Climate Action

The new Climate Action and Low Carbon (Amendment) Bill 2020 was passed by Cabinet on March 23rd, which will put specific obligations on local authorities to create a Climate Action Plan (CAP) within 18 months, addressing both mitigation and adaptation. The Council is 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 current plans.

It is expected the new legislation will be enacted in or around the publication of the national Climate Action Plan 2021 in June.

The Council hosted a PPN workshop March 24th. Opportunity to make an online submission, with the portal open from 23.03.21 until 18.05.21. Local authorities are expected to lead on and champion the CAP21.

The Council has been successful in an URBACT application to localise the SDGs. 19 cities across Europe are part of the project with Tallinn as the Lead City. Meath is the only location in Ireland selected. It's a 22 month project and 70% ERDF funded.

MCC became the first (and only) EU Climate Pact Ambassador, this is part of the EU Green Deal.

Decarbonisation Zones as per Action 156 of the Climate Action Plan 2019 (CAP2019) picking up momentum. Nominated town/area must be made by 30.04.21 and implementation plan submitted by 31.12.21. Innovation, partnership and citizen/stakeholder buy-in will be critical to success. Local authorities 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 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.

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 - ongoing.

The Climate Action & Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) Team is collaborating with the Community and Library Sections of the Council on a number of #KeepWell campaigns including one 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.

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.

A 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 ongoing 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 and with additional capacity to be available by the end of April. Further expansion is planned which involves the acquisition of some adjoining lands and 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 March 26, 2021 where an update on the guidelines for review of LECP will be given.

LEADER Programme 2014-2020

Meeting of the LAG is scheduled to take place on March 26, 2021. The LAG will receive details of progress and any EOIs received.

Joint Policing Committee

The next Meeting of the JPC is scheduled for May 24, 2021.

Age Friendly County programme (AF)

Meath Age Friendly continues to work with the library, Arts, Sports Partnership, Climate Change and Biodiversity Sections to roll out initiatives under the Keep Well national campaign which will continue until June.

Meath Age Friendly has commenced the roll out of the Age Friendly Business initiative in Athboy where 20 businesses attended an Age Friendly Business workshop. This initiative encourages businesses to get involved and ensure their property is easily accessible both inside and out to older persons. A steering committee meets regularly to progress the initiative with a launch planned when restrictions are lifted.

Meath Public Participation Network (PPN)

Meath PPN co- hosted a successful Sustainable Energies Webinar with the Council's Climate Action Team. The Spring Training Programme continued throughout March, with positive feedback from participants. Support and advice were provided to community groups applying for the 2021 Community Grants Scheme. Meath PPN was chosen to host a Climate Action Conversation as part of the Department of Environment, Climate and Communication's National Dialogue on Climate Action.

Comhairle na n'Óg

The Comhairle continues to meet regularly online. It is progressing its topic of Community Facilities for young people and engaging in a consultation piece with NUIG, Trinity and UCD on Covid-19 one year on. Four young people from Meath Comhairle na n'Óg have been selected to represent the county at a National Networking Event which will take place over the Easter, from April 7-9th.

Healthy Ireland - Keep Well Campaign

The campaign is being co-ordinated at a local level by Meath County Council and 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 June.

Grant Schemes

Carranstown Grant Scheme

The scheme closed for applications on February 26, 2021. A meeting of the ICLC to take place on March 30th to review applications.

Outdoor Recreation Infrastructure Scheme 2020

The Department approved one application submitted under Measure 2 for a footpath/cycleway from the Boyne Greenway to Rathmullen Road to the amount of €145,118. Under Measure 3 the Department approved €500,000 towards the Castletown to Nobber Greenway section.

The Community Grant Scheme 2021

The Community Grant Scheme closed on March 12, 2021. Applications to be assessed and allocated in the coming weeks for presentation to the SPC and the full Council.

CLÁR 2021

On March 15, 2021, Heather Humphreys TD, Minister for Rural and Community Development launched the CLÁR 2021 programme. Projects will be considered under the following measures:

- Measure 1: Support for Schools/Community Safety Measure
- Measure 2: Outdoor Community Recreation Facilities
- Measure 3: Community Wellbeing Measure, comprising:
 - (a) Community Gardens & Allotments
 - (b) Mobility and Cancer Care Transport
- Innovation Measure

The closing date for the receipt of expressions of interest to Meath County Council (community@meathcoco.ie) under Measures 1, 2 and 3(a) is Wednesday, April 21, 2021.

The closing date for the receipt of applications under Measure 3(b) is Friday, May 7, 2021 and these are to be submitted directly to the Department of Rural and Community Development at CLAR@DRCD.gov.ie

The closing date for the receipt of expressions of Interest for the Innovation Measure is Friday, May 21, 2021 and these are to be submitted directly to the Department of Rural and Community Development at CLAR@DRCD.gov.ie.

Schools Pride of Place Gardening Scheme

The scheme launched on March 22nd, the closing date for the receipt of application forms is Tuesday, April 13, 2021.

National Broadband Plan- BCPs

New sites for BCPs in Bective and Moynalty were surveyed for wireless point-to-point connections. Two more sites in Cortown and Carnaross Mart are yet to be surveyed.

WiFi4EU

Work has commenced installing new broadband connections to businesses in Navan for the WiFi4EU for the network to go live in April.

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 selection 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

Borrow, download
and enjoy here
Your library in one app.



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.

Meath County Council Library Service Writer in Residence scheme 2021

Meath County Council recently invited applications for a Writer in Residence, under the Creative Ireland Meath programme. The residency runs for the period April 2021 to December 2021 and will be managed by Meath County Council Library Service.

The residency is open to published writers working in any genre of fiction or poetry who have significant experience in delivering high quality writing experiences for children, young people and adults. The Residency is designed to provide the public with an opportunity to meet, and develop creative reading and writing skills, with a practicing writer and enable creative writers to develop their work from home.

The successful applicant will

- Engage with children, young people and adults through the library branch network, with schools, and with existing book clubs and writing groups
- Make use of social media to report on and publicise their residency

Key events will include

- Cruinniú na nÓg June 2021
- Children's Book Festival October 2021
- Family Time at Your Library (early) December 2021

Keep Well Campaign

Grow It Forward - The Grow It Forward campaign is a collaborative programme between the Irish Public Library Service and the Grow It Yourself organisation that supports people to live healthier and more sustainable lives by growing some of their own food. The campaign will run from 23rd March to 30th June.



This project is part of a national programme developed by GIY to support the Government of Ireland's Living with COVID Resilience and Recovery Plan as the lead activation under the Healthy Eating pillar delivered in partnership with the national library network.

For the majority of people, the best way to contribute to Ireland's response to this global public health crisis is to stay positive and stay home. People need to stay physically and mentally well and connected with their family, friends, neighbours or broader community whilst adhering to public health guidelines. Food growing offers a new challenge, fresh air and optimism, with the promise of great home-grown food to look forward to. It also confronts the vulnerable feeling of not knowing where your food comes from, replacing it with a grower's pride.

The general public were invited to register with the library service to receive free seed kits . 824 kits were applied for within the first 24 hours and registration is now closed. All participants were asked to GROW It Forward by sharing their kits as little seedlings, plants in pots or the produce at harvest time to 9 other people.

Grow It Forward eLibrary - The library created a Grow It Forward eLibrary with books and magazines to help hone gardening skills and provide some recipes for cooking the ingredients that will be produced. <https://www.meath.ie/libraries/GrowItForwardeLibrary>

Useful tips and links were also added to the library service Facebook and Twitter accounts and website throughout the campaign.

Participants were also directed to an eLearning Course **Vegetable Gardening 101** with Universal Class. It's a short 3 hour course and it's free to library members.

"Vegetable Gardening" is a 12-part course that is designed for beginners to gardening. If you're interested in learning how to set up, design, and cultivate a vegetable garden, you will find the tips and advice in this course to be a helpful way to get started and to keep your garden growing for years to come.

This course will offer you the basics of how to create a garden in your space, while also helping you prepare the soil, choose the right fertilizers, and prevent weeding troubles. Additionally, you will learn about organic gardening, as well as container gardening when space is limited.

Virtual Portrait Project Age – ‘A Great Reader of a Great Age’

As part of the government’s ‘Keep Well’ Community Resilience Campaign, Meath County Library service and artist Andy Parsons are looking for four participants to join a **Virtual Portrait Project**.

The service is looking for people in County Meath, age 70+ who are in a care home or cocooning at home, missing their social and cultural activities and interested in making new connections at this time. As the title suggests the ideal person from a library perspective should be ‘A Great Reader of a Great Age’.

The process of making the paintings, which involves long online chats about all sorts of different subjects, is as important as the finished paintings, and it adds a unique element to each of artworks. The paintings are completed in acrylic on high quality 50x70cm gesso panels.

The project is attracting very strong interest from the general public and the first portraits will be completed in April.

Economic Development

Overview of Activity

Activity	Approvals
Mentoring Assignments	25
Trading Online Vouchers Approved	21
Training Courses Attended (online)	381
Trading Information Seminars Attended (Online)	34
LEO Fund Grants Approved	4

Student Enterprise Programme

Leo Meath held the virtual Awards Ceremony for the county final of the Student Enterprise Programme on March 22nd. The following student businesses will represent Meath at the National Final on May 14th:



Junior Category: **Hound Stretchers**, Ellie Mc Cluskey from at Scoil Mhuire, Trim with her business which is a local dog walking service.

Intermediate Category: **Mitchelstown Stables**, Jack Kearney from St. Patrick's Classical School, Navan. This business is a service for breaking and pre-training young horses.

Senior Category: **Easy Ex**, Sean Mc Dermott, Oisin Craig, Josh Keating and Carl Mc Govern, St. Ciaran's Community School in Kells. This business designed and produced a range of seven stickers which prompt and encourage home workers to build easy bodyweight exercises into their day.

Additional prizes were awarded by LEO Meath as follows:

Intermediate Category:

2nd Place - Golden Boxes - Andrew Harford, Andrew Smith and Mark Diamond, St Patricks Classical School, Navan - This business makes up a selection of locally sourced vegetables in boxes and sells at farmers market and supplies a shop in Navan. They make up and sell treat boxes too.

3rd Place - Ear Protector Packages - Finn Mc Nally and Jamie Bellew, St Patricks Classical School, Navan - This enterprise makes ear protectors for face masks and sells them in kit with a face mask and a bottle of hand sanitizer.

Senior Category:

2nd Place - Helping Hands for Schools – Levi Fagan, Dunshaughlin Community College - This is poster business that designs and produces a variety of posters. Each poster includes all the letters of the alphabet with each letter being the start of an important safety lesson or definition.

3rd Place - Moon Charmz – Emma Dalton, Ella Wilson, Kate Griffin and Rachel Norman, St Peter's College, Dunboyne - Customizable silver hoop earrings in fully eco-friendly packaging.

Best Senior Video - E&N Décor - Niamh Gordan and Ellie Galvin, St Peter's College, Dunboyne - Design and manufacture of handmade decorations, coasters and ornaments.

Best Intermediate Video - APC – Andrew Canavan, St Patricks Classical School, Navan - Covid Kit consisting of an aluminium phone case, mask and sanitizer.

Innovation: Pi Pros – Gavin Arthur, Evan Keogan and Ethan Kennaugh, St Patrick’s Classical School, Navan - This company designed and built a home internet safety interface which attaches to your modem and blocks viruses entering your home. It is a product which you buy once rather than pay monthly for an online service.

Best Social Media: Wired – Mia Frawley and Rachel Conway, Ratoath College - Wired make rings and jewellery. They went viral with a tik tok video showing a ring being made and got over 700k views and over 100k likes over the course of a few days.

Best Commercial Potential - Shoe Brand - Peter Connolly, Daniel Boyd, Conor Deering and Donal Dempsey, Peter's College, Dunboyne - Shoe Brand provides a service painting and customizing footwear.

Intellectual Property: Seasonal Wood Slices - Barry Fitzsimons, St Patricks Classical School. Decorative wooden pieces for your home, all pieces are unique and hand-made using only fallen timber. The student did an online workshop in Intellectual Property and researched the IPOI website and trade-marked his product.

Finance Section

Commercial Rates

Commercial Rates Waiver Scheme: Quarter 1 of 2021 has been applied to qualifying Commercial Rate accounts totalling €2,972,831.

It should be noted that this waiver scheme has different eligibility criteria in comparison to previous waiver schemes. A waiver for Q2 has been announced and will be applied to qualifying Commercial Rate accounts once the relevant approval has been officially received from the Department. Once applied, statements will issue to Rate Customers showing these adjustments.

Anyone that did not receive the waiver can apply, details on this are on our website and have already been advertised on our social media channels and will be repeated once the Q2 waiver is applied and statements issue. The statements that issue will have information on how to apply for the Commercial Rates Waiver and the new SBASC scheme. All available information on these have been circulated previously to all Elected Members.

Small Business Assistance Scheme for Covid (SBASC): The applications portal is now open and can be made online via <https://sbasc.submit.com/show/1> The processing of these applications will commence as soon as the software to do so is available.

Housing Loans: The 3 month mortgage payment break has been expanded to a possible 12 month payment break. The assessment, processing and engagement with customers is ongoing. 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 22nd March 2021	
Applications Received	409
Applications Returned	16
Applications awaiting further information not Submitted to Housing Agency	7
Applications Submitted to Housing Agency for Assessment/Recommendation	386
Applications Awaiting Assessment /Recommendation by Housing Agency	7
Applications Awaiting Decision by Meath County Council Credit Committee	2
Applications Approved by the Meath County Council Credit Committee	235
Applications Refused by the Meath County Council Credit Committee	142
	386
Approvals Drawdown by Customer for House Purchase (includes restructuring)	158
No of customers in MARP	34