

2023

ANNUAL REPORT

TUARASCÁIL BHLIANTÚIL

Comhairle
Contae
Mhuineacháin
Monaghan
County Council



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Foreword

We are pleased to present this Annual Report for 2023, which outlines the extensive range of services provided directly or indirectly by Monaghan County Council. Within the main body of this report, the various activities and delivery of services and infrastructure projects being progressed by Monaghan County Council, are outlined. As a result of post pandemic challenges and the ongoing conflict in Ukraine, we continued to adapt to deliver all our services and to assist businesses and communities to get through a very challenging year.

Elected Members and staff rose to the challenges of providing additional services such as the increasing demand for Housing supports. There was a high level of commitment across all departments to deliver the 2023 Service Delivery Plan and in achieving the Objectives of our Corporate Plan. Most areas met all of their stated objectives within the limitations placed on us by the ever-rising costs of energy and materials and where the level of achievement was less than 100% it will not have any impact on the Council achieving the objectives of its Corporate Plan.

2023 represented a very successful year on the delivery of key regeneration projects identified in Monaghan County Council's multi-annual capital programme. The new Castleblayney Library, situated at the entrance to Lough Muckno opened its doors in October. The regeneration project was largely funded by the Department of Rural and Community Development's Rural Regeneration Development Fund (RRDF). RRDF Funding also benefited The Ridge Business, Enterprise and Technology Centre, which was officially opened earlier in the year. Both projects represent significant Government and Local Authority commitments to Castleblayney. However, our success in Castleblayney in 2023, is being replicated all throughout the county with similar projects underway including, CTek 2, Carrickmacross, Newbliss Enterprise Centre, Blackwater Valley Enterprise Centre, Bio-Connect Innovation Centre, Dublin Street Regeneration and indeed ongoing work at the magnificent Monaghan Peace Campus.

We would like to commend the Members of the Strategic Policy Committees, the Corporate Policy Group and the Local Community Development Committee and to acknowledge all the work that is carried out at Municipal District Level and by the various other hardworking committees. These committees are invaluable in assisting the Council in pursuing its objectives and getting through its business. The commitment of the Councillors and external members is evident from the activities outlined in the report.

We express our appreciation for the dedication and hard work of the Elected Members, the Management Team and Staff of the Council. We would like to particularly thank the Elected Members who have distinguished themselves in their respective roles, on various committees.

We are confident, given the abilities and spirit of co-operation that is consistently shown by the Elected Members and staff that we will be in a position to meet the challenges that lie ahead. We can look forward to a positive 2024.

We are grateful to Councillor Séan Conlon, outgoing Cathaoirleach, and Councillor Aoife McCooey, outgoing Leas Cathaoirleach, for their commitment and cooperation in the delivery of the Council's high-level goals in 2022/2023. We are confident that the work of the Council and the progress achieved will enhance the quality of life for the people of Monaghan.

Finally, we want to thank you, the people of County Monaghan; it is your sense of pride, community, leadership and volunteerism, that aids us in our work. Your willingness to give freely of your time and talent is greatly appreciated; your efforts make an enormous contribution to our communities.

We commend this Annual Report for adoption by the Elected Members. It will give an overview to the people of County Monaghan and beyond of the broad range of activities undertaken and of the Council's achievements in 2023.

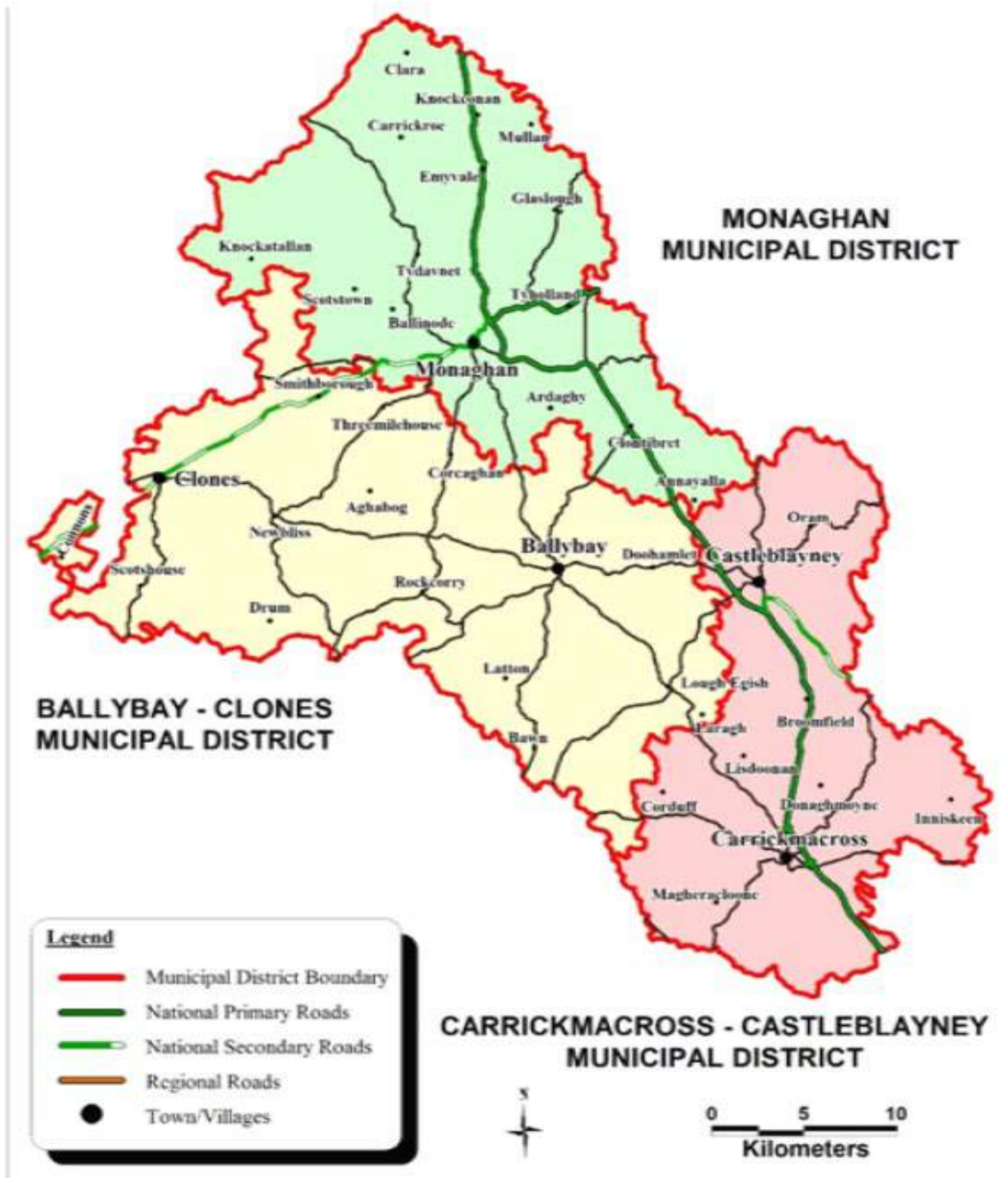


David Maxwell
Cathaoirleach Monaghan County Council



Robert Burns
Chief Executive of Monaghan County Council

District Map / Mission Statement



Mission Statement

*Monaghan County Council provides
High Quality, Sustainable Public Services to enhance the
Economic, Environmental and Cultural Wellbeing
of our People and County.*

Elected Representatives

The following are the Elected Representatives for the County of Monaghan:

BALLYBAY-CLONES MUNICIPAL DISTRICT

				
Cllr Seamus COYLE (FF)	Cllr Pat TREANOR (SF)	Cllr Sean GILLILAND (FG)	Cllr Hugh MCELVANEY (IND)	Cllr Richard TRUELL (FG)

MONAGHAN MUNICIPAL DISTRICT

			
Cllr Sean CONLON (SF)	Cllr Cathy BENNETT (SF)	Cllr Brian MCKENNA (SF)	Cllr Raymond AUGHEY (FF)
			
Cllr David MAXWELL (FG)	Cllr Seamus TREANOR (IND)	Cllr Paudge CONNOLLY (IND)	

CARRICKMACROSS-CASTLEBLAYNEY MUNICIPAL DISTRICT

			
Cllr Aidan CAMPBELL (FG)	Cllr Peter CONLON (FG)	Cllr Aoife MC COOEY (FF)	Cllr PJ O'HANLON (FF)
			
Cllr Noel KEELAN (SF)	Cllr Colm CARTHY (SF)		

Finance

Reconciliation of Statement of Financial Position (SoFP) and review of Statement of Comprehensive Income (SoCI)

The Finance section carry out regular reconciliations and reviews of balances on the SoFP, thus adhering to best practice recommendations. This ensures that debts are collected as quickly as possible, funding for capital projects is identified and transactions are monitored and reviewed on a timely basis, loans are reconciled to statements and fixed assets are reconciled to other available registers such as iHouse and the Property Asset Register. In addition to this, Finance carry out a quarterly analysis of actual versus budgeted revenue expenditure and income to ensure that all expenditure and income are accurately posted and are recognised in the correct period.

Cumulative surplus

The Council achieved a cumulative surplus in 2022 of €404,993. The Council hope to retain a surplus going forward. An annual surplus is achieved through accurate budget preparation, cost reduction awareness and careful monitoring of actual spend versus budget.

Treasury Management

In order to maximise interest receivable on excess funds, Finance staff monitor the bank balance and transfer excess funds to HFA who pay 1.5% on investments up to three months and 2% on investments over three months.

Rates Collection

Monaghan County council's Rates collection excelled again in 2023. The final collection rate is estimated at 96%. Monaghan County Council's high rate of collection is due to early and accurate billing, experienced staff, multiple payment options for customers and use of specialist legal firms.

Reduce Rates write off

In an effort to address the level of vacant properties in urban areas, the Elected Members adopted a resolution at the Budget 2023 meeting to reduce the Rates write-off on commercial properties from 100% to 80% for 2023 (and also for 2024). This has resulted in a reduction in

vacancy. Since the introduction of the write off reduction, a number of properties have been delisted, relet, converted for domestic use or are undergoing refurbishment.

Impact of retained fire officer cost

The implementation of the workplace relation commission's proposals for retained fire fighters fell to be implemented with effect from the weekly/fortnightly pay cycle closest to 1 July 2023. The agreement provided fire fighters with a fixed income starting at €18,050 per annum for new recruits. There will be a minimum crew of 12 in every fire station which will necessitate the recruitment of 12 new firefighters and an assistant chief fire officer in County Monaghan. A recruitment campaign commenced in Q4 2023 and will continue into 2024. The additional retained fire service costs for 2024 are estimated at approximately €584,959.

Energy inflation grant

In Q4 2022, due to funding pressures facing the local government sector particularly in relation to rising energy costs, the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage provided supplementary support of €515k to Monaghan County council for 2023. This energy credit is not receivable in 2024.

Uisce Eireann – stranded costs

A Memorandum of Understanding was issued during 2023 by DHLGH in relation to payments to Local Authorities for stranded costs arising from the Water Services Transformation programme. For 2024, the main changes for Monaghan County Council is that Central Management Costs (CMC) relating to Water services are recouped from DHLGH instead of Uisce Eireann as was previously the case. This however will result in a reduction in this income stream as the majority of this recoupment will be based on 2022 CMC costs.

Rent Review

A rent review was conducted by the Housing section during 2023. This review was previously postponed due to restrictions that were in place due to COVID 19. The revision of rental charges will result in a budget increase in rental income of c.€969k for 2024 viz a vis 2023.

Budget preparation

During Q3/Q4 2023, the Finance section prepared the 2024 annual Revenue budget. This provides for €89m of income and expenditure. Rates income is budgeted at €15.1m (ARV 0.2445) and LPT funding at €13.225m which includes 15% increase on the base rate. Budget 2024 funding has increased by 12% viz a vis budget 2023. This

represents an additional €9.7m of income and expenditure for Monaghan County Council for 2024. The Budget has been prepared with an objective of providing funds for the continuation of existing service levels despite the challenges of rising costs.

Housing & Building

Housing Delivery 2023

A total of 98 additional social housing units were provided in 2023. These homes were delivered through a mix of new build and acquisitions. The Department of Housing target set for Monaghan County Council for 2023 was 56 social housing units, this was exceeded by 75% in 2023.

The new build projects were the main focus of the capital expenditure programme for 2023. Monaghan County Council completed 7 units at An Clós Ballybay. This project is a combination of town centre renewal, addressing derelict properties and unfinished housing development. There were 4 houses completed at Cnoc Na Gréine, Tydavnet, 1 property at McCurtain Street, Clones and 4 homes at Station View in Monaghan town.

Monaghan County Council have an excellent working relationship with Approved Housing Bodies and continue to collaborate with them in the delivery of social housing units. In conjunction with Tuath Housing, 14 homes have been delivered at The Meadows, Emyvale and 8 homes delivered at Radhairc An Bhri in Castleblayney (Phase 2).

Cooperative Housing Ireland delivered 17 houses at Drumbear and Cluid Housing Association delivered 9 houses at Knockroe Glen in Monaghan town. North and East Housing Association delivered 4 Capital Assistance Scheme apartments at Birch Court, Ballybay.

In 2023 Monaghan County Council completed the purchase of 19 houses,

13 Tenant in Situ

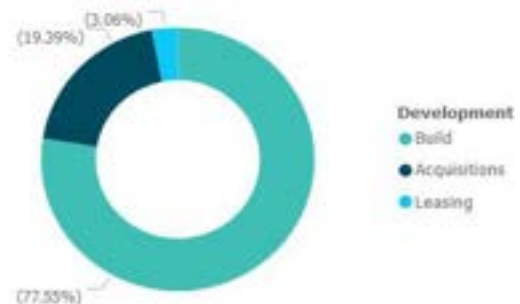
1 Disability

3 Exit from homelessness / prevention of homelessness

2 Standard Acquisitions

Through the Mortgage to Rent scheme a further three houses are now being managed by "Home for Life". These properties are officially recorded under the "Leasing" heading as they might eventually return to the ownership of the occupiers. However, they are currently in the ownership of "Home for Life" to allow occupiers to remain in their homes in spite of mortgage issues.

Scheme Type



ProjectUnits

BY YEAR, QUARTER, DEVELOPMENT

Year	2023				Total	Total
	Qtr 1	Qtr 2	Qtr 3	Qtr 4		
Acquisitions	1	4	2	12	19	19
Build		21	35	20	76	76
Leasing			2	1	3	3
Total	1	25	39	33	98	98

Casual Vacancies / Voids

Monaghan County Council dealt with 68 Casual Vacancies in 2023 at a cost of €1,913,851 (Including €840,536 Energy Efficiency costs). The houses were prepared for reletting at an average cost of €28,144.87 each and completed in an average time of approximately 15.56 weeks. The cost and reletting time average includes energy efficiency retrofit works which adds €12,360 to overall average cost and increases the overall average weeks as these works take longer. Typical reletting works are new kitchen, flooring, electrics, painting, heating system, bathroom upgrades and fencing. Monaghan County Council does not have any long-term vacant houses (Voids).

Housing Maintenance:

In 2023, a budget allocation of €1,075,000 provided for response & planned general maintenance of the Council's housing stock. The Housing Section received and logged 1,904 repair requests in 2023, similar to 2022 figures of 1,890.

The key areas of housing maintenance for occupied dwellings include:

1. **Response Maintenance** which involves responding to tenant emergencies and reported repair requests. Housing Section continues to engage with tenants to provide appropriate information in relation to these responsibilities.
2. **Planned Maintenance** involves the delivery of targeted programmes for specific improvement and replacement works. In 2023 targeted planned maintenance works were focused on external works including wastewater treatment systems, boundary replacements, window and door replacement and roof replacement.

Croí Cónaithe Scheme

The Vacant Property Refurbishment Grant was launched on 14 July 2022 and benefits those who wish to turn a formerly vacant house or building into their principal private residence.

When the grant was launched, vacant properties in towns and villages were included. The grant was expanded in November 2022 to include eligible vacant properties in cities, towns, villages, and rural parts of the country.

From 1 May 2023, the grant was further expanded to provide for applications for one property which will be made available for rent, in addition to one property which will be a principal private residence of the owner.

A grant of up to a maximum of €50,000 is available for:

- the refurbishment of vacant properties for occupation as a principal private residence, and
- for properties which will be made available for rent,

Where the refurbishment costs are expected to exceed the standard grant of up to €50,000, a maximum top-up grant amount of up to €20,000 is available where the property is confirmed by the applicant to be derelict.

There have been 143 applications received since the grant's initiation.

76 applications have been approved, broken down by MD as follows:-

- 27 Monaghan MD valued at €1,460,068 (15 - Vacant Grant – 12 - Derelict Top-up Grant)
- 22 Ballybay/Clones MD valued at €1,238,300 (8 - Vacant Grant – 14 -Derelict Top-up Grant)

- 27 Carrickmacross/Castleblayney MD valued at €1,492,122 (15 - Vacant Grant – 12 -Derelict Top-up Grant)

County Council Tenancies

In 2023 Monaghan County Council had 137 new tenancies commenced plus an additional 47 persons from the Council's housing list were offered tenancies with an AHB.

Please see below tables for 2023 Allocations.

Allocations by Municipal District, Monaghan County Council Properties - 2023	
Clones/Ballybay	22
Monaghan	43
Carrickmacross/Castleblayney	72
TOTAL	137

Allocations by Property Type, Monaghan County Council Properties - 2023	
1 Bedroom	11
2 Bedroom	38
3 Bedroom	77
4 Bedroom	9
5+ Bedroom	2
TOTAL	137

Homeless Services

In 2023, Monaghan County Council received 181 enquiries either directly from individuals themselves or from others on their behalf, reporting homelessness. 54 children have also been noted to be implicitly impacted as a result.

Following a Homeless Assessment, 53 of those individuals were deemed as homeless, including 14 children implicitly impacted and required a placement into Homeless Emergency Accommodation. The remaining 128 enquiries were experiencing accommodation related difficulties or were at risk of homelessness, but not homeless. In respect of all homeless enquiries support and guidance was provided by the Council's Homeless Services.

There are 7 individuals currently engaged with the Housing First Programme in county Monaghan. They are accommodated in a mixture of Local Authority and Approved housing units and are supported by a wraparound support service provided by Peter McVerry Trust.

Traveller Accommodation

Monaghan County Council is preparing its Traveller Accommodation Programme 2025 to 2029. Traveller social housing support will be provided through the provision of Social Housing, Approved Body Housing, Traveller specific accommodation and HAP assistance.

The recent estimate of Traveller families living in County Monaghan is 166 families.

107 households live in a house rented from the Local Authority, 20 families live in a house purchased with the assistance of the Local Authority, 2 families live in a house acquired without any Local Authority assistance, 9 families live in private rented accommodation, 8 of these families receive support with their rent, 3 families live in Approved Bodies housing, 2 individuals live in other state supported accommodation, 9 families are sharing accommodation, 13 families are living in Traveller specific accommodation, 1 family on the roadside.

From these figures we can see that 9 families who are sharing and 1 individual on the roadside who are not receiving social housing support and may require this in the period of the plan. The Local Authority must consider the existing and projected accommodation needs during the Traveller Accommodation Programme 2025-2029.

Housing Assistance Payment

HAP continues to play an important role as a form of social housing support for those with a long-term housing need. 127 tenancies commenced in 2023 and there was a total of 507 active HAP supported tenancies at 31st December 2023. HAP Shared Services Centre based in Limerick City and County Council has the responsibility for all financial transactions, collection of rent from tenants and landlord payment at month end.

Rental Accommodation Scheme

The Rental Accommodation Scheme (RAS) is a support to people who have a need for long term housing. The total number of tenancies in receipt of RAS support was 199 at 31st December 2023: 64 households in private rented accommodation and 135 households in AHB properties. The monthly landlord rent cost for all RAS tenancies at 31st December 2023 was €78,880.44.

Housing Grants

In 2023 Monaghan County Council received an initial allocation of €1,312,475 and following requests to the Department it was increased to €2,402,000 due to the continued high up take of housing grants in the County. Housing Section approved 339 housing grant applications, paying out on 326 applications and recouping in full on 326 applications.

Monaghan County Council continues to be at the top of the Departments 'drawdown table' for 2023, a testament to the great work being undertaken by all involved in promoting and delivering the various grant schemes.

Climate Change

Monaghan County Council is committed to reducing the negative effects of Climate Change on its social housing stock. All social housing projects are being designed to either mitigate against or adapt to the impacts of climate change. An internal desktop Flood Risk Identification Report was carried out on all Social Housing Stock in 2022.

In 2023, following on from this report, consultants were appointed by Monaghan County Council to carry out further Flood Risk Assessments on properties that have been identified as potentially being at risk of flooding in a one thousand year storm event. The potential necessity and feasibility of flood mitigation or adaptation measures will be considered in 2024.

In 2023 Housing Section included a number of Climate Action programme in works undertaken. The Energy Retrofit programme of replacing oil/solid fuel heating systems for a Heat Pump was carried out in 92 properties and in the new development An Clós, Ballybay a pilot of sustainable grass driveways was implemented.

Energy Efficiency Works

Building on the success of the Energy Efficiency Programme in 2022, Monaghan County Council again surpassed its allocation from the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage for 2023 and delivered upgrade works to 92 properties at a cost of €2,940,353. The Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage funded 98% of these costs

(€2,895,182).

The works included new windows and doors, internal or external wall insulation (if required) and heat pump installation. Works also include removing old, inefficient heating systems, upgrading flat roof insulation, closing existing chimneys and all other works necessary to achieve a minimum B2 Building Energy Rating (BER).

As the Energy Efficiency Retro-fit Programme is funded under “Housing for All” it is anticipated that in 2024 the funding allocation for this programme will increase. Monaghan County Council aims to maximise the number of properties being completed each year subject to funding.

The programme of works for 2024 will continue to target properties in order of priority dictated by the Building Energy rating.



Housing and Disability Steering Group (HDSG)

The role of the HDSG

- Overseeing the local implementation of the National Housing Strategy for People with Disabilities, including the housing of

people with disabilities transitioning from institutional care.

- Developing, monitoring and reviewing of local interagency protocols, as appropriate.
- Developing strategic and specific plans to meet the housing needs and related supports for people with disabilities.
- Working with all agencies in the provision of services to people with disabilities including employment, education and training.
- Acting as a forum for the exchange of information.

The table shows that 18% of all allocations were for people with Disabilities. It is the Council objective to have this at 20%.

Allocations Report	LA	AHB	2023
Total Allocations	137	47	184
Allocations for Disabled People	18	15	33
Physical	9	12	21
Sensory	0	0	0
Mental Health	2	2	4
Intellectual	7	1	8

Health and Safety Unit

Operational Plan

In line with the Annual Service Delivery Plan (ASDP) developed for 2023, the Health and Safety Unit (HSU) developed the 2023 HSU Operational Plan. This plan set out the work targets to be achieved in 2023. The HSU reviewed the Operational Plan on a weekly basis to ensure achievement of the plan. The operational plan was achieved (some work contained in the original plan was reduced due to staff reduction).

The following is a summary of the main elements of work conducted by the HSU in 2023

- HSU Annual Service Delivery Plan developed on time and implemented.
- HSU Operational Plan developed on time and delivered.
- HSU Corporate Plan Progress Report issued on time.
- HSU Corporate Risk Register reviewed and updated quarterly.
- Corporate Safety Statement reviewed/updated six times in 2023.
- 13 x H&S Procedures were reviewed / updated along with 28 x H&S Forms and Templates.
- A detailed review of the HSMS was conducted in Jun and Dec 2023.
- There were four section audits conducted in 2023 (Environment, Training, Veterinary and Housing) with detailed both a detailed and summary report issued for each audit.
- HSU Monthly Reports issued on time.
- LG Cert presentation delivered to participants in relation to H&S Question by Head of H&S.
- HSMS Training provided for all employees by Head of H&S.
- Four LASOG Meetings (including National Conference) attended by Head of H&S

- 13 x Safety Briefings developed and delivered to all employees.
- Bi-monthly defibrillator testing, maintenance and cleaning carried out by Head of H&S.
- New Defibrillators placed in Castleblayney Library and Cabinet fitted to Peace Campus (for new defib).
- Workers' Memorial Day was acknowledged in April.
- Daily events delivered for Health and Safety Week in October 2023 by Head of H&S.
- Safety Link newsletters were developed by Head of H&S and issued in June and December 2023 with good and positive feedback from employees.

Inspection Programme

The 2023 Inspection Programme was successfully completed. The following table outlines the inspections completed by the HSU:

Target Number of Inspections:	Actual Achieved:	% Achieved:
175	199	114%
Inspection Conducted:	Number Conducted:	
HHS Spot Checks	84	
Road Works	91	
Yards	3	
Water	4	
Housing	8	
Corporate/Capital	3	
Environment	2	
Other	4	
Total:	199	

Hazard and Risk Assessment

The following table outlines Hazard and Risk Assessments completed by the HSU in 2023:

Assessment Type:	No. conducted:
Water Services	34
Buildings	4
Yards/Depots/Landfill	3
Playgrounds	13
Other	2
Total:	56

Water Services

Uisce Éireann Transformation

There were significant developments in relation to the Uisce Éireann /Irish Water transformation program in 2023.

In accordance with the Water Sector Transformation policy paper, Irish Water - Towards a National, Publicly Owned, Regulated, Water Services Utility the Workplace Relations Commission (WRC), assisted parties to devise a mutually agreed operational framework to replace the existing service level agreements.

The outcome of the engagement led to a Framework for Future Delivery of Water Services – which also addressed staff concerns relating to the future delivery of water services.

The migration of public services from Monaghan County Council to the direct managerial control of Uisce Éireann commenced on the 27 July 2023.

Uisce Éireann has assumed full accountability for the delivery of water services and the management and direction of all eligible water services staff in Monaghan County Council.

The Councils responsibility regarding overseeing the Rural Water Program will be unaffected by this transition of public services.

Rural Water Programme

The Rural Water Programme in County Monaghan is administered by Monaghan County Council.

The programme provides measures to address deficiencies in:

- Group Water Schemes
- Group Sewerage Schemes
- Private Water Supplies where no alternative group or public supply is available.
- Private Domestic Wastewater Treatment systems (DWWTs) whereby the applicant qualifies

under the Housing (Domestic Wastewater Treatment Systems Financial Assistance) Regulations 2020.

- Private Water Supplies whereby the applicant qualifies under the Housing (Domestic Lead Remediation Grant) Regulations 2022.

Subsidies

There are 12 group water schemes in the county plus Barraghy GWS supplies part of the county bordering Cavan (they deal with Cavan as supervisory authority and for payments). The 12 Group Water Schemes supply approx. 28,400 persons. Annual subsidies are administered by Monaghan County Council towards the cost of providing domestic water to group water schemes in the county. €6m in subsidy payments were made to twelve group water schemes in 2023 by the Local Authority.

Multi Annual Rural Water Programme (MARWP) 2024-2026

The 2024-2026 funding cycle of the multi-annual programme consists of measures which reflect the key challenges currently facing the rural water sector - from catchment to consumers (source – treatment - distribution), to prevent water contamination and ensure that drinking water is safe and meets quality parameters of the Drinking Water Regulations on a consistent long-term basis. This funding cycle is currently open for applications and will close on the 12th of April 2024.



Figure 1 Source Protection Pilot Project Baird's Shore/Dromore River



Figure 2 Source Protection Pilot Project Baird's Shore/Dromore River

Capital grants totalling €8,936. were administered to group water schemes in 2023 in the county under the MARWP. These payments were for the closing out of projects under the 2019-2021 MARWP.

Well Grants

Thirteen new well grant applications were received in 2023 by the Local Authority. In 2023 applicants could claim €1,000 towards treatment of their private water supply, €3,000 towards the upgrade/remedial works and €5,000 for the installation of a new well-private water supply.

In 2023 a total of €19,450 grant aid was paid to applicants towards upgrade/remedial works or the installation of treatment systems to their private water supply.

Domestic Wastewater Treatment Systems

Under the Water Services Amendment Act 2012 Monaghan County Council undertakes inspections of private wastewater treatment systems (septic tanks). In 2023, under the National Inspection Plan (NIP) 45 domestic wastewater treatment system (DWWTs) inspections were undertaken by Local Authority staff resulting in 17 compliance notices and 28 advisory notices being issued to households. 3 grants amounting to €15,000 were paid to eligible applicants for remedial/improvement works to DWTTs in 2023.

Grant applications relating to 2023 advisory notice requirements will continue to be submitted in 2024 by households as improvement works are completed and inspected.

Drinking Water Compliance

In 2023 the compliance rate in Monaghan for private group water schemes and small private supplies was 99.4% for all parameters assessed.

There were 19 exceedances noted throughout the year and the HSE was consulted where relevant. The main exceedances were THM, Manganese, Iron and Aluminium. The 19 exceedances were identified through our own sampling program, notified by the lab, and then notified to the schemes. Among the corrective actions taken by the schemes to close out exceedances were, repeat sampling to verify compliance, investigations into treatment plant processes and escalating to a site audit if necessary.

In addition to the regulatory sampling program, there is also a program of sampling raw water taken from each source. This is in addition to the daily samples taken by the schemes themselves. All raw water samples taken by MCC in 2023 provide additional information in respect of substances of interest such as herbicides and PAH. In 2023 an Operational sampling programme continued for 2 schemes that are undergoing assessments for upgrades. This data will be

used to contribute towards reporting when required.

One 'Do Not Consume' notice issued in 2023. This notice was lifted as soon as possible following consultation with the HSE and the group water scheme. The notice related to excess manganese above public health guidance values.

In addition to the sampling and monitoring work as outlined above Monaghan County Council carried out 1 audit of a private GWS treatment plant and several visits to some small private supplies during 2023. The visits were selected on priority based on their last date of inspection or a particular water quality issue.

Asset Transfer

Section 12 of the Water Services (No. 2) Act 2013 provides for the transfer of Water Services Assets to Uisce Éireann. The legislative provisions have been given effect by Ministerial Order. To date 137 folio numbers have transferred to Uisce Éireann.

There are approximately 56 folios yet to be transferred as some assets contain more than one folio.

Detailed work is ongoing preparing supporting material for the transfer of these assets which includes the subdivision of folios and associated mapping, the registration of unregistered sites, the establishment of legal rights of way and the resolution of outstanding title anomalies.

Environmental Protection

During 2023, the Environmental Services section in Monaghan County Council was again tasked with implementing EU and National Environmental Policy and legislation aimed at protecting the environment of our county.

As detailed in High Level Goal 1 Monaghan County Council Corporate Plan 2020-2024, the council committed to the promotion and protection of a clean, safe environment in a manner which is viable and sustainable.

The priorities and objectives for the Environmental Services section are outlined in Appendix 11 together with the progress that was made during 2023.

In summary these objectives include

- Implement the County Monaghan Litter Management Plan.
- Implement the Connacht-Ulster Waste Management Plan 2015-2021
- Ensure all Council owned waste and recycling facilities operate in accordance with current waste management legislation.
- Implement the River Basin Management Plan 2018-2021 and associated Water Framework Directive requirements.
- To develop innovative environmental awareness projects.
- Ensure public safety from uncontrolled animals and the protection of animal welfare in establishments under the supervision of Monaghan County Council.
- Protect public health by ensuring food safety compliance in food businesses under Monaghan County Council supervision.

Waste Enforcement and Regulations

During 2023 our RMCEI Environmental work plan in waste was prepared in line with the National enforcement priorities (NEPs) which were communicated to all local authorities via correspondence issued by the EPA in December 2022 which set the following

priorities for 2023:

- Tackling significant illegal waste activity.
- Construction and demolition Waste.
- End of Life Vehicles and metals.
- Household and Commercial waste.
- Producer Responsibilities.

During 2023 there were three full time Waste Enforcement Officers and Monaghan County Council recouped €192,000 from the Department of Environment Climate and Communications for costs associated with waste enforcement activities. In addition, there was one full-time environmental patrol warden. Whilst a significant portion of our enforcement staff workload was in dealing with the NEPs, staff were also engaged on other activities such as the investigation of waste complaints, the processing of Certificate of Registration and Waste Facility Permit applications, the assessment of planning applications to ensure waste management compliance, and ensuring that waste activities taking place within County Monaghan are being carried out in compliance with waste management legislation through the appropriate certification and permitting regime.



Illegally Dumped C&D waste

In delivering on these priorities in 2023 Monaghan County Council completed the following:

- Carried out over 1,000 inspections.
- Investigated 375 waste complaints.
- Initiated 238 enforcement actions including the issuing of 79 waste warning letters, 31 notices under the Waste Management Act, 24 Fixed Penalty Notices under the Waste

Collection Permit Regulations, and 47 litter fines under the Litter Pollution Act.

During 2023, dumping of diesel laundering waste remained problematic with 20 incidents of diesel wash recorded during the year, again primarily in the south of the county near the Northern Ireland border. The costs incurred in dealing with diesel wash waste in 2023 were €115,000 which was subsequently recouped from the Department of the Environment Climate and Communications.

During 2023 Environmental Services also secured €75,000 in funding from the Department of Environment Climate and Communication to progress the erection of a new storage compound at Scotch Corner for the temporary storage of diesel wash waste pending its subsequent removal offsite for subsequent treatment at a licenced hazardous waste facility. Works on this storage shed started in December 2023 with works due to be completed in March 2024. The erection of the storage compound will result in less contaminated liquid waste being generated on site which in turn will result in a reduction in the overall treatment costs.



Works at new storage compound – Feb 2024

During 2023 Monaghan also secured €110K to deliver a range of projects under the Anti-Dumping Initiative program. Projects delivered under this program included the purchase of solar powered litter bins for the Municipal Districts, a subsidised bulky goods collection month at our two recycling centres and a free household hazardous waste collection day at Scotch Corner.



Free Hazardous Waste Collection Sat at Scotch Corner

Water Quality

During 2023 there were four full time environmental officers working in water quality. In December 2022, the National Water priority works areas were communicated to all local authorities through correspondence issued by the EPA.

The water priorities for 2023 included:

- Pressures from Agriculture (slurry/soiled water collection and storage)
- Pressures from Agriculture (slurry and fertiliser spreading)
- Domestic Wastewater Treatment Systems / Septic Tanks
- Discharge Licences/Misconnections
- Local Priorities and Water Quality Monitoring

Under the 2023 RMCEI Enforcement and inspection plan that was prepared in February in line with these national priorities, Monaghan County Council's water quality team continued its program of water quality sampling in conjunction with the EPA, carried out investigative assessment work on selected river and lake waterbodies, undertook a farm inspection program, investigated a significant number of water pollution incidents, regulated effluent discharges through licensing, and worked with the Local Authorities Waters Program (LAWPRO) with the aim of improving water quality in areas designated as priority areas for action under the River Basin management plan which sets out the actions that Ireland is taking with the aim of improving water quality and achieving 'good' ecological status in water bodies (rivers lakes, estuaries and coastal waters) by 2027. During 2023, several Local authorities including Monaghan

County Council were notified that additional funded staff resources were being allocated to help address national water quality issues with a particular focus on pressures from agriculture and in December 2023 a new Executive Scientist was recruited by Monaghan County Council. Additional staff resources funded by the DHGLG are expected in 2024, with the focus again on improving water quality nationally.



Some of the inspection work carried out by our water team in 2023 included the following:

- 66 water pollution complaints investigated.
- Carried out 41 septic tank inspections in collaboration with the rural water unit.
- Carried out 52 GAP farm inspections.
- 250 samples taken as part of Water Framework Directive monitoring on rivers and lakes.
- 86 Discharge licence inspections
- 35 bathing water inspections.

During 2023 our water quality team further progressed the Lough Muckno Road to Recovery project. Under this phase of the project the aim is to complete a Paleolimnological study of the lake sediment to reference trophic changes and predict lake recovery times. Sampling work on the Lough Muckno project was completed in January 2024 and a report on the findings due in Q2 2024. Monaghan County Council have made a formal request to include Lough Muckno as a "Catchment Project Area for Action" in the soon to be published national River Basin Management Plan 2022 -2027.

Air Regulatory work

In relation to air enforcement during 2023 over 60 routine air quality inspections were conducted under the Solid Fuels Regulations, the Petroleum Vapour Regulations, the Solvent Regulations, and the Decorative Paints Regulations. By the end of 2023, the following facilities were regulated under the following air regulations.

- 23 car-refinishers were authorised under the Decorative Paint Regulations.
- 4 dry-cleaning facilities and one industrial premises were authorised under the Solvent Regulations.
- 29 petrol stations were authorised under the Petroleum Vapour Regulations.

In 2023 Monaghan County Council in collaboration with Cavan County Council secured €30k in funding from DECC to progress a co-ordinated sampling programme of solid fuel for sale across the region to assess compliance with the Solid fuel Regulations. A total of 34 retailers were inspected in Monaghan with 33 samples taken, the results of which will be used to inform our solid fuel enforcement work in 2024.

Waste Management Facilities

During 2023 Monaghan County Council continued to operate a comprehensive recycling facility infrastructure network in the county comprising of two recycling centres at Scotch Corner and Carrickmacross and 26 strategically placed bring centres located in our county towns and villages. The centres are operated under a concession contract, which generates income for the Council. This contract remains in place until 2027.



Scotch Corner Recycling Centre

In relation to the landfill facility at Scotch Corner further small-scale infrastructural improvements were progressed including surface water management works, leachate management works, and additional groundwater and surface water investigations. During 2023 monitoring and sampling works continued to ensure compliance with our licence. The most recent EPA site visit in 2023 demonstrated that the Scotch Corner Facility was fully compliant under the terms of the licence with no non-compliances noted during the audit.

In May 2023, the new site office at Scotch Corner was officially opened. The main contractor for these works was McCusker Contracts with significant input from local precast manufacturer Wright Concrete Products Ltd who constructed the modular building. This new building is a climate resilient structure which will provide for the needs of our landfill staff for many years to come.



New Landfill Site Office Building

Historical Landfills

During 2023 Monaghan County Council secured €56k funding from the Department of Environment Climate and Communications to progress further works Under the Waste Management (Certification of Historic Unlicensed Waste Disposal and Recovery Activity) Regulations 2008. Under these regulations local authorities are required to conduct an environmental assessment of closed landfills that were previously operated by local authorities during the period 1977 to 1997. Works carried out in 2023 under the departmental funding included Environmental

Risk Assessment works at the Tiragravan site, the submission of a Certificate of Authorisation application to the EPA for the Corkeeran site and the progression of Section 177AE planning regularisation applications for the Killycronaghan and Killycard sites under 177AE of the Planning and Development Act.

Environmental Awareness

In 2023, the Environmental Awareness Officer continued promoting, supporting, funding, and raising awareness of new and existing environmental initiatives with tidy towns, schools, community groups, and other stakeholders. Some projects completed to date include:

- Provision of litter pickers, bags and skips to community groups.



- Participation and promotion of clean up events e.g., Spring Clean/Autumn Clean.



- Opening of Carrickmacross dog park. This was an initiative to help tackle dog fouling on footpaths.



- Financial supports via the Environment Fund.
- Responsible waste collection – Household hazardous waste collection day.
- Supports and promotion to both primary and secondary schools of the Green Schools Programme.
- Continued collaboration between Monaghan County Council, WEEE

Ireland and the EPA on repairmystuff.ie website.

- Installation of new water filling stations along The Avenue Walkway, Carrickmacross and at Scotstown GAA training grounds.



Climate Action Unit



Establishment of Climate Action Unit

A dedicated Climate Action Unit was created in 2023 to coordinate the local authority's response to the challenges of climate change. The newly formed unit consists of the new posts of Climate Action Coordinator, Climate Action Officer, and Community Climate Action Officer respectively.

Development of the Monaghan County Council Climate Action Plan (2024-2029)



Public & Community Climate Action Workshop

The Climate (Amendment) Act 2021 specifically requires all Local Authorities in Ireland to prepare and make a Climate Action Plan. In March 2023 the Department of Environment, Climate and Communications launched a set of statutory guidelines for each Local Authority to prepare and adopt the plan by the end of February 2024. A significant achievement by the Climate Action Unit during

2023 was the development of the Monaghan County Council – Climate Action Plan (2024-2029). The plan builds on the successful implementation of the Climate Change Adaptation Strategy (2019 to 2024) and outlines the Council's ambitions to create a resilient and prosperous County for all who live, work, and visit Co. Monaghan. The plan sets out how the Council will work to further reduce greenhouse gas emissions and improve energy efficiencies in its buildings and operations, while making Monaghan a more climate resilient county over the next 5 years.

To inform the development of the plan, the Climate Action Unit engaged in an extensive series of collaborations with all stakeholders to gather views on risks, barriers, and opportunities to implement climate action in Monaghan. A summary of the groups engaged in this consultation are listed as follows:

- Pre-draft public consultation, survey, and public meeting to inform the plan
- Extensive engagement with the various departments of the Council to understand core operations and inform the development of this Plan
- Engagement with the Elected Members to ensure support for the actions proposed
- Engagement with neighbouring Local Authorities through both direct engagement and the CARO organised events to collaborate on plan development



Staff Climate Action workshop

Statutory public consultation Phase:



Public consultation drop-in clinic

The Draft Monaghan County Council Climate Action Plan (2024-29) was published on the 19th of October for public consultation. During the 6-week statutory consultation period which closed on the 4th of December the Council actively sought the views of the public to help shape and enable effective climate action at a local and community level. A dedicated Climate Action Consultation web page was developed for the public to view the plan and make a submission. A consultation survey was developed as a more streamlined option for people to have their say on the proposed plan. The plan was also made available in hard copy at each of the libraries in the county. Stakeholder engagement and outreach activities included the following:

- Statutory Notice, press release and advertisement placed in Northern Standard to encourage people to have their say on Monaghan's draft Climate Action Plan.
- Formal notice given to all elected members and Climate & Environment SPC members on publication of the draft Climate Action Plan, where to see the plan and how to make a submission.
- Extensive posts on the Council's social media channels to raise awareness and invite the views of the public.
- Presentation & discussion on the Draft Plan and consultation process delivered to the November Climate & Environment SPC
- Comhairle na nÓg, National Youth Council of Ireland and all secondary schools in the county were invited to

make a submission to ensure that young people had an opportunity to feed into the plan making process.

Members of the public were encouraged to attend public consultation drop-in clinics which were held in Carrickmacross, Castleblayney, Clones, Monaghan, and Ballybay Libraries. These two-hour sessions were hosted by the Climate Action Unit to provide guidance on the draft plan and on the consultation process.

All submissions received were considered in the preparation of the final Climate Action Plan that was proposed for adoption at the Full Council meeting in February 2024.

Progress on Climate Change Adaptation Strategy 2019-2024

Monaghan County Council continued to progress the implementation of the actions contained in the Climate Change Adaptation Strategy 2019-2024. In October the Climate Action Unit submitted the third implementation progress report to the Eastern and Midlands Climate Action Regional Office which demonstrated that considerable progress was made in progressing the measures and actions contained within the strategy and within the national Climate Action Plan.

Some of the milestones achieved to date include:

- The progress report indicated that 93.4% of the 61 actions had been progressed
- In terms of energy usage, Monaghan County Council is among the best performing local authority in the country. As of the end of 2022 Monaghan County Council had increased its energy efficiency by 51.8% since the baseline.
- MCC are obliged to report on its energy and emissions each year on the M&R system through SEAI. As of the end of 2022 MCC had reduced its electricity-based emissions by over 50% since the baseline year. Transport

& thermal emissions were reduced by a combined 12% since the baseline year.

- In 2023 76 staff have received Delivering Action training with 2 staff receiving LA Climate Action Awareness training.
- Green Public Procurement training has also been delivered to 11 staff in relevant sections.
- In 2023, 10 businesses have availed of the Green Business support from Monaghan LEO to date with an approval value of €20,787. This is a 2-day consultancy support that will assist businesses to determine their carbon footprint by evaluating scope 1 and 2 emissions.

Community Climate Action Programme



PPN Plenary Meeting Dec 2023

Monaghan County Council has an important leadership role to play in tackling climate change, and in doing so will positively engage with residents and community organisations. The Council launched the Community Climate Action Fund in December 2023 to work with local groups to help build low carbon communities, focusing on themes such as

energy, travel, food & waste, recycling, and local climate action.

Prior to the launch of the fund awareness raising events took place to highlight the upcoming Fund and series of presentations were carried out during this time. These included presenting to the full Council, the Climate Change and Environment SPC along with the PPN plenary meeting at the start of December.

In preparation for the opening of applications for the fund a dedicated webpage page was developed along with raising awareness raising events.



Information Clinics Poster

Applications for the Community Climate Action Fund opened on the 13th of December. In mid-December three days of information clinics were held in Clones Library, Carrickmacross Library and Monaghan Library. These clinics facilitated by the Community Climate Action Officer were held to allow community groups to discuss potential projects along with general questions in relation to the fund.

County Heritage Office

2023 was a year of change for the Heritage Office with the departure of the longstanding Heritage Officer Shirley Clerkin who has left a great legacy in the protection, conservation and promotion of the county's Heritage and Biodiversity. The team was expanded with the addition of the Council's first Biodiversity Officer in June but was without a Heritage Officer for most of the year. The Heritage Office continues to have the support of an Assistant Staff Officer.



The Heritage office sits within the Directorate of Climate Action, Environment and Water Services.

Despite the staffing challenges the Heritage Office continued to deliver heritage services, implement heritage and biodiversity policy and practice locally and coordinate and deliver heritage and biodiversity awareness and events in the county as well as administering and delivering funded heritage and biodiversity projects.

Funding was awarded from various sources including the Heritage Council, the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage, and Creative Monaghan towards the implementation of the following projects.

Heritage Forum

The County Monaghan Heritage Forum is a multi-stakeholder forum with representatives from civil society, elected representatives, state agencies and organisations and Monaghan County Council staff. The secretariat is provided by the Monaghan Heritage Office. Its' chairperson is Cllr. Aoife McCooey.

The forum advises on the development and implementation of the County Monaghan Biodiversity and Heritage Strategic Plan. The forum met on its usual quarterly basis in 2023.

Conservation

Community Monuments Fund

This scheme from the National Monuments Service, Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage is administered by the Heritage Office. The fund is for the care, conservation, maintenance, protection and promotion of archaeological monuments. Two applications for funding were successful in 2023.

1. Old Errigal Truagh

The old church ruin at Errigal Truagh is dedicated to Saint Meallán a seventh century saint from County Down. The church is described as ruinous in 1622 but was later rebuilt and continued in use until 1824. The remains of this former medieval parish church consist of the west gable with a central doorway and the east gable with a large, pointed opening. The church and other associated monuments (MO003-018) are on the record of monuments and places held by the National Monuments Service of the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage and as such are protected under National Monuments Legislation.

In follow up to conservation works carried out under the Community Monuments Fund in 2022, there was a further phase of work in 2023 this time concentrating on the east gable of the church ruin. Works included vegetation removal, masonry repairs and repointing to the east gable and localised vegetation removal to tombs. In addition to the Heritage Office of Monaghan County Council, the project team included a Conservation Architect, Archaeologist, Conservation Engineer and the contractor. The after photo shows that the ruin has been stabilised, its protection against the elements secured for many years to come.

It is anticipated that a further phase of works in 2024 would consist of assessment of the

condition of the Singleton and Anketell burial plots and specifications for their consolidation and conservation. The Singleton and Anketell burial enclosures belonged to two important landowner families in the area. They date to the 19th century and feature detailed ironwork.



Errigal Truagh before works



Errigal Truagh after conservation

2. Clones Motte & Bailey

This motte and bailey is one of the finest examples of this site type in the country. These fortifications were built by the Anglo-Normans and this example dates from the early 13th century although they often utilised pre-existing important sites. In 2023 works carried out here included landscaping and facilitating access and involved the clearing of scrub and

immature, diseased and fallen trees. This has opened up views towards the monastic site, the round tower and the diamond. Half of the site was left wild and a new boundary hedge planted along one side to attempt to offset any impact on wildlife.



View from the summit of Clones motte

Outreach

Heritage at the Heart Podcasts.

Funded by the Heritage Council, a fourth series of podcasts on heritage and nature in Monaghan was presented by the Heritage Office and recorded onsite. They present interviews with local people, custodians, and heritage specialists, with lots of lively discussions and stories about the places and their value. Each podcast is accompanied by specially commissioned music by distinguished Monaghan composer Michael Gallen. The podcasts are available on all usual podcast platforms and the Heritage Section of the council website.

Series 4:

Episode 1 – Charlotte Sheridan Architect

Episode 2 – Fergal McNamara Clones

Episode 3 – Knocknagrave Environmental Centre

Episode 4 – Cornagilta School

Episode 5 – Climate Action Team Chat

Traditional Rural Houses of Monaghan

Building on the countywide survey of vernacular buildings undertaken by the Heritage Office in 2015, significant work was undertaken in 2023 on the compilation of a

book on the subject. This will be published in 2024. The book looks at the heritage of traditional rural buildings created using local materials and traditional skills and examines important considerations for these assets into the future including re-use and adaptation.

Heritage Week

A very successful Heritage Week was run by the Heritage Office from August 12-20th. A packed schedule of events was undertaken, which saw over thirty events delivered over the two-week period.



Pollinator-friendly Gardening Event with Horticulturist and Biodiversity Officer

Wild Child Day was celebrated over a full weekend in Rossmore Park, where children of all ages engaged in building forts, and learning about trees and forest survival from charismatic Ozzy outdoor facilitator Dale Treadwell.

Biodiversity

The appointment of the new Biodiversity Officer in June 2023, under a partnership with the Heritage Council, was a very welcome addition to the Heritage Office. Dr Patricia McCreesh has an extensive background in aquatic ecology, and considerable broad ecological experience. She has been busy meeting and liaising with community groups, individuals, NGOs and council colleagues in her first six months. Biodiversity loss is a huge issue globally, nationally, and locally, and it is imperative that Monaghan County Council leads the way in good practice for preserving, restoring and enhancing biodiversity in the county.

Biodiversity Week

Biodiversity Week took place from 21st-28th May 2023. A diverse array of events, covering a selection of Monaghan’s biodiversity, were well attended and enjoyed by members of the public.



Ceili Dancing in Cornagilta Schoolhouse



Hedgerow workshop at Clara Hall

Swift Survey

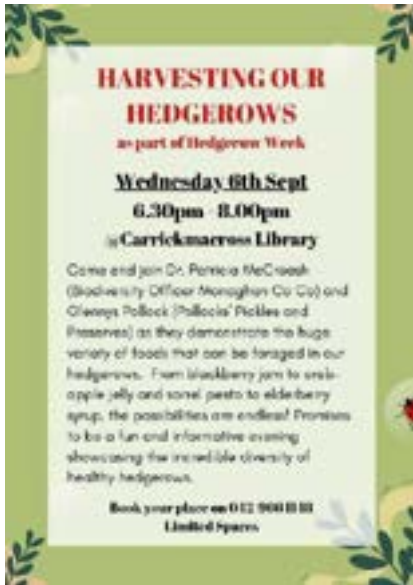
A county-wide Swift survey was carried out in 2023 by Bird Watch Ireland with funding from the Local Biodiversity Action Fund. This was a comprehensive survey of this unique, red-listed bird whose population has declined by over 50% in the last 20 years. Thankfully, several towns were found to have good numbers of swifts with Monaghan town, Carrickmacross and Ballybay having the most nests in the county. There is still a lot of work to be done in the county to restore and increase swift numbers, through protection of existing nest sites, installation of new swift

nest boxes and repeat surveying. The report is available on the council website. The large dataset collected during this project will be used to inform the County Development Plan and other council policy documents, including the forthcoming Biodiversity Action Plan. The report was launched in November by the new Chief Executive Robert Burns.



Hedgerow Week

The first week in September was a celebration of Hedgerows, and the Biodiversity Officer held two very well attended events. The first in Carrickmacross library was a talk on 'Harvesting our Hedgerows' with a practical demonstration of some of the wonderful foods provided by hedgerows such as hazelnuts, blackberry jam, sloe gin, haw jelly, crab-apple jelly, elderberry cordial, rosehip syrup and sorrel pesto. A great evening was had by all participants.



The second event was an informative discussion on the ‘Wonder of Hedgerows’ emphasising their role as stock boundaries, townland boundaries, key habitat for numerous birds and mammals and their ecosystem services.



Biodiversity Conference

On the 18th of November, as part of Science Week, the Biodiversity Officer organised the county’s first ever Biodiversity Conference in the Hillgrove hotel. The key aspect of the conference was that it was non-technical, with local speakers, presenting on a variety of

biodiversity topics relevant to Monaghan. The speakers comprised of a Farming for Nature local farmer, the council Horticulturist Michael Carroll, a local Tidy Towns representative, a local ecologist, a member of the Monaghan Wetlands Forum, Bat Conservation Ireland, and Birdwatch Ireland. Over 120 people attended from a wide range of backgrounds and interests. Media coverage was exceptional, and it is envisioned that this will become an annual event for the county.



Launch of the County Swift Report at Monaghan's First Biodiversity Conference Nov 2023

Fire & Civil Protection

2023 was a challenging year for Monaghan Fire & Civil Protection (MFCP) with the retained fire-fighters industrial action and the subsequent WRC agreement necessitating significant adjustment to administrative systems. The implementation of the WRC Agreement will also form a substantial workload in 2024 and beyond and will pose budgetary implications going forward.

Other challenges in 2023 included the demands associated with ensuring the provision of compliant hostel type accommodation to cater for refugees.

However, MFCP continued to maintain the delivery of a range of essential services to the citizens of Monaghan. These services included Fire Safety and Building Control functions, that encompasses implementing the statutory requirements of the Building Regulations and Building Control Regulations, inspection of new and existing building stock for compliance with fire safety requirements, licensing of filling stations, inspection of licensed premises, advice and enforcement under the Fire Services Acts and the promotion of fire safety in the community. Operational services encompassing both Fire Service & Civil Defence include; responding to emergency calls and providing Community Support, assistance to other emergency services, public safety and reviewing and enhancing Major Emergency Planning in consultation with the other Principal Response Agencies.



Fire-fighters Pumps Course in Monaghan Fire Station
Nov 2023

Monaghan is served by five retained fire stations at Clones, Monaghan, Ballybay, Castleblayney and Carrickmacross, providing an operational fire and emergency response service at all times.



Monaghan Fire Service attended an overturned truck containing Methane: May 2023

A breakdown of total calls in 2023 per station area as follows:

Fire Station	1 st Turn-out	2 nd Turn-out
Ballybay	30	9
Carrickmacross	76	3
Castleblayney	59	25
Clones	31	3
Monaghan	117	11

Monaghan Fire & Civil Protection were mobilised to 315 incidents in 2023 a decrease of 7% on 2022 for first attending appliances, and a 2% increase to 2nd appliance turnout. In 2023 the top incident types attended by Monaghan Fire Service were Road Traffic Collisions, Monitoring Alarm Activations, domestic house fires, and tertiary fires (i.e. small fires/bin/skip). Road Traffic Collisions remain significantly high in recent years, while there has been a notable reduction in chimney fires in 2023.



QQI CFB training March 2023 held in Monaghan

Training

Training completed in 2023 included Flood First Responder, Emergency Service Driving Standard (ESDS), Hazmat and Emergency First Responder.



Castleblayney fire crew attending a water rescue incident Nov 2023

MFCP's training needs assessment incorporates the requirement at national, regional, and local level, and includes the ongoing station training programme, and is periodically reviewed to align with MFCP's safety management system, and to capture emerging trends and priorities.

WRC Agreement: Following the intervention of the Workplace Relations Commission (WRC), an agreement was reached between both Union and Management incorporating greater flexibility and pay terms for fire-fighters in 2023. The process of implementing the WRC agreement has commenced in Sept 2023 and will continue into 2024 with the recruitment of additional fire-fighters.

Health & Safety: Following an Occupational Health and Safety Management System audit completed in March 2023, MFCP successfully retained ISO 45001 Accreditation. The audit outlined scope for improvement in terms of asset management and specifically the development of a system to enable the migration from hardcopy record keeping to a softcopy format. Progress was ongoing in 2023 and will form the basis of our work programme for 2024.

Along with the provision of Critical Incident Stress Management, the Employee Assistance Service has been extended to Fire Personnel and provides support to extended family members.

Fire Safety - Fire Prevention

Our Fire Prevention Section reviewed and processed all valid fire safety certificate applications received and provided advice on

achieving compliance with Part B of the Building Regulations (Fire Safety). Fire safety inspections were carried out on a range of building types including licensed premises, residential care homes, preschools, flats, petrol stations and community buildings. 2023 also seen a significant increase in the number of conversions of various building types to multi-occupancy residential buildings primarily for accommodating people seeking protection.



Fire Safety Week focused on fire safety in the home, encouraging all homes to have a working smoke alarm. Several intensive fire safety campaigns were held during the year, targeting elderly and vulnerable people, along with seasonal campaigns at Easter, Halloween, Christmas and Fire Safety Week.

A total of 186 Fire Safety & Building Control inspections were conducted in 2023, and 98 planning referral reports completed. All notified licensing referrals for pubs, clubs, dances etc were assessed by a fire officer and recommendations issued to the Courts Service. During Performance Inspections resumed however they were limited in 2023 due to Industrial Action, desktop studies were carried out for 30 pubs/clubs around the county to check on fire safety management and to ensure public safety.



Winning Fire Safety Week poster 2023 by 4th Class pupil at St. Michael's NS Donaghmoyno

Community Fire Safety

A range of fire safety initiatives were delivered focusing on both schools and community groups. Smoke detectors were distributed as part of the Community Smoke Alarm Scheme and the key messages of Carbon Monoxide Awareness Week and Fire Safety Week were promoted via local and social media platforms. The Primary Schools Programme was again delivered by a pre-recorded video, and we continued with a Fire Safety Poster competition for primary schools. Fire safety awareness information was issued to the Traveller Community.



Fire Safety display and 'Chip Pan' demonstration at Gortakeegan Oct 2023

Emergency Management: Severe Weather

The Severe Weather Assessment Team monitored a number of potential severe weather events during the year with regular briefings from Met Eireann, most notable in 2023 included Storm Babet & Storm Isha.

Major Emergency Management: The Cross-Border Emergency Management Group (CBEMG) continue to review and enhance multi-agency engagement on a cross border basis to ensure procedures are in place to enable an effective response from agencies on both side of the border.

Monaghan Fire & Civil Protection secured funding in 2023, in conjunction with the North-East Regional Emergency Planning Group, to develop a Community Resilience booklet which will be issued to each household in 2024. The booklet will capture the key information required to assist during periods when they may feel vulnerable.

MFCP continued in 2023 with both An Garda Síochána and the HSE to test our response capabilities associated with procedures to ensure an effective interagency response, communication and media processes, and

interoperability.

Multi-Agency Major Emergency Management involves maintaining plans, systems, procedures, and training, and to enhance the capability of all stakeholders.

Cross Border Emergency Planning: Monaghan County Council as the lead authority presented initial findings of research on Cross Border public safety messaging at the second All Island Disaster Risk Reduction Conference in Dec 2023. As part of the Shared Island Fund, this research was undertaken in collaboration with the International Centre for Local and Regional Development (ICLRD) based in Maynooth University and in partnership with Fermanagh & Omagh District Council.

Building Control

Monaghan Building Control Authority received a total of 232 valid Commencement Notices in 2023, an increase of 7% from 2022, reflecting the buoyant nature of construction industry. An inspection rate of 42% of new builds was achieved this year. In addition, there were 98 applications for Fire Safety Certificates and 52 Disability Access Certificate applications under Building Control legislation.

The demand for multi-occupancy accommodation influenced the high number of Fire Safety Certificate applications in 2023.



Building Control Inspection June 2023

The level of one-off houses 'opting out' of statutory certification has continued to remain relatively high. In opting out of the requirements for statutory certification the homeowner is making the decision to refrain from having their dwelling included on the Certificate of Compliance on Completion register.

Capital Investment

There was again significant Capital investment in MFCP during the year with the delivery of battery-operated RTA cutting tools, and the award of a new fire appliance for Monaghan Fire Service.

Construction of a new Fire Station in Ballybay commenced in September 2023 and is envisaged to be completed and fully operational in Q1 2025.



Construction of new Ballybay Fire Station

Monaghan Civil Defence

Civil Defence activities in 2023 focused on our local community and continued to support each Principal Response Agency. Tasks undertaken in 2023 by Civil Defence volunteers, included:

- Transportation duties: Including the transfer of persons to various accommodation centres.
- Medical cover at outdoor events & Irish Blood Transfusion Service.
- Helping vulnerable persons within communities by delivering food and medication.
- Delivery of essential Training & Maintenance



Civil Defence Vol's demonstrating CPR and patrolling on bikes at a Vintage Show Aug 2023

The Civil Defence HQ building continued, in 2023, to provide a hub for local community support deployment and to assist Principal Response Agencies during severe weather events, and other emergency response requirements.

Monaghan Bombing:

Members of the Monaghan Civil Defence Auxiliary Fire Service at the time of the Monaghan Bombing were acknowledged for the contribution at an event held in Monaghan Civil Defence HQ in 2023. The event was attended by surviving members, relatives of deceased members, and family and friends of Monaghan Auxiliary Fire Service at the time of the Monaghan Bombing.



Members of Monaghan CD in 1974 recognised May 2023

Training

Monaghan Civil Defence is a volunteer-based organisation where members support the primary emergency services and the local community. Monaghan Civil Defence currently has 53 volunteers. Volunteers are multi-skilled, and the main programmes of activities undertaken are:

- Casualty First Aid
- Search & Rescue (Boating)
- Water & Flooding incidents
- Auxiliary Fire Service
- Welfare and Communications
- Radiation Monitoring & Radio Communications

Courses were provided for volunteers throughout the year at Regional, local level and at Civil Defence Branch Headquarters in Roscrea and Phoenix Training Centre, Phoenix Park, Dublin.



Civil Defence Volunteers during an open day recently May 2023

Civil Defence Community Response

Civil Defence Volunteers continue to be actively supporting our community with attendance at various events and undertaking duties such as transportation, First Aid, etc.

Civil Defence also continue to support and assist An Garda Síochána in missing person's searches, to augment search operations, Civil Defence volunteers have completed Sonar Scanning and Search and Rescue training.



Civil Defence Volunteers conducting Speed Boat Training Sept 2023

Membership

Monaghan Civil Defence continued to successfully recruit new Volunteers in 2023, due primarily to benefits derived from:

- High standard of training
- Personal development and teamwork
- Learning new skills such as Technical Rescue, Boat Training, Emergency First Responder
- Giving back to your community
- Getting involved in local and national events



Civil Defence Volunteers assisting inter-county GAA matches 2023

Fleet Procurement

Monaghan Civil Defence secured Clar funding in 2023 for a Patient Transport Vehicle which will improve accessibility to a wider range of people in Monaghan. The Vehicle is due for delivery in Q2 2024.

Community Development

Local Development Committee (LCDC)



Monaghan LCDC plays a co-ordinating role at county level helping to ensure that there is a coherent approach to local and community development in the county. In 2023, the LCDC met 8 times and operated effectively in managing various programmes including SICAP, LEADER, PEACE, Community Support Fund, Community Recognition Fund and Healthy Ireland Fund.

Local Economic and Community Plan (LECP)

Following extensive consultation, the final draft of LECP was presented to the LCDC. The plan will be officially launched in 2024.

Social Inclusion Community Activation Programme (SICAP)

The objective of SICAP, delivered by Monaghan Integrated Development CLG and overseen by the LCDC, is to provide social inclusion support to disadvantaged individuals and groups throughout the county. The budget for 2023 in Monaghan was €788,468. This includes additional funding to support Ukraine Refugees.

Monaghan LEADER Programme 2014-2022

Monaghan LCDC is the Local Action Group (LAG) and is the decision maker in respect of project applications. Monaghan Integrated Development CLG (MID) is the implementing partner and Monaghan County Council is the financial partner for the Programme. The LAG met 8 times in 2023 and approved projects recommended by the IEC members.

€6,872,946.94 was the total allocation for the LEADER Programme 2014-2022 for County Monaghan. Since the start of the current LEADER Programme, 134 projects have been allocated funding of which 113 are completed.



During 2023, Monaghan LAG approved 3 of these projects to use up any de-committal monies available in the programme.

Examples of LEADER Projects funded:



Ceol Connected Ltd received €26,643.75 (75% rate of aid) to hire a branding agency to create a robust brand

identity and strategy for their SongTales, which is a new high-quality music and creativity box service for children ages 3-7 years.

Kelly Brothers Ltd based in Mullaghmatt have concentrated their business on the production of specialised bespoke fire doors and fire door sets. Kelly's set out to purchase more modern machinery to achieve a better workflow, decreasing lead-time and downtime, with a view to increasing sales, profitability and reducing waste. They received €74,640 (75% rate of aid) under EURI funding to purchase an edge bander.



Department Of Rural & Community Development Funding Schemes

The funding received from the Department of Rural & Community Development (DRCD) and Monaghan County Council plays a crucial role in improving the quality of life for residents in our rural towns and villages. By addressing the key priorities and investing in the long-term prosperity of our rural communities contributes to building resilient, vibrant and thriving communities.

Clár

CLÁR is a targeted investment programme for rural areas that aims to provide funding for small infrastructural projects in rural areas that have experienced significant levels of de-population.

€581,822 was allocated to Monaghan County Council under the Measure 1 for 14 community-led projects.

Clár Projects Completed 2023



Ballybay Youth Centre Outdoor Area



Aghabog Community Gym

Outdoor Recreation Infrastructure Scheme

The funding is aimed at supporting outdoor recreation tourism, a growing tourism sector internationally, which has the potential to have major economic spin-off benefits for our rural towns and villages as well as improving the health and well-being of rural communities.

To date Monaghan County Council has received €100,000 for 2 projects approved under the Project Development Measure.

Monaghan County Council submitted a further 11 projects under Measures 1, 2 and 3 to the value of €1,149,266 under the 2023 scheme and await Departmental approval of the successful projects.

ORIS Projects Completed 2023



Bog Garden, Ulster Canal, Monaghan



Lough Major Lido and Boat House



Town and Village Renewal Scheme

The 2023 Scheme supported the revitalisation of rural Ireland through a renewed focus on town centre regeneration and enhancing economic and social vibrancy in line with the

Town Centre First policy.

€250,000 was received under the Building Acquisition Measure (BAM) for the acquisition of McMahon's Bar, Main Street, Emyvale which will be repurposed as a multi-use community space.

Monaghan County Council submitted 5 projects to the value of **€1,476,195** under the 2023 scheme and await Departmental approval of the successful projects.

Town and Village Projects

Drum & Rockcorry Vision Plans



Launch of Drum Vision Plan



Launch of Rockcorry Vision Plan

Community Recognition Fund

This fund aimed to support the development of community infrastructure and facilities in recognition of the contribution being made by communities across the country in welcoming and hosting significant numbers of new arrivals from Ukraine and other countries. Monaghan County Council received an allocation of €881,203 and 8 projects received funding.

Community Recognition Projects completed in 2023



Childrens outdoor exercise equipment at The Peace Link, Clones

Monaghan PEACE Campus

During 2023 Monaghan Community section continued to provide support to the Capital projects team on the Peace Campus project. This project is supported by the Special EU Programmes Body and is due to open early 2024. When opened this will be a safe shared space for people from all backgrounds to enjoy.

Monaghan Age Friendly Programme

The Monaghan Age Friendly Programme continued to work towards creating the types of communities where older people have a strong voice in local decision making and in which they live autonomous, independent and valued lives.

Monaghan County Council continued to facilitate meetings of our Older People's Councils and Age Friendly Alliances in 2023.

Monaghan Age Friendly Programme worked with stakeholders on local projects including a partnership with the Cavan and Monaghan Garda Division on the Age Friendly Wellness Event which took place in May, and which saw over 100 older people attend the event. The event won the Safety and Security category at the National Age Friendly Recognition and Achievement Awards 2023.



Community Awards Nights

A series of Community Awards Nights which recognised the hugely important work which community groups undertake throughout the county on an annual basis were held in 2023. Each of the community groups present had received funding from the Community Development Fund or Environmental Services Fund in 2023 which was used to carry out valuable projects in their local areas.

Beechill College Intergenerational Project

Transition Year students at Beech Hill College are continuing to engage in an Intergenerational Project, with support from the Monaghan Age Friendly Programme. Transitional Year students from the school are broadcasting regular local news programmes to the residents of local Nursing Homes across Monaghan.

The project, which was initiated by Seamus McDermott (Monaghan Age Friendly Ambassador), won a Judges Special Recognition Award at the National Age Friendly Recognition and Achievement Awards 2023.



Africa Day

Africa Day continues to be a great success in Monaghan. It is designated by the African Union as an annual celebration of the continent's unity and falls on 25th May each year. Africa Day 2023 saw celebrations take place in both Castleblayney and Monaghan.

The first event titled "Beauty of Africa " was held on Thursday 25th May at the Íontas Centre in Castleblayney. The event, which was organised by LINC Society Ltd. drew a large attendance. The audience enjoyed the African Dance by the Royal Dance Group, a Bead Making Workshop, two African themed documentaries, a Cultural Exhibition and a Children's Art Competition which was the highlight of the evening.

The second event to mark Africa Day 2023 took place on Saturday 27th May at St. Joseph's Pastoral Centre in Monaghan. The event included African fashion, music, heritage, food and culture. The event was run by the African Committee at Teach na Daoine FRC.



Launch of Africa Day 2023

Social Inclusion Week

Monaghan Social Inclusion Week 2023 took place between Monday 13th November to Sunday 19th November 2023 and was organised by the Local Community Development Committee (LCDC) Equality Subgroup which is made up of representatives of the local key service providers.

The Council were proactive participants in Social Inclusion Week, with our libraries being strong supporters and contributed by putting on many free events in their branches.

Yellow Flag Programme

Inver College, Carrickmacross have advanced to Year Two of the Yellow Flag Programme. They are proud to be one of only eleven schools in the country taking part in the programme.

The programme supports schools to become more inclusive of all cultures and ethnicities, celebrates diversity and challenge racism and discrimination. The programme is being run with the continued support from Monaghan County Council and the LCDC Equality Subgroup.



Yellow Flag event during Social Inclusion Week 2023 at Inver College, Carrickmacross

Communication Boards

Communication Boards have been installed at two locations at Rossmore Park Playground in Monaghan. The initiative was developed in association with InterAcT (Accomplish & Thrive), Trinity College Dublin and Inclusion Ireland, and supported by Safe Care Technologies and the HSE.

Communication Boards are primarily a communications support, with particular benefit to children or adults who may not communicate using speech. The Communication Boards, which include picture representations of day-to-day core words, as well as images that are specifically tailored for its environment and the location for which it is proposed, help bridge this communication gap for everyone.

Each Communication Board includes a QR Code which enables users of the playground to scan the code and take an image with them which can either be printed or used on their phones.



Cathaoirleach, Cllr. Séan Conlon at the launch of the Communication Boards

EU50 Day

The Government's EU50 programme was celebrated in Monaghan with three successful events.

The event in Monaghan Town was run by Muineachán le Gaeilge who hosted 'Lá Gairmeacha Gaeilge san Aontas Eorpach' (Irish language careers in the European Union day) which provided information to 4th and 5th year secondary students about the employment opportunities in the Irish language that are available in the EU.

The second event took place in Castleblayney and was run by WCI Blayney Blades who hosted an event titled "Celebrating Ireland's 50th Year in the EU". It included an information workshop on the "History of Ireland Membership of the EU" which emphasised the benefits that EU membership has brought to Monaghan and to the country.

The final event held during EU50 week was at the Peace Link in Clones and drew a large and diverse attendance. The EU50 Family Day provided a variety of entertainment which catered for all members of the community. The food provided represented many different European countries and cultures.



EU50 Day celebrations at the Peace Link

Community Activities Fund

Funding of €265,142 was awarded by the Department of Rural and Community Development to County Monaghan for the Community Activities Fund. 102 projects received funding towards running costs and capital projects.

The Community Activities Fund supported groups with their non-pay running/operating costs, as well as funding to carry out necessary repairs and improvements to their facilities and purchase equipment.

Pride of Place

The strength of Co. Monaghan’s community sector once again was showcased at the 2023 IPB Pride of Place Awards, where women’s group Blayne Blades came away with the top prize in a hotly contested ‘Community Wellbeing’ Category.



Tidy Towns

Co. Monaghan entrants continued to show well in the National Tidy Towns competition, with all groups improving their marks on 2022.

The Community Department provides support to Tidy Towns groups through the organisation of network events and activities, and sending information out to the Network mailing list to ensure groups are kept informed of opportunities open to them for funding, training, etc.

Play and Recreation

The Council was awarded a grant of €3,000 from the Dept of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration & Youth to run activities to mark National Play Day in July. Staff from Monaghan libraries, Monaghan Sports Partnership, Tusla, Monaghan Integrated Development, CYPSC and the National Childcare Network collaborated to provide activities at the events and continued to work in close contact throughout the year.



A group of childcare practitioners participating in the forest play workshop

Funding of €18,000 was secured under the Dept of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration & Youth’s Capital Grant for Play & Recreation Scheme 2023 towards a complete re-development of Corrybrennan playground in Ballybay. This was in addition to funding from the Town & Village Renewal Fund to provide a substantial €240,000 budget.

The amenity is expected to be completed by end Q2 2024.



Playground design consultation workshop with the children and residents of Corrybrennan Park

Community Support Fund

136 community groups around Co. Monaghan received a total of €267,622.40 in funding from the Dept of Rural & Community Development's 2023 Community Support Fund, which was administered by Monaghan LCDC. Groups received funding for small capital projects, purchase of equipment and operating costs. A percentage of the Fund was ringfenced for women's groups.

Minister Heather Humphreys announced the funding awards to a packed hall in Doohamlet Community Centre.



Minister Humphreys announces funding awards

Healthy Monaghan

The Healthy Ireland Strategic Action Plan 2023-2025 for County Monaghan provides a roadmap towards good health, access to services, healthy environments and the promotion of resilience. The Healthy Ireland Framework required each county to prioritise two outcomes based on local needs. The Healthy Monaghan programme identified two

outcomes based on local needs as below:

- increase in % of adults and children meeting physical activity guidelines.
- decrease in the number of people showing negative mental using the five item Mental Health Index-5(MHI-5) from the RAND SF-36 questionnaire.

The Healthy Ireland Fund 2023-2025 Local Strategy for County Monaghan was approved by the LCDC in January 2023. In May 2023, the Healthy Monaghan Programme was awarded €228,698.32 under the Healthy Ireland Programme 2023 -2025 Round 4 funding. Various initiatives were approved for the 2023 programme with some carrying over activities to 2024. Two initiatives received funding in 2023 and will continue to receive funding in 2024 and 2025. These initiatives are:

- Foroige, Early Intervention Youth Mental Health Service, under the decreasing negative mental health outcome.
- CMETB, Planet Youth – Increase Leisure Time Initiative, under the increasing physical activity outcome.



Monaghan Public Participation Network with support from Monaghan County Council continued to develop as the main link through which the Local Authority connects with the Community, Social Inclusion and Environment Sectors across the county. 636 groups were registered with the PPN by the end of 2023.

National PPN Conference

PPN Staff and Secretariat members attended the PPN National Conference in Wicklow on 5th October 2023 which provided a great networking opportunity to meet up with other PPN Networks in the country.



Training

The PPN delivered free training on topics such as:

- First Aid and Cardiac First Responder
- Sustainable Gardening and Mental Health
- Pollinator Friendly Workshops



Communications

Over 110 emails and notifications were issued during 2023. Of these notifications, 19 were related to public consultations, such as Climate Action Plan, Migrant Integration Strategy, Monaghan Tourism Strategy, Library Development Plan, Future of Local Democracy, Peace Plus and LECP. 20 of the notifications were for funding grants available to community groups, such as the Community Support Fund, Community Recognition Fund, CLAR, ORIS, Sports Club Grant Programme and the Community & Voluntary Energy Support Scheme. The remaining notifications were to do with webinars, information events, talks, courses available and various group activities going on throughout the year.

Funding

For the first time since its establishment an increase in funding from the Department of Rural and Community Development was made to all PPN's. This amounted to €10,000 and was in recognition of the considerable increase in work that has been undertaken by PPN's since 2004.

Monaghan County Council and MPPN's strong working relations was evident through many funding allocations the council received from Government and out of its own resources. The benefits of this collaborative working approach can be seen by many innovative funded projects spread across the county.

MPPN also liaise regularly with Monaghan County Council's Community Department on the Monaghan Women's Assembly and Social Inclusion Unit and take part in outreach and support community engagement and Regional and National initiatives that promote opportunities for participation.

Representation

54 community representatives represented the PPN across 16 various decision-making committees, putting the community firmly at the heart of local decision making. 2 new PPN representatives were elected in 2023.

Public Consultations

MPPN liaises with different departments in relation to public consultations, be they local, regional or national.

Several public consultations were held in 2023 including consultation for the Local Economic and Community Plan, the Leader Development Strategy and Peaceplus. Consultations were also held in relation to Public Service Messaging in the event of emergency situations and the development of Monaghan County Councils Fire and Civil Protection Personal and Community Resilience leaflet to be delivered to all households in County Monaghan.

Women's Safety Conference

Monaghan PPN held a hugely well attended Women's Safety conference on 23rd November in the Hillgrove Hotel, to tie in with the global 16 days of activism against gender- based violence. This event was funded by the Department of Justice under the Community Safety Innovation Fund and included speakers from Safe Ireland and the Garda Crime Prevention Unit.

We learned that almost 60% of the people in attendance at the conference had been a

victim of crime. They shared stories with us throughout the morning and made suggestions for how Monaghan County Council could help make Co. Monaghan safer for women and girls, which was presented in the afternoon to the Joint Policing Committee’s annual public meeting.



Monaghan Women’s Assembly was established on March 8th, 2021. The aims of Monaghan Women’s Assembly are:
Funding was received from DHLG for three projects that will take place in 2023/2024:

- To Raise Awareness of Monaghan Women’s Assembly
- To provide workshops on developing women’s skills such as public speaking, marketing and promotion, and
- To host a webinar for women in the form of a community consultation that will inform issues being raised across the board by female members of our community.

Staff resources are provided by Monaghan County Council.

Monaghan Sports Partnership

MSP delivered over 300 activity programmes, events, initiatives and training courses during 2023 to keep our communities active and engaged, with over 10,300 people taking part; including children and young people, adults, older people, people with a disability, migrant

populations. A snapshot of the main successes are detailed:

Community Based Programmes

Facilitated numerous Active Adults (50+) activities in various community locations across the county. Over 650 participants took part in a diverse range of activities, both indoor and outdoor.



Supporting National Events/Initiatives

Organised and delivered numerous events across 2023 to celebrate national initiatives at a local level, including:

Women In Sport Week, Men’s Health Week, National Bike Week, Social Inclusion Week, HER Outdoors Week, Positive Ageing Week, EU Week of Sport.

Children and Young People

A range of activity programming to support Schools based physical activity, peer learning and increased use of local facilities.

Inclusive Sport and Physical Abilities

Continued work with the adult disability day services to provide sports activities. Strengthened our relationship with key stakeholders in mental health services. Expanded offerings for children with a disability, working closely with autism supported services in schools and developing community engagement initiatives to support inclusive activities within sports clubs.



Education and Training

In total, 33 training and education courses were provided for 516 sport club volunteers, transition years students, primary school students and teachers.

2023 Sports Club Funding Support

MSP administered €53,555 in funding support to 73 sports clubs under 3 measures for sports equipment, training & education and participation programmes. Also €18,000 under Energy Support funding.

Sports Activity Hubs

Specific location areas of sports participation at Kilmore-Drumsnatt and Ballybay environs through Dormant Accounts funded projects.

Planning

Development Plan

The Monaghan County Development Plan is the main public statement of planning policies for County Monaghan. The Development Plan consists of a written statement of policies and objectives, and a series of maps. The Plan underpins the economic and social progress of the County as a whole and thus is one of the principal functions of Monaghan County Council.

The County Development Plan provides an overall strategy for the proper planning and sustainable development of County Monaghan and is consistent with both national and regional spatial planning policies and objectives. It sets out the land use, infrastructure, environmental, amenity and development objectives and policies of the County's planning authority for a six-year period. The current Monaghan County Development Plan covers the period 2019-2025. Spatial planning through the development plan objectives and policies endeavours to achieve a balance between the common good and the interests of individuals.

On the 11th of May 2023 Monaghan County Council gave notice of intention to review the existing Monaghan County Development Plan 2019-2025, and to prepare a new Monaghan County Development Plan for the period 2025-2031 for the functional area of Monaghan County Council. The review will take up to two years and will conclude with the adoption of the Monaghan County Development Plan for the period 2025 – 2031.

Pre-Draft Development Plan consultation was undertaken over an eight-week period from the 11th of May 2023 to the 7th July 2023. A Strategic Issues & Options Paper set out the strategic issues affecting the County and was used to stimulate debate and facilitate public involvement at this early stage of the development plan process. A dedicated web page was set up on the Monaghan County Council website to host and make information publicly available, and to act as a 'hub' for interaction throughout the two-year plan making process.

Pre-draft consultation was carried out with prescribed and non-prescribed bodies, service providers, primary and secondary schools, and planning agents on the planning mailing list. Monaghan County Council commissioned a radio advertisement on Northern Sound which was aired twice daily to publicise the review of the County Development Plan and invite members of the public to the public consultation workshops. Notices were also regularly published on the Council's Facebook and Twitter/X page. A total of six public information evenings throughout the month of June were held in Monaghan, Carrickmacross, Castleblayney, Clones and Ballybay. A total of 39 people attended the sessions, with the highest attendance recorded in Carrickmacross.

The Pre-Draft Consultation process attracted sixty-six submissions from a wide range of public bodies, other organisations and individuals. The comments received covered a broad range of issues within the topics of Environmental Assessment & Monitoring, Settlement Strategy, Housing Strategy, Climate Change, Environment & Heritage, Economic Activity, Infrastructure & Services, Community Services / Facilities, as well as a range of other issues that did not fall within the foregoing topics. A Chief Executive's Report on the submissions received during the pre-draft consultation period was subsequently prepared for issuing to the elected members for their consideration and direction on strategic issues to be included within the draft development plan which will be placed on public display in mid 2024.

Residential Zoned Land Tax Mapping

The Residential Zoned Land Tax (RZLT) was introduced in the Budget 2022 under the provisions of the Finance Act 2021. The purpose of the proposed measure is to activate existing planning permissions and zonings where housing is permitted and where the land is connected to, or has access to services (road infrastructure, footpaths, public lighting, surface water, waste water & water supply), but remains undeveloped. The legislation clearly sets out that land in scope for the tax will be zoned for residential

development or a mixture of uses including residential.

Although the RZLT will be administered by Revenue Commissioners, all local authorities are required to undertake mapping to identify the lands in scope for the tax in their respective functional areas. The RZLT mapping is required to be carried out on an annual basis.

The applicable date for lands zoned and serviced to be liable for the tax was 1st January 2022 with the final date for inclusion of lands on the Draft Map being 1st October 2022. Local authorities were required to undertake mapping to identify the lands in scope for the tax in their respective functional areas and publish these maps by 1st November 2022. Interested parties (landowners and members of the public) were able to make comments on the published maps by 1st January 2023 indicating errors or omissions or detailing why the lands should or should not be in scope for RZLT.

A total of 80 submissions relating to 92 land parcels were received and determinations in respect of these were made by the planning authority by 1 April 2023, on whether the lands should remain in scope for RZLT. Following the issuing of these determinations, 31 appeals of these determinations were made to An Bord Pleanála.

Housing Need & Demand Assessment

Every local authority is now required to carry out a Housing Need and Demand Assessment (HNDA) to enable it to:

- develop long-term strategic views of housing need across all tenures,
- provide a robust evidence base to support decisions about new housing supply, wider investment and housing related services that inform an overall national housing profile,
- inform policies about the proportion of social and affordable housing required,
- provide evidence to inform policies related to the provision of specialist housing and housing related services.

KPMG consultants were engaged by the Planning Section to carry out the HNDA and a final report was published in September 2023.

Development Management

The Planning Authority received 595 planning applications, 16 extension of durations of planning permission, and 78 exempt development applications during 2023. Exempted Development Applications have more than doubled from the same period last year, primarily as a consequence of the introduction of the Croí Cónaithe Grants Scheme which require a declaration from the planning authority that the works proposed to improve the building are exempt from requiring planning permission. The number of applications increased by approximately 9% compared to the number of applications received in 2022.

Planning Applications Received in 2023	
Full Permission	492
Outline Planning	8
Permission Consequent	3
Temporary Permission	1
Retention	90
Permission Consequent	3
Extension of Durations	16
Exempt Development Applications	78
Part VIII Proposals	8
Total Applications Received	699

Whilst the majority of applications received were for single dwellings, home extensions and agricultural development, a number of significant and complex applications, (most of which were accompanied by Environmental Impact Assessment Reports and Natural Impact Statements) were submitted in 2023. Applications of note submitted in 2023 included:

- 23/40: Permission to construct a 38,356m² food production facility at Monaghan Road, Moraghy, Castleblayney
- 23/61: Permission for a two-storey primary care centre at Bree, Castleblayney.
- 23/60037: Permission for a tourist development comprising the refurbishment and conversion of former Mill Buildings to self-catering units, the construction of additional single storey lodges, glamping pods, fisherman lodges, associated café and games facilities at Culloville, Castleblayney
- 23/60045: Permission for the excavation of the former underground mine by open cast mining methods for the purposes of gypsum extraction incorporating community sports complex at Drumgoosat, Magheraclone

- 23/60102: Construction of 26 dwellings at Railway Road, Castleblayney
- 23/60186: Construction of 5755 SQM wholesale/warehouse unit at Annahagh, Monaghan
- 23/60107: Permission for a single storey warehouse and associated yard for storage of freight vehicles and trailers at Cooltrimegish, Lough Egish.
- 23/60152: Permission for 18 dwellings at Castle Park, Shercock Road/Mile Hill Road, Castleblayney
- 23/60218: Permission for 50 dwellings at Drumconrath Road, Carrickmacross

Planning Applications Statistics for 2023	
Invalid	104
Granted	384
Refused	26
Withdrawn	18

Twelve decisions were appealed to An Bord Pleanala in 2023, which represents 2% of the applications received in 2023.

Compliance with Conditions

The Planning and Development (Amendment) Act 2018 (Commencement) Order 2021 (SI 714 of 2021) brought section 23(4) of the Planning and Development (Amendment) Act 2018 into operation on 17 December 2021. This legislation requires the Planning Authority to deal with any compliance submission in respect of a condition(s) attached to a planning permission which requires the written agreement of the Planning Authority within a time limit of eight weeks. The 98 compliance submissions received by the Planning Authority in 2023. There were 231 planning search requests in 2023, an increase of 17 from the previous year.

E-planning Portal

The Planning Section is now dealing with a dual system of both hard copy and online applications since February 2023 when the online system went live. 56% of the planning applications were received online in 2023 and it is expected that this figure will be higher in 2024 as more agents start to use the portal. The Local Government Management Agency continues to provide daily support in relation to the operation of the portal.

Temporary Time-Limited Waiver Scheme

Since the introduction of the Temporary Time-Limited Waiver Scheme in respect of Development Contributions for new housing developments (including one off houses), the Planning Authority has submitted four grouped claims to date to the Department totalling almost €76,000.

Taking in Charge

Public advertisement took place with regards nine estates which are due to be formally taken in charge in 2024. A significant number of estates were progressed through various stages of the taking in charge assessment process in 2023. A significant number of applications are currently with Irish Uisce Eireann for agreement and it is hoped that these can be substantially progressed in 2024.

The Planning Section continue to pursue security bonds on a small number of developments throughout the County. The Planning Section will continue to progress the Taking in Charge of residential developments in 2024.

Planning Enforcement

When the Planning Authority becomes aware of a breach of planning permission or unauthorised development, discussions with offender(s) are often sufficient to ensure remedy. However, where issues are not addressed by the offender then formal enforcement action is taken. Continued development activity throughout the County has meant enforcement complaint numbers are similar to 2022. Enforcement statistics for 2023 are set out below.

2023 Enforcement Statistics	
New cases opened	98
Total cases closed	136
Ongoing enforcement cases	139

Of the cases closed, 62 were as a result of the Planning Authority issuing warning Letters, enforcement notices and/or prosecution proceedings. A high number of cases were closed following a review of historical and long-standing cases. A significant number of enforcement cases are at prosecution stage and in 2023 there were significantly more court hearings than previous years and this will likely continue to 2024.

Development Contributions

Early invoicing and enforcement action in the

recovery of unpaid development contributions has resulted in development contribution receipts amounting to €1,234,431 in 2023.

Derelict Sites

Work continued in 2022 on addressing dereliction in the County with seven sites added to the Derelict Sites Register. No sites were removed from the Derelict Sites Register during the year. There were thirty six sites on the Derelict Sites Register at the beginning of 2023. Five sites were removed from the register during the year resulting in thirty-one sites on the Derelict Sites Register on 31st December 2023.

Built Heritage

Monaghan County Council's Planning Section administer two annual heritage grant schemes annually, the Built Heritage Investment Scheme (BHIS) and the Historic Structures Fund (HSF).

The Built Heritage Investment Scheme encourages the investment of private capital in small-scale, labour-intensive projects to repair and conserve historic structures and to support the employment of skilled and experienced conservation professionals, craftspeople and tradespersons. County Monaghan received an overall allocation of €96,000 in 2023.

In 2023 twelve projects were awarded funding under the BHIS, with eleven availing of same as follows:

- St. Sillians Church, Tyholland
- Freame Mount Demense, Dartry, Cootehill
- Tydavnet Parish Church, Ballinode
- 25 Main Street, Glaslough
- Newbliss Gate Lodge, Killycushil, Monaghan
- The Squealing Pig, Monaghan
- Monaghan Methodist Church, Monaghan
- Former Railway Station wall, Glaslough
- St. Joseph's Church, Knockatallon
- Hilton Park, Stable-yard
- John Anderson's, Drum



Conservation repairs to windows & roof at 25 Main Street, Glaslough

The primary focus of the Historic Structures Fund is on conservation and enhancement of historic structures and buildings for the benefit of communities and the public. It aims to enable conservation works to be carried out on heritage structures which are deemed to be significant and in need of urgent support. Total funding under the HSF for 2023 was €317,630.

In 2023 five projects were awarded funding under the HSF, with four availing of same as follows:

- St Macartan's Cathedral, Monaghan
- Rossmore Mausoleum, Monaghan
- Shanco Church, Emyvale
- St. John the Evangelist Church, Dartrey



Completed conservation work to the roof at St. John the Evangelist Church, Dartrey

Section 57 Declarations

Under the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended) works which would normally be considered exempted development under Section 4(1)h of the Act may not be exempt in respect of a Protected Structure or a Proposed Protected Structure.

Section 57 of the Act allows for the owner or occupier of a Protected Structure or a Proposed Protected Structure to make a written request to the Planning Authority to issue a declaration as to the type of works which it considers would or would not materially affect the character of the structure or any element of the structure, thereby clarifying which works would be considered exempted development and those which would require planning permission. Monaghan County Council received seven Section 57 Declarations in 2023.

Capital Projects

Monaghan PEACE Campus



The Monaghan Peace Campus will open in May 2024. The Peace Campus encourages cross-community and cross-border interaction and is designed to be welcoming to all and respectful to all cultural identities.



MPC – December 2022



MPC - December 2023

The Building is located next to, North Road, Glaslough Street and Plantation Road in Monaghan town and is a significant investment by the Council in the urban regeneration of the county town.

The “Monaghan Peace Campus” Webpage is updated Quarterly to provide current information about the project and progress on site.

Proposed new Civic Office Headquarters

The Capital Projects Unit is finalising the design for the proposed Monaghan County Council Civic Office Headquarters at Roosky, Monaghan.

The Part 8 Planning documents have been advertised with a decision due in Q2 2024. Detailed design will continue in 2024 with the project expected to go to tender in 2024.



3D birdseye CGI image of the proposed new Civic Offices at Roosky



Front elevation CGI image of the proposed new Civic Offices at Roosky

Dublin Street & Backlands Regeneration Project

Dublin Street South Regeneration

The Council progressed design proposals for the regeneration of the Dublin Street south area of Monaghan Town during 2023. Following the submission of a planning application for the scheme in Q3 2022, An Bord Pleanála (ABP) issued a further information (FI) request on the project proposals in Q1 2023. Following receipt of this request, the Council carried out a comprehensive review of the development proposals. The review incorporated further consultation with the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage; the engagement of additional architectural and public realm consultants; and direct engagement with property owners in

respect of buildings that immediately adjoin the existing and proposed connections between Dublin Street and the new backlands quarter. The revised planning submission was issued to ABP on 5th December 2023.

Avison Young (Valuation Office) continued engagement and negotiations with affected property owners throughout 2023 and negotiations will continue in 2024. The Council reached agreement to acquire 4 properties in December 2023.

Detailed designs for the proposed Dublin Street South scheme are substantially complete and are scheduled to be finalised following ABP’s planning decision.



Dublin Street South Regeneration Scheme Area



Architectural Image – View of proposed Pedestrian Civic Plaza (Gavan Duffy Place) from Dublin Street



Architectural Image – East View of proposed entrance to Pedestrian Civic Plaza



Architectural Image – West view of proposed entrance to Pedestrian Civic Plaza

Dublin Street North Regeneration Project

The Capital Project Unit is also continuing to progress proposals for the regeneration of the Dublin Street North area of Monaghan Town. The Design Team prepared Preliminary Designs for Public Consultation in July 2023 and held a public consultation day in the Market House, Monaghan on the 3rd of July 2023 for the purpose of providing feedback on the design proposals. Following consideration of the public feedback, the Preliminary Design stage was completed, and the project moved into Stage 2 developing the design for an Application for Approval to An Bord Pleanála in 2024.



Preliminary Design: Plan view of Dublin Street North Regeneration proposals



Preliminary Design: 3d birdseye view of Dublin Street North Regeneration proposals

Castleblayney Market Square Regeneration Phase I – Gate Lodge 2 Library & Public Realm

Broomfield Construction contractors completed the contract works for the Gate Lodge 2 Library Refurbishment and Public Realm facilities in Q3 2023. Following the building handover, fit out works for the library facility were progressed and the new library was opened to the public in September 2023. The regeneration project was officially opened by Minister Heather Humphreys in November 2023.



Refurbished Gate Lodge Library Building



Refurbished Gate Lodge Library Building



Lower Ground Floor – Children's Section

Castleblayney Market Square Regeneration Phase II – Castleblayney Market House & Market Square.

Dhb Design Consultants progressed the detailed design proposals for the Castleblayney Market House & Market Square project throughout the course of 2023.

The Design Consultants finalised detailed designs for the Market House refurbishment and Market Square public realm improvements in Q4 2023. A Category 1 funding application under the Rural Regeneration and Development Fund (RRDF) is expected to be submitted in early 2024.



Architectural Image – Refurbished Market House



Architectural Image – Upper Ground Floor



Architectural Image – Events Space at Roof Level

Newbliss RRDF Digital Enterprise Hub

Monaghan County Council received funding through the Department of Rural and Community Development's Rural Regeneration and Development Fund for the delivery of the Newbliss Enterprise and Digital Hub. This project will see the former Courthouse in Newbliss converted to a remote working, enterprise and

digital hub. The 'Hub' will act as a key driver for the sustainable regeneration of Newbliss Village. By increasing footfall and addressing dereliction through the refurbishment of a vacant listed building, the project will act as a catalyst for economic recovery in area. The 'Hub' which will be managed and operated by Enterprising Monaghan will consist of:

- Rentable desks for students/remote workers
- A meeting room
- A canteen
- 7no. offices of varying sizes
- An outbuilding with a multifunctional space

Having secured planning permission for the development, a tender competition for the construction works was then completed. The successful tenderer was Lowry Construction Ltd. Works commenced at the end of June 2023. The Ceremonial signing of the Contracts with Minister Heather Humphreys and the Elected Members took place in the Ballybay Clones Municipal District Offices on the 16th June 2023. Substantial completion is expected in Q4 2024.



Blackwater Valley Rural Enterprise Hub

The facility will consist of a remote working /hot desking area, a meeting room, a commercial kitchen, a café/shop, multi-purpose community space, 2no. training rooms, 6no. offices for rent, 2 clinical rooms for rent. (Total floor area is 920 m2).

A Steering Group was established to guide the project, consisting of representatives Truagh Development Association and Monaghan County Council. Local architects, Craftstudio Architecture Ltd, were appointed as the Design Team Lead on the project. Working in collaboration with the Steering Group, Craftstudio Architecture lodged a

Part 8 Planning application for the project on the 19th of October 2023.

Subject to planning consent, a tender competition will be run in Q1 2024 for the appointment of a Main Contractor to complete the build. It is expected that works will commence on site in Q2 2024.



Shared Island Project – Development of SME innovation clusters across five Local Authorities

Monaghan County Council are the lead in a joint partnership with four other Local Authorities, Armagh, Banbridge & Craigavon Borough Council, Mid Ulster District Council, Cavan County Council and Fermanagh and Omagh District Council on a Shared Island Project to investigate the feasibility of developing SME innovation parks in each local authority area and ascertain the synergies that can be accomplished by project partnering. In November 2023 the projects Economic Consultants completed the joint Feasibility Report for issue and consideration by the Department of the Taoiseach. Work will continue in 2024 for the delivery of Masterplans at the identified sites in each of the five local authorities to augment the Feasibility Report and set a vision for future development. The Monaghan County Council site focuses on a 46 Hectare site east of Annahagh roundabout on the N2 in Monaghan.



Monaghan County Council’s study area for the Shared Island Project Feasibility Study at Annahagh & Knockaconny.

Industrial Zoned Lands, Annahagh, Monaghan

In November 2023 Monaghan County Council appointed a Design Team to prepare Masterplans for the development of a 15 Hectare site of Industrial Zoned Lands west of Annahagh Roundabout on the N2 in Monaghan. Designs are developing and the Masterplans will provide a Basis of Design for providing infrastructure to service industrial sites on the zoned lands.



Area of lands subject to Masterplan development for industrial sites at Annahagh, Monaghan

Monaghan Leisure Complex

Refurbishment works to the Changing Village facilities in Coral Leisure were successfully completed in 2023. The works included the replacement of changing cubicles, upgrade of plumbing works to shower heads, taps and ancillary upgrade works. The refurbishment works were completed through a grant allocation of €113,000 from the Sports Capital and Equipment Programme (SCEP) and matching funding from Monaghan County Council. In September 2023, the Council submitted an application for the next round of funding under the Sports Capital and Equipment Programme.



Energy

The Capital Projects section in Monaghan County Council is now tasked with monitoring energy usage for the Council, in line with the Climate Change Adaptation Strategy 2019-2024, which was adopted by Monaghan County Council in September 2019.

All Public Bodies are mandated to report annual energy data through the SEAI M&R 20230 platform, who manages the reporting process on behalf of the Department of the Environment, Climate and Communications (DECC). This annual monitoring & reporting (M & R) is to comply with Ireland's national and EU's commitments and wider climate change goals, whereby a 51% reduction in energy-related greenhouse gas (CHG) emissions and a 50% improvement in energy efficiency is to be achieved by all Irish Public Bodies by 2030.



Some of the Energy efficiency achievements and milestones achieved to date include:

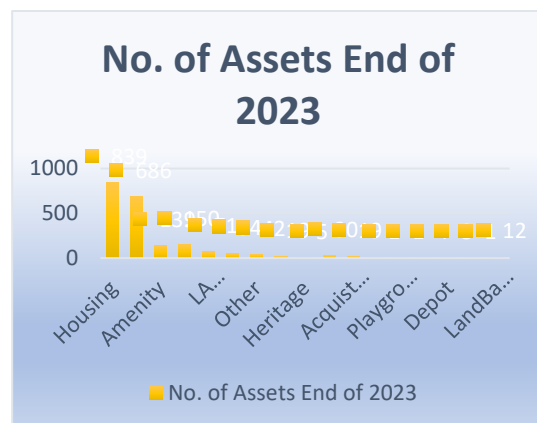
- In terms of Energy usage, Monaghan County Council is among the best performing Local Authority in the country, having already achieved a 52% energy improvement by the end of 2022.
- Monaghan County Council were the first Local Authority to complete the full LED retrofit of its public lighting and were recently shortlisted at the LAMA All Ireland Community & Council Awards 2024 in the Local Authority Energy Decarbonisation category for its work in reducing energy and carbon by 54%, through our Public Lighting Retrofit programme.
- Monaghan County Council's Energy Team also continue to work in close partnership with our main stakeholders Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland (SEAI), and the Eastern and Midlands Climate Action Regional Office (CARO), who support our team in the development of Clean Energy and Energy Management.
- The New Border Energy unit partnership was formed in 2022 with our neighbouring local authorities, Leitrim, and Cavan Count Councils, where the committee meet regularly to discuss similar Energy issues.
- Following on from the Deep Retrofit Energy Audit which was carried out in Q4 2021 by the Environmental section, a total of 6 No. Council Buildings have now been chosen to undergo full detailed Design and Construction retrofit works, with 50% funding under the SEAI Energy Pathfinder Programme. It is anticipated that the Design Consultant will be appointed by end of Q1 2024, and construction works to commence in late 2024.

Property Asset Management

The Council Property Management Software System records and tracks all land and building assets under the control of the Council. This ensures good Governance and effective management of our property portfolio and links to the Financial Assets Register (FAR).

As of December 2023, Monaghan County Council currently has 2,081 Assets in the Property Interests Register including 71 buildings.

Asset Type	No. of Assets End of 2023
Housing	839
Roads	686
Amenity	139
Water Services	150
LA Building	71
Car Park	54
Other	42
LA Building Campus	19
Heritage	5
Land	30
Acquisition in Progress	19
Burial Grounds	1
Playgrounds	1
Landfill	4
Depot	8
Quarry	1
LandBank	12
TOTAL	2081

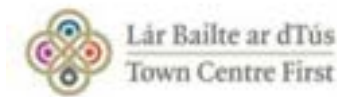


Town Regeneration Section

Carrickmacross Town Centre First Plan

Following the appointment of a Town Regeneration Officer in August 2023 and the award of funding from the Department of Rural & Community Development, Monaghan County Council has commissioned a Town Centre First Plan for Carrickmacross.

“The Town Centre First policy aims to create town centres that function as viable, vibrant and attractive locations for people to live, work and visit, while also functioning as the service, social, cultural and recreational hub for the local community”.



Subsequent to the appointment of consultants, The Paul Hogarth Company, the Council formed a local Town Team to lead in the development of the plan. This team comprises representatives of groups across Carrickmacross, including the Chamber of Commerce and Tidy Towns. The first Town Team workshop was held on 23rd September 2023 where introductions were made and the methodology and programme discussed and agreed. An initial SCOT Analysis was also completed collaboratively.

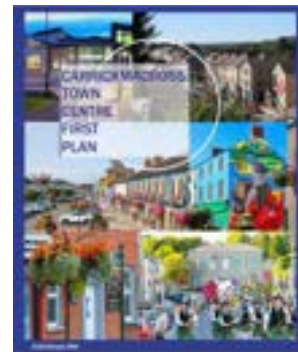


A public engagement process was initiated from 3rd October to 29th October 2023. This comprised a short survey for completion both on-line and on paper and also an in-person event held on 5th

October 2023. By its closing date, a total of 503 responses were received, indicating a strong level of interest from members of the public. Topics raised including positivity about the town’s heritage and sense of community, but also concern around traffic and car parking, perceived antisocial behaviour and provisions for young people.



The consultancy team has also engaged with elected members of the Municipal District, representatives of Monaghan County Council departments and on 23rd October 2023, the team visited 3 schools in the town. This was an opportunity to discuss the plan with pupils and staff, to listen to their opinions regarding the town centre and to encourage them to complete the survey.



The initial draft of the Town Centre First plan for Carrickmacross was made available during mid-November 2023 and further public consultation, consisting of a number of in person events and online surveys was held during December 2023. It is expected that the finalised plan will be completed by the end of February 2024.

The plan will map out a series of transformative projects specifically tailored for Carrickmacross, encompassing a spectrum of scales and ambitions. The Town Centre First Plan will be a live document, remaining responsive to ongoing input and feedback, ensuring its adaptability to the evolving

needs and aspirations of Carrickmacross.

Regeneration Plan for town centre lands in Castleblayney, Co. Monaghan

Monaghan County Council has commenced the process to appoint an architect/urban design led consultant team to prepare a regeneration plan, incorporating approximately 4.5 hectares of town centre zoned lands, an area which radiates from the Market House west along Main Street and north along Muckno Street with McGrath Road to the northwest and Monaghan Road to the west, area outlined in red in Map 1 below.



This appointment will be made in early 2024. The project will be led by the Carrickmacross Castleblayney Municipal District and delivered with the assistance of the Town Regeneration Section.

Proposed Strategy to deal with Vacancy and Dereliction in County Monaghan



Following engagement with a range of stakeholders both internal and external to the Council, the Regeneration unit is developing a strategy to address the County's dereliction and vacancy issue. The proposed strategy consists of

working with relevant landowners, seeking in the first instance to address the issue using current available Governmental supports and if not successful, utilising the Councils powers as contained in the 1990 Derelict Sites Act (as amended) to address this issue.

This strategy and associated policy will be considered by the elected members in early 2024.

Monaghan County Council Policy and Procedure for Derelict Sites



Urban Regeneration and Development Fund (URDF) Call 3

The Unit is progressing the Urban Regeneration and Development Fund (URDF) Call 3 for Monaghan Town, and actively engaging with property owners, where possible, to address the long-term vacancy and dereliction of 17 properties that have been approved by the Department Housing Local Government and Heritage with financial resources to allow if necessary to acquire these properties, compulsorily or by agreement, and to place them on the open market for sale to buyers that will bring the properties back into active use. This funding is committed to 2030



Cross Border collaboration

The Town Regeneration section is collaborating with cross-border local authorities through ICBAN and EBR and other sections in the Council, in the development of projects for submission to the PEACE PLUS programme.

PEACEPLUS PROGRAMME 2021 – 2027

Current proposals include: the development of a Digi Hub (EBR), place plans for key towns in the County (EBR) and Smart Towns and Villages project (ICBAN).

Cultural Team

Creative Ireland Programme



Let the creativity continue: Creative Ireland Programme extended to 2027!

Committed to the vision that everyone should have the chance to realise their creative potential to the full, the innovative all-of-government culture and wellbeing programme will be extended, in principle, for five more years.

Established as a legacy initiative of the hugely successful Ireland 2016 Centenary Programme, the unique Creative Ireland Programme enjoys the accolade of being the only programme of its kind in the world and collaborating across government.

Monaghan Murals



At the core of the programme is the founding vision that creativity must be at the very heart of public policy and that participation in cultural and creative activity effectively promotes the wellbeing of the individual, the community, and the nation at large.

Minister for Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sports and Media Catherine Martin TD and Minister of State with responsibility for Local Government and Planning Kieran O'Donnell TD announced the roll out of 31 new Local Authority Creative Ireland Culture and Creativity Strategies (2023-2027) at an event at Farmleigh in the Phoenix Park, February 2023. The new strategies reflect the creative ambitions of communities around the country which will be supported by the Creative Ireland Programme 2023-2027. There will be a greater focus on health and wellbeing, creative industries, climate action, the development of the Irish language and social sustainability.



Monaghan

Between 2017-22 Creative Ireland allocated €29.8 million to support thousands of local authority initiatives that have unlocked a national ecosystem of creativity, of which Monaghan received €977,952 which supported 187 projects, where 361 creatives engaged with audience engagement of 543,869.

Rossmore Giants



For 2023, €191,290 was allocated to each authority. However, we were successful in obtaining an additional €254,060, therefore total expenditure of **€445,350 (increase of 133%)** which supported 25 projects such as:

Patrick Kavanagh Weekend



Creative Cafes



Arts in Motion project



Magic Under Monaghan Film



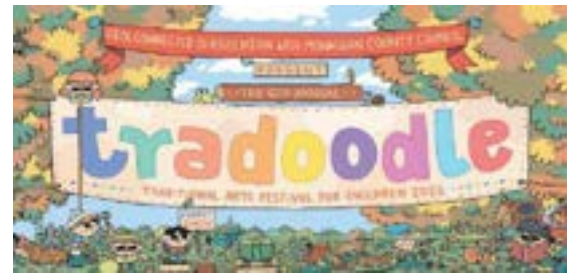
Wilde Sisters Short Film



Drumlin Yarnspinners Network



Tradoodle Festival



Creative
Communities

Culture Night 2023



This was the 11th year for the County Council to coordinate Culture Night, an annual all-island public event that celebrates culture, creativity, and the arts. This year, it took place on Friday 22nd September. Working with community and creatives/artists, a

vibrant engaging programme of 33 events took place across the county. The Council received €10,000 funding from the Department of Culture, Heritage, and Gaeltacht.

Decade of Centenaries Programme



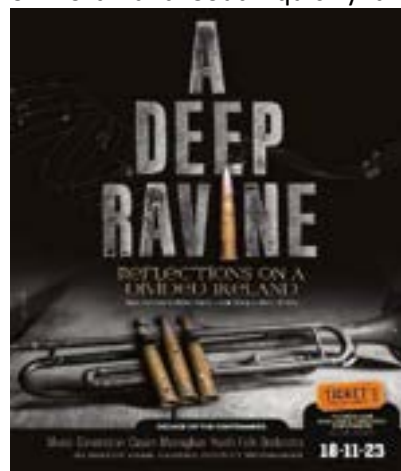
We finished off the Decade of Centenaries with the finale of many projects and programmes but having laid the foundation for future research and engagement in our history through other mediums within the culture and creative sector. For 2023 a total of **12** projects took place engaging with the community about historical events during 1923 period. We received **€195,000** funding, of which some capital funding towards the new Museum exhibition at the Peace Campus.

Over the period 2018-2023, an allocation of **€175,000** was given to each authority and we were successful in obtaining a further €389,894, bringing total support to **€564,894 (220% increase)**

A Deep Ravine

What started as a small project during covid with 12 young people, evolved beyond our vision to a new cross border youth orchestra of almost 100 young people. Working with local award-winning composer Michael Rooney, who composed this special suite of music to reflect key events along our border area during this turbulent period. It was enriched by the talents of local actors, skilfully

directed by the esteemed writer Tommy McArdle. It is a meditation on the lives of various people centred around that great divide when a new border came into being and when the two states of North and South quickly divided the island.



It was premiered at the spectacular Hilton Park estate in November 2023, with standing ovations, as one audience member commented *'I believe I have witnessed another Riverdance moment...new type of performance, unique!'* A partnership with Cavan Monaghan Music Generation and Cavan County Council.



One Book One County Initiative

An annual initiative facilitated by Library service, where all schools are invited to read the one book and discuss it. The book chosen for 2023 was 'The Irish Civil War 1922-23' by Patricia Murphy. Due to its success, it will continue every year as part of Library programming.



The
2023
Civil
by
its
year



Radio Plays

Two radio plays were commissioned and are available to listen online. The Emergency Part 2 by local historian Kevin McGeough and Requiem for a Hotel by local writer Ted McCarthy.



History Writing Competition

With the Office of Cathaoirleach (Library and Museum Services) encouraging children and young people to learn about their history through research and production of a series of excellent essays and poems, which were digitised and available online.



No Going Back Play

The reasons why people get involved in the Irish War of Independence and Civil War that followed, are many and varied, some idealistic, others more personal. But whatever the reasons, there are always casualties resulting from conflict and the scars of conflict can be physical or psychological or both. This play tells the story of two brothers who have taken part, and they carry those scars that cannot be easily shaken off. Researched and written by Joe Hanratty.

Library Services

What another bumper year of activity and development in our library services. We opened our new library in Castleblayney, working with Ballybay Clones MD purchased the Market House in Ballybay to be a library and community cultural space to amazing stats such as:

- 250,000 visits to our libraries
- 1825 events organised.
- 27,130 attending our events.
- 170,000 items borrowed.
- 17,500 online loans
- 719,092 social media reach



Childrens Book Festival 2023

Curated especially for our young book enthusiasts. We believe that stories have the power to transport us to extraordinary places, introduce us to fascinating characters, and spark our creativity. With that in mind, Children's Book Festival 2023 was a whirlwind of literary adventures! The festival was packed with exciting activities, interactive workshops, enchanting storytelling sessions, and the chance to meet some of our favourite authors and illustrators. From exploring magical lands to solving mysteries with clever detectives, the festival was a world of fun and learning. 25 events took place across the County and a further 6 events took place online. **3849 children** participated in total.



Dyslexia Resources

In 2023 we added to our bank of accessibility resources by sourcing a range of tools designed to empower individuals with dyslexia to read comfortably and confidently. We continually strive to create an inclusive reading environment where everyone can dive into the world of books without barriers.

Our toolkit for those with Dyslexia and/or visual stress contains:

- Reading Windows with a variety of coloured films
- Line Tackers
- Finger focus tools (for younger readers)
- Page overlays (in a selection of 10 different colours)
- Reading rulers (in a variety of tints)

These tools will compliment a range of other resources available such as C-Pen readers, TTRS software, Magnifiers, Large Format Keyboards & Mouse, and Read Aloud Magazines.



TechKnow Digital Literacy Project

We successfully applied for funding through the Adult Literacy for Life programme with a project which focused on Digital skills as an important part of 21st Century literacy. The aim of our project was to offer 1 to 1 digital skills sessions to the general public with a view to increasing their digital literacy skills and giving them the confidence to develop their skills further through other Library & ETB digital skills courses. The 1 to 1 sessions were backed up with small group classes which looked at functional digital literacy such as safe shopping online, cybersecurity & Parental controls on digital devices. The project launched in September 2023. As of 31st Dec 2023, **134 adults** had received 1 to 1 help. The learners presented with a wide variety of needs ranging from the basics of making a call

on a Smartphone, saving a contact in a phone, sending a WhatsApp message, sending & deleting emails to more advanced needs such as unsubscribing from digital services, booking flights/hotels online, ordering groceries for home delivery, using Google Maps and applying for health expenses tax back.



Barry McGuigan Park Story trail

As part of our 'Spring Into Storytime' programme, we installed a new Story Trail in Barry McGuigan Park, Clones. The story of 'Flossie Mc Fluff', an Irish Fairy by Eoin O'Brien is a rhyming tale with an environmentally friendly message. Those using the park can follow the trail to read all about Flossie's adventures. An audio guided version is also available by scanning a QR code on the introductory panel. It was launched in March 2023 with help from the author and local school children. The Story trail adds an extra element of fun and colour to the wonderful outdoor space in Clones.



Ireland Reads 2023

To celebrate Ireland Reads Day 2023, Monaghan County Libraries teamed up with TFI Local Link Cavan Monaghan to provide 'Books on Buses'. Passengers on all Monaghan routes got more than they bargained for with their bus ticket as they discovered free book bags which contained a quick read, information about the library and some

library merchandise. The initiative proved to be very successful and hopefully one that can be repeated.



Community Collaboration: A celebration of St. Dymphna's Story in Tydavnet

In May 2023 we teamed up with the community of Tydavnet to celebrate the opening of a new exhibition St Dymphna - The Tragedy of an Irish Princess in the National Gallery of Ireland. The exhibition has been organised together with The Phoebus Foundation (Antwerp) and told the story of St. Dymphna who travelled from Tydavnet to Geel, Belgium. Library staff worked with the local committee to roll out a Primary Schools competition and exhibition of work in the local community centre. Entrants were invited to retell the story of St Dymphna in their choice of medium e.g. poem, story, artwork in any medium, comic strip, audio recording, video recording, or animation. It was a very ambitious project, and the entries were of an exceptionally high quality, demonstrating the interest and appeal of the story of St Dymphna and her links to Tydavnet, Monaghan, and Geel.



Summer Stars Reading Challenge

The annual Summer Reading Challenge took place again across the summer months. Almost **2,000 children** took on the challenge to read 6 books during their summer holidays. The Summer Reading Challenge is an important literacy programme which keeps children's reading levels up during the break from school and helps to avoid what is commonly known as the 'Summer Slump' in literacy levels. The Reading Challenge was complimented by a programme of events across the summer holidays including Chess Clubs, Book Clubs, Science Workshops, Coding Workshops, Art Workshops, Storytime sessions and more.



Cavan Monaghan Science Festival

The Cavan Monaghan Science Festival returned in 2023 for another thrilling celebration of science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) designed to ignite curiosity. This annual event, hosted by Cavan & Monaghan County Councils with the support of Science Foundation Ireland transforms learning into an engaging adventure for people of all ages.

At the heart of the festival is the belief that STEM is not just a subject; it's a way of thinking and exploring the world. Our festival aims to demonstrate the fun and excitement of STEM disciplines through hands-on activities, captivating demonstrations, engaging lectures, and interactive exhibits.

The comprehensive programme included talks and workshops on a wide variety of topics ranging from Botox to Agricultural Genomics, Apollo

Astronauts to Passive housing, Biodiversity to Football physics.



Europe Direct Clones



Europe Direct Clones is a local point of contact for citizens to engage with the EU. As a regional service, Europe Direct Clones engages with citizens across three counties, Monaghan, Cavan, and Louth.

Europe Direct Information Centres provide information, assistance, and answers to questions about the EU and the rights of EU citizens, the EU's priorities, policies, programmes, and funding opportunities.



A wide range of events were held during 2023 focusing on the European Green Deal, The Digital Decade and promoting European Citizenship. In 2023, we also celebrated Ireland's 50 Years of EU membership. Several of the workshops saw citizens engage with topics such as Artificial Intelligence, Robotics and EU Funding. Schools from across the region participated in the Annual Soapbox Competition. Representatives from Europe Direct Clones went forward to participate in the National Final and came 1st in the 17 and over category and 2nd in the 16 and under category.

Europe Direct Clones receives funding from the European Commission.

Sensory Services

We continued to support schools in providing access to Nessy Reading & Spelling, Lexia and TTRS software during 2023.

A bookable sensory space is available in Clones Library and 2023 saw us add to our collection of assistive toys which are available to borrow by library members.



We held numerous autism friendly workshops throughout our 2023 programming, and had information sessions on Speech and Language Therapy, Irish Sign Language, Sibshops and the benefits of music therapy.



New Multilingual Translation Service

The Scan EZ, multilingual translation service was introduced to Clones Library during 2023. This allows staff, teachers, and library members to scan or import documents and translate them into over 100 languages. The converted documents are sent as Microsoft word or MP3 files making it very accessible for the end user. Scan Ez also allows library members to scan and enhance old photographs and create a digital copy.



Local History and Genealogy Service

The service continued to be very busy with enquiries throughout 2023 from around the world dealing with **2567 queries**. Work continued with the scanning & indexing of death notices & obituaries from the local newspapers.

Mystery of History Activity Book

We produced an activity book to encourage children to take an interest in the history of their area and to record their family history.

The book contains literacy, numeracy & visual activities related to local history & genealogy, which makes it an ideal resource for teachers to use in conjunction with the school curriculum. The book was distributed to all primary schools in the county. The feedback from teachers & pupils was very encouraging.



Literacy Activity Books

In 2023 a new and fun activity book was produced to celebrate and promote the historic occasion of the Ireland Women's Team participating in the FIFA Women's World Cup. Following on from the success of the previous literacy activity books developed in house, we negotiated this project on a national scale with the LGMA/Library Development Unit. As a result, every library authority in the country received free copies of the booklet to distribute as part of their summer stars reading programme. The project which saw 150,000 booklets printed for distribution was funded by the Football Association of Ireland.



The Chess Clubs Phenomenon

Chess is in fashion! Library Chess Clubs for both adults and kids were established across Monaghan Library branches. The popular strategy board game proved popular with all age groups with great uptake. Library staff continued his good work hosting and leading weekly Chess groups.



My Open Library

This service at Carrickmacross Library was made available again from February 2023 after the service was withdrawn during COVID. The library is open 8am to 10pm 365 days per year. The service has received positive feedback from staff and members of Carrickmacross Library. Secondary and third level students have found the service to be very beneficial to their academic studies. It has also provided a social outlet for these students during a time of high stress and pressure in their lives. Visits from young families and those with conflicting work hours schedules have been able to visit and borrow more regularly.



Carrickmacross Library has seen an increased membership of young adults and college students which can be directly attributed to the MOL service. At end of 2023, there are **415 registered members** of the service. **32%** of MOL members joined specifically for the service having never had library membership before. Many others had expired accounts which had not been in use until they availed of the MOL service. Active membership retention is also greater with MOL members renewing their membership annually.

Staff have welcomed the service and have recognised that it complements the overall service in a positive manner. The service has run successfully in Carrickmacross with continued interest anticipated.



Establishment of community and youth book clubs

As part of the National Library strategy, it is a target that every user has a book club suitable for their age group. This has led to the formation of many new books club facilitated by library staff. In Carrickmacross Library, we have the new Farney Book Wizards while in Scotstown the Henry's book club is running smoothly at Henry's café on monthly basis.



Monaghan County Museum

We are Moving!

Monaghan County Museum closed its doors on Hill Street on International Museums Day, May 18th 2023. Our home on Hill Street has served the Museum well for nearly forty years, but the



ambitions of the service and the wealth and breadth of our collection now requires a bigger and more accessible space to reach an even wider audience. That new space is the Peace Campus building, currently under construction on Plantation Road in Monaghan Town.



Our new home: The Peace Campus from above

The doors to Monaghan County Museum on Hill Street may be closed but the museum itself remains active and busy. Actually, very active as our move to our new home at the Peace Campus edges ever closer. This requires a temporary restriction on visitor access as we carefully organise the safe transit of our collection to its

new home, but behind closed doors it's business as usual and a whole lot more!

Peace Campus Update

Building has continued apace at the site of the Peace Campus as has our anticipation for the move to the museum's new home there. Recent images of the site show great progress in construction, allowing us a view of the emerging shape and layout of our new exhibition space. The new museum within the Peace Campus development will be the first purpose-built museum in Ireland in over 20 years and will be an exciting, inclusive, accessible space of enjoyment and education for the communities of County



The impressive staircase in the Peace Campus



The exterior of the museum-end of the building

Monaghan and visitors alike.



The view across Monaghan town from the Peace Campus roof



The second-floor museum gallery space taking shape in the Peace Campus

Behind Closed Doors: Preparations for the Move

Behind the closed doors, the museum remains a hive of activity. All staff members are occupied with preparations for the move to the Peace Campus later this year. Whether it be on the grand scale of exhibition design to the more banal, but equally important, packing of objects, it's all hands-on deck.

In order to facilitate the meticulous process of moving the collection, the temporary gallery space closed to the public in January. This gallery space has now become the organisational hub of the physical move. Before this could happen our nationally acclaimed *Monaghan's War of Independence* exhibition had to be carefully dismantled.



Removing the wall panels from the Monaghan's War of Independence exhibition



Objects being sorted and packed

With the gallery cleared the space is now being used to facilitate auditing, photography, numbering, packing, and storing the collection before the move. The relocation to a new building has provided collections care staff a unique opportunity to audit the entire collection within an 18-month timescale. The best part of it has been the rediscovery of objects in the store, some which may never have been exhibited before and may now be displayed in the new Peace Campus galleries.



The Collections Care Team inspect the condition of one of the banners in the museum collection

Banners

The museum's collection is fortunate to contain some beautiful, striking banners that belonged to different organisations in County Monaghan. Banners were displayed and sashes were worn by society members as a way of publicly expressing their attitudes, views, and allegiances. Banners, which were usually carried at marches and

parades, were often decorated with paintings and symbols or motifs connected with the beliefs and history of the organisation they represented. During the recent audit of our collection, we had the banners out and were so struck by their vibrant beauty that we just have to share some images of them!



LHS; Loyal Orange Lodge No. 211 Banner from Ballybay, Co. Monaghan. RHS; Ancient Order of Hibernians Banner of Division Number 255, Monaghan.

Museum Events

The Last Christmas on Hill Street

On December 7th 2022, the museum invited the public to come and join us in celebrating the last Christmas spent in our present home on Hill



Guests enjoying the last Christmas in the museum on Hill Street.

Street. This was the last large event in the museum and many people came to join in the festive celebrations.



(left – right) Monaghan Uilleann pipers Eamonn Curran and Tiarnán Ó Duinnchinn provided the afternoon’s entertainment

The festivities swung into action with renowned Monaghan Uilleann pipers Tiarnán Ó Duinnchinn and Eamonn Curran, entertaining the audience with traditional music. Seasonal mince pies and

mulled wine were served up, as were many fond memories of the people, events and exhibitions associated with the museum’s thirty-six years in the building.



(left – right) Monaghan County Museum Curator, Liam Bradley and Cathaoirleach Sean Conlan from Monaghan County Council



The museum staff attending the last Christmas at their Hill Street workplace.

International Women's Day

On March 8th, the museum celebrated International Women's Day 2023 with a special presentation on 'How to Care for Your Skin' in conjunction with Cavan Monaghan ETB. Those

who attended were provided with information on how to establish a suitable regime for glowing, healthy skin regardless of age, gender, or skin type.



Attendees at the Skin Care Workshop

The End of an Era

Over the last two weeks before closing on 18th May 2023, the museum invited people to take this last opportunity to visit us in our current venue. The response was excellent, and visitors came in their droves. Nostalgic stories were exchanged, reminiscences shared and people, no longer with us but who had been at the heart of the museum at Hill Street, fondly remembered. On Thursday, 18th May 2023 the door finally closed to the public. The staff look forward to welcoming everyone back in Spring 2024 in the new museum at the Peace Campus.



Museum Staff on the steps of the museum on Hill Street as it closed its doors to the public in preparation of the move to their new home at the Monaghan Peace Campus.

and that's a wrap from Hill Street

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Arts Office

We align ourselves with the [Framework Agreement with The Arts Council 2020 – 2027](#)

In the understanding that the Council's commitment and delivery of the Arts in the County can always be sustainable.

3 key objectives are the cornerstone of our goals in maintaining a vital role for the arts in the creative society within Monaghan.

Some of the updates in our 2023 delivery are as follows:

1. **Supporting the Artist:** Value and support the work of artists and extend the range of opportunities for artists to develop their practice.

Our **Value-Added Scheme** in 2023 funded one Artist with a view to developing and promoting her Art.

Assisted an Artist with a **Residency Fee** for Tyrone Guthrie Centre for €400.

Our Annual **Artist Support Scheme 2023 – Arts (Monaghan.ie)** awarded a total of **€12K** to **18 Artists** in 2 categories of Artists, Emerging Talent, and Established Artists.

Assisted **Clones Artist Studio** throughout the year with funding and assisting Tenants in the Studios, another of our [long-standing commitment](#) to the Arts in County Monaghan. Artists present Workshops and Projects throughout Autumn.

We also co funded with the Arts Council and in association with arts officer association the biannual **Platform 31** bursary which is awarded in competition form to one Artist in mid-career wishing to engage in new and exciting work an amount of **€8K**.

Workplace Scheme 2023 Assisted Monaghan Artist Collective in amt of EUR 2,400 Declan Gorman Performed a One-Off Show here, "**Falling Through the Universe**" which is a staging of James Joyce's "The Dead". Captivating the audience for 80 minutes and thoroughly enjoyed by all. Declan then travelled on to London with his show.

2. **Young people and the Arts;** opportunities for children and young people to create, access and participate in great art.

Contribution to **Music Generation 2023** of 30K which is the Music Education Service providing opportunities for children and young people to have access to instrumental tuition locally and great opportunities. a. So many of our schools and young people gain tremendous opportunities by being part of this initiative.

As part of our Local Arts in Education delivery, we linked up with CMETB and Cavan County Council, we awarded 4 Bursaries between Youth Groups in the County totalling € 2,400.00 in 2023 in collaboration with **The National Youth Council of Ireland (NYCI)**.

We each contribute financially to its operation which in turn assists schools in both counties to achieve the status of being in the **Creative Schools Programme** under the auspices of the Arts Council. We now have 17 schools in County Monaghan who have achieved and participated in the programme.

We also contributed **5K** to **Tradoodle Festival**, a traditional Arts Festival full of Music and Workshops for young audiences "Tales and Tunes at The Market House" in 2023.

Two & One Productions Performed "**The Flowers of May**" on the 6th & 7th here in The Market House, a story of the daily challenges of Autism within the family. A full house here for both Performances.

As we also fund many other arts centre, festivals and venues in the county we ask them through our funding programmes to also follow up on the advocacy programme that we commit to in realising the potential of every child and commit to supporting young people in the Arts.

3. **Creating Capacity** Investing in the professional development of venues, festivals and organisations providing high-quality arts experiences.

The Council awarded through its **Arts Partners Scheme** a total of **€68K** to the below named recipients:

The Garage Theatre
Íontas Theatre
Castleblayney Drama Festival
Clones Film Festival
Féile Patrick Byrne
Muckno Mania

The Clones Artists' Studios is the Council's most public investment in advocating to the significance that artists make to our civic society. The artists in the studios delivered 8 artist led workshops in the Autumn and other more publicly accessible events and have been a bridge to some integral projects within Clones. A truly fantastic feature of the Council's commitments to artists in 2023.

A standout Event in 2023 was the presentation of **Clones Connections** at Clones Artist Studios in March. A very creative and colourful Show which proved very successful in the local community.



In May we had the **Palestinian Paintings Exhibition** arrive here in The Market House. It displayed until 04 June. A powerful series of 12 Oil Paintings about life today in Palestine by Jewish – Israeli Artist Zohar.

Palestinian Paintings Exhibition



Monday May 8th - Monday June 5th

Culture Night Photo launch was held here in The Market House to showcase future Events in the County to take place later in the month. It was a great success for Music Generation Cavan/Monaghan and the Cavan Youth Orchestra, marking their very first collaboration. The 'Come & Play' Event offered children a unique opportunity to immerse themselves in orchestral music and experience playing as part of an orchestra. This gathering provided a more inclusive and enriching Workshop experience for the young participants, allowing them to explore melodies on classical instruments and try their hand at learning simple tunes and rhythms.

OVERLOOKED Exhibition Opened in The Market House on the 20th of September, the first Solo Exhibition of Monaghan Artist Aisling Slattery Fanning which showed a consistent theme in her work using recycled materials or donated objects as surfaces in replacement of canvasses highlighting her low carbon footprint.

Kavanagh Weekend in October was another success. A weekend comprising of Live Music, Tours, Discussions and Art Journalling Workshops, Readings, and a Guided Bus Tour. A total of 25K benefitted this Weekend of entertainment.

Tourism Section

The role of the Tourism Unit within Monaghan County Council is:

- To raise customer awareness of the Monaghan area as a tourism destination
- To develop and contribute towards the development of the county's tourism product

The **Key Tourism Development Initiatives** progressed in 2023 included the following:

New Tourism Strategy 2023-2028

In early 2023, Monaghan County Council commissioned the development of a new, inclusive and ambitious Tourism Strategy (2023-2028) for County Monaghan, to help address deficits, capitalise upon opportunities, and grow new partnerships within the county's tourism and recreational sectors. The focus in 2024 will be on implementing this strategy and one of the key actions outlined is the resourcing of the Tourism Section. To this end, Budget 2024 makes provision for additional staffing in the section.

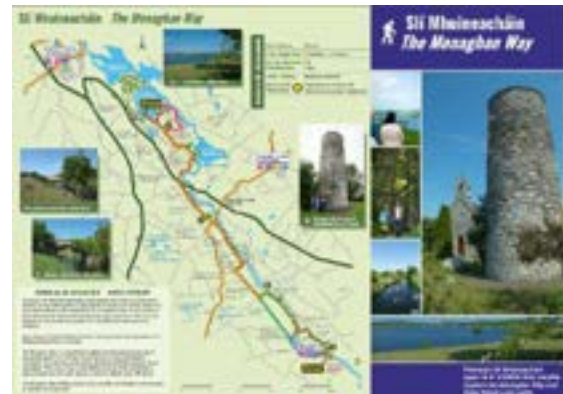


TOURISM DEVELOPMENT

In 2022/2023 the section was successful in being awarded funding from a number of sources and planning/design and/or capital works were carried out to progress a number of projects.

Completed Projects

Monaghan Way Upgrade – Under the ORIS funding programme (€139,490) this trail (from Inniskeen to Castleblayney) was upgraded and 3 new looped walking trails were developed at Inniskeen, Toome and Magoney.



Projects Progressed

Dartrey Forest Enhancements - €400,000 ORIS funding was secured for recreational enhancements in the forest. The project was progressed through the Planning and Procurement stages in 2023, with construction to commence on site in Q1 2024.

Black Island Lough Muckno - €500,000 ORIS funding was secured to upgrade and enhance the recreational facilities on the island. A Design Team was procured and the project progressed to detailed design in 2023, following focused consultation with user groups and key stakeholders. A Planning submission and construction procurement process will be undertaken in Q2 2024 with construction to follow.



Destination Towns - €497,962 was received from Failte Ireland to deliver a multi-use events space in Church Square, Monaghan. The project was progressed through planning, procurement and construction commencement in 2023 with overall completion in Q1 2024.



Dromore River Blueway – A €50,000 ORIS pre-development funding project for the proposed Blueway from Ballybay to Lisnalong was progressed to planning stage in 2023 and a major funding application for capital works to deliver the Blueway was submitted under the ORIS programme in October.

Sliabh Beagh Feasibility Study - €145,475 funding was secured from Shared Island for a feasibility study related to the development of Sliabh Beagh as an Eco-Tourism destination. A Design Team was appointed and the study completed with submission to the Shared Island unit in December.

Lough Muckno Vision Report – Following on from the Vision for Muckno document, a feasibility study process was commenced which led to the completion and publication of a Strategic Planning & Environmental Assessment Report by Fehily Timoney Consultants in October 2023.

TOURISM PROMOTIONAL ACTIVITIES

The section was very active in promoting tourism in 2023 and delivered a number of successful initiatives including the following:

C'Mon to Monaghan video series showcasing activities, crafts and food producers which was promoted via local radio and social media.



Tracks & Trails Filming on the Monaghan Way – The team from the popular RTÉ TV and online series was in Inniskeen in August to film the newly upgraded Monaghan Way and will be screened in April 2024.

Radio Campaigns

The section organised a live outside broadcast by iRadio on Friday 1 September featuring competitions and giveaways. An additional radio campaign was run in collaboration with 98FM in mid-August.



Social, Digital and Print Media Coverage - Monaghan was showcased by a range of influencer and travel journalists in travel features in both print and online media, including articles in the Irish Times, The Irish Sun, and Digital Dad Diary.

Updated suite of Explore Co Monaghan Brochures - The promotional suite of brochures for the county were all updated and redesigned with a fresh new appearance.



Patrick Kavanagh Centre

In its second operational year the centre performed above expectations diversifying its revenue streams and fully embracing events and festival potential. There was a 20% increase in visitors overall which was largely due to an increase in group and school tours. The success of the Kavanagh Weekend also augers well for 2024 and a growth in events and festival is anticipated over the next few years.

Highlights

The Centre was represented at annual trade events (including Meitheal) and met with tour operators working in international markets. It is anticipated that opportunities for business will develop over the coming years.

Kavanagh Poetry Award & Weekend Festival

The latest edition of the Kavanagh Weekend & Poetry Award took place this September and was a three-day, multi-venue, multi-disciplinary festival. It was hugely successful and received national coverage. The programme was of a high artistic standard and highlights include the village procession of light, Lisa O'Neill, Blindboy Podcast, and a screening of Pat McCabe's – Holy Hour, Requiem for Brendan Behan. There was also strong throughput in the village with accommodation sold out and thriving traditional music sessions each evening.

Taking Flight Radio Series

This is a series of radio essays & documentaries celebrating the work of Patrick Kavanagh. It is an ongoing series and the Dawning of the Day

documentary celebrating Raglan Road won a silver medal at 2023 IMRO radio awards. This is a collaboration with RTE Lyric and made possible through Creative Monaghan funding.

Creative Ireland commissioned traditional arts producers Ceol Connected to create a new theatrical work inspired by Kavanagh's timeless poem A Christmas Childhood. A co-production with National Concert Hall and Draocht Arts, the development of the work started during the summer with a series of workshops in St Daigs Inniskeen NS. This work toured from November 2023 and was the subject of a Nationwide episode on RTE 1. Three Performances took place in the Kavanagh Centre in December.



Kavanagh Country Brochure – A new Kavanagh Country brochure was delivered and this comprises a listing of attractions, accommodation providers, places to eat and other tourism amenities in the south of Monaghan. It is an easy to read guide for what to do and where to stay tied together through the story of Kavanagh and the poetry inspired by the unique character of Monaghan.



Kavanagh Craft Collection – A new line of ceramics by Busy Bees Ceramics was introduced into the Kavanagh Craft Collection, leveraging the brand potential of our native clay which ties in with Kavanagh's obsession with same.

Una Agnew Talks – The Centre organised a series of talks over 6 weeks on Patrick Kavanagh in Carrickmacross Library. Overall this was a very

successful initiative which averaged 40 participants per talk.

**A Comprehensive Course
on the Poet
Patrick Kavanagh
1904-1967**



September - October 2023

**By the author and lecturer
Dr Una Agnew SSL**

VENUE: Carrickmacross Library
Civic Centre, Riverside Road, Carrickmacross, A81 HY83.

Centre was further developed with new fixtures and a design for new signage at the entrance was developed to reinforce the centre's presence in the village landscape.

High Quality Events Presented

The following events were delivered during 2023 at the Centre:

- Martin O'Connor Trio
- Martin Hayes
- Kavanagh Weekend Festival
- Juggernaut Theatre Production
- Storytelling and Poetry Healing Workshops
- A Christmas Childhood Theatre Production



Kavanagh Retail Space – The retail space in the

Local Enterprise Office

Financial Supports & Job Creation

In 2023, LEO Monaghan approved approximately €715,000 in funding support, contributing to the creation of 78 net local jobs. Financial assistance from LEO reached 168 small businesses throughout the county that collectively employ 1015 individuals.

Training

In 2023, our main objective was to offer enhanced support and services tailored to promote the growth of new startups. LEO Monaghan also remained committed to assisting established businesses in their expansion efforts, addressing various challenges such as sustainability, digitalisation, and the economic effects of the conflict in Ukraine.

Throughout the year, close to 1043 entrepreneurs and individuals aspiring to start their own businesses engaged in 60 training sessions and workshops organised by LEO Monaghan, including 7 specialised "Start Your Own Business" courses.

Mentoring

Within the Local Enterprise Office Mentor Programme, clients collaborate with seasoned mentors who pinpoint solutions to address areas of vulnerability within their businesses. The mentorship initiative persists as a thriving endeavor, garnering overwhelmingly positive feedback from participants, underscoring the significance of non-financial assistance to micro-enterprises.

The LEO's mentoring service is intricately crafted to supplement the enterprise training and management development resources available. The pool of mentors comprises adept business advisors spanning various management domains. In 2023, we had the busiest year yet with one-on-one mentoring sessions provided to 238 clients.

Lean for Micro

There has been a substantial increase in the demand of the LEAN for Micro initiative, which is one of the main support tools devised to enhance

productivity and efficiencies within organisations. LEO Monaghan approved 15 small and medium businesses with the LEAN programme offering.

Trading Online Vouchers

The Trading Online Voucher provides qualifying businesses with 50% of eligible expenses, capped at €2500, to develop a new ecommerce website or enhance an existing one. Throughout 2023, there remained a strong demand for this program, resulting in the approval of 35 vouchers.

Green Business

As the focus on climate action and sustainability becomes increasingly pervasive, LEO Monaghan has taken the lead in developing adaptation strategies and fostering awareness among local businesses in Monaghan. The aim is to promote the transition of businesses towards becoming low-carbon entities.



The 'Go Green' climate action series is delivered to aid businesses in their journey towards becoming low-carbon entities. With a focus on decarbonisation and resource efficiency, these events continued to be delivered in 2023.



The 'Go Green' network series complemented the LEO Monaghan's Green Business support with the aim of further increasing the capacity and peer learning amongst stakeholders.



In addition, 5 businesses were approved for the Energy Efficiency Grant in 2023, enabling businesses to get financial support towards the implementation of energy efficient measures.

Student Enterprise Awards

Every September, through the Local Enterprise Office Monaghan, secondary school students with an entrepreneurial spirit embark on a real-world business journey as part of the Student Enterprise Programme.

This initiative, which aligns with the business studies curriculum at both Junior and Senior levels, offers students a rewarding opportunity to research, establish, and operate their own businesses. Participants have the flexibility to develop their business concepts individually or as part of a team.

In 2023, over 400 students from 9 schools across County Monaghan participated in the programme. Monaghan has a history of notable achievements in the programme, and in 2023, also had great success with 3 Students winning National awards. Supported by Local Enterprise Office Monaghan, the students won prizes for entries to the competition titled “My Entrepreneurial Journey” in the Junior and Intermediate categories and a SMART Business Award in the Junior category, sponsored by Folens.

The winning students were, Joshua McGahon, from Beech Hill College, Monaghan who took 1st place in intermediate category of My Entrepreneurial Journey. Aoife O’Neill from Our Lady’s Secondary School, Castleblayney, Monaghan who won 2nd place in the Junior category of My Entrepreneurial Journey. Shannon McClenaghan a 2nd year Student in Our Lady’s in Castleblayney also won in the Junior Category and took the SMART Business Award based on her idea to design Jewellery with GPS tracking devices for

people with Alzheimer's disease.



Local Enterprise Awards

Moffett Parking Solutions based in Clontibret represented County Monaghan at the 23rd National Enterprise Awards in 2023,



Moffett Parking Solutions Ltd (MPS) is a young and innovative engineering company which designs and manufactures bespoke solutions to increase car storage capacity through vertical optimisation. MPS solve vehicle access and storage capacity challenges for their customers with their range of custom-designed lifts and turntables. Their range of products include basement and loft access lifts, car stacking lifts and turntables.

Local Enterprise Week



Over 200 local businesses participated in the 6 Local Enterprise Week events hosted by LEO Monaghan from March 6th to 11th inc in 2023. The headline event was evolve- Digital Transformation for Local Businesses which was ran in conjunction with the Monaghan Digital Steering Group.



The world is rapidly racing towards digital transfer in all domains, and it is essential for local companies to renovate their working processes digitally to increase efficiencies, productivity, and profits. Small and medium businesses need to maximise every advantage - and implementing a digital strategy can certainly give businesses a competitive edge. This digital transformation conference was aimed at local businesses from all sectors, interested in adopting technology solutions to enhance profits. and/or advisory services for eligible businesses.



North East Creative Conversations



The Northeast Creative Conversations Programme (NCC) programme was aimed at design businesses in counties Cavan, Louth, and Monaghan and aimed to strengthen and develop the Northeast Region's capacity as a creative centre of excellence in Design and enhance potential for economic development and sustainability in the Creative Sector.



The project supported circ. 50 business in the Northeast region, including those involved in industrial design, product design, visual communications, graphic design, Ui/Ux (User-interface/User-experience) and interaction design, service design and strategic design.

Monaghan Women in Business Network

The relaunch of the Monaghan Women in Business network occurred in March 2023. Around 50 businesswomen from across the county attended to hear about upcoming plans and changes. The network unveiled a fresh brand reflecting the vitality of local businesswomen. Attendees were briefed on website

enhancements, including an online directory for business promotion and a membership fee granting access to yearly events. Keynote speaker Sharon Keegan, CEO of Peachy Lean Athleisurewear, shared her journey from a kitchen table idea to international success, inspiring attendees with her honest and practical insights.



Launch of ESG Cluster

Small and micro businesses in Monaghan have become the first in Ireland to utilize the ESGo digital tool, offering independent validation of their green credentials. This tool, hailed as a "game changer" by the LEO Monaghan, provides access to benefits previously out of reach. ESGo facilitates businesses in tracking and managing their Environmental, Social & Governance (ESG) journey, filling a gap for businesses lacking such recognition. This inaugural cluster aims to support local businesses in transitioning to low carbon entities. Notably, businesses like Andy's Bar & Restaurant, led by head chef Sean Redmond, have seen significant energy cost reductions through ESGo, reinforcing the positive impact of environmental sustainability efforts on both the bottom line and reputation of local entrepreneurs and employers.



Information Systems

The Information Systems Section is responsible for ICT and digital transformation in Monaghan County Council. We provide modern and secure ICT infrastructure, systems, and solutions to enable efficient service delivery.

Applications and Digital Transformation

The Applications and Transformation unit is responsible for digital transformation and for the Council's extensive suite of software applications. The team continued to redesign and automate manual paper-based processes and develop online forms for a number of public facing services including:

- Community Development Fund
- Environment Development Fund
- Climate Action Fund
- Climate Action Pre-Draft Online Survey
- Local Enhancement Programme
- Gaeltacht Scholarship Application Form
- County Development Pre-Draft Form
- RZT Submission Form

In 2023 we assisted the Finance staff pilot the AFS on behalf of the sector. We also carried out upgrades to a number of applications including the online expenses system, iReg, iHouse and iPlan.

e-Planning

In 2023 Monaghan County Council implemented the national LGMA online planning portal. The portal enables members of the public and agents to submit planning applications as well as submissions and observations online 24/7. A user can register, submit documents online with their planning application, pay by credit card or EFT and submit further documentation at a later stage if necessary. The user is notified via email at every stage of the planning process, e.g. validation, further information, decision etc. A user can also view previously submitted applications on the dashboard, as well as the status of applications quickly and easily. The portal is easy-to-use and moves the process into an environmentally friendly one, by removing the need for the

applicant to provide 6 paper copies per planning permission application to the Local Authority. We went live with the application on the 21st Feb 2023 and by 31st December 2023, 63% of Monaghan County Council's planning application were submitted online.



Planning Application Capture Environment (PACE) project

The national PACE project was a collaborative initiative by the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage and Ordnance Survey Ireland with the aim of providing local authorities with a national application for digitally capturing the site outline of statutory planning applications. We migrated our existing GIS planning data into the PACE system and upgraded our digitising application to the national PACE application. Over 32,000 planning application sites were successfully migrated into the PACE Application and all new planning application site locations are now digitised using the PACE application.

CiviQ – New Public Consultation & Survey Platform

As a result of a need to standardise the online public consultation and survey process as well as GDPR regulations, we procured, implemented and rolled out a new online public consultation and survey platform called CiviQ Open Consult.

Residential Zone Land Tax Project – Mapping & Submissions

The Residential Zoned Land Tax is a new tax aimed at increasing housing supply by activating zoned, serviced residential development lands (including mixed-use lands) for housing. It also aims to incentivise landowners to use existing planning permissions for housing. We facilitated and assisted with the digital capture of this spatial information and provided it to the Department for the production of the national [Residential Zone](#)

[Land Tax Map Viewer](#). We also developed and implemented online Laserfiche submission forms to facilitate this project.

We also assisted Planning Department in digitising and producing the new Variation No 5 County Development Plan Maps which were published in Nov 2023.

Broadband Services

The Broadband Officer continued to facilitate the rollout of the National Broadband Plan (NBP) across the county. In 2023, we worked with NBI on the transition to full fibre for all the Broadband Connection Points that have been passed by fibre. Seven BCPs have now been transitioned across to a fibre connection, including St Pats Direct Provision Centre.

Monaghan County Council continued to support the delivery of broadband to all of the 18 BCPs within the county. In 2023, we dealt with more than fifty broadband related queries from industry, members of the public and from our elected representatives. By the end of 2023, 62% of the 15,698 premises to be served under the NBP were ready to avail of a full fibre service delivered through NBI. Take up of these services has exceeded expectation nationally and locally. In County Monaghan 31% of homeowners have ordered a new fibre connection when passed and this figure has been as high as 40% in some other counties.

Throughout 2023, we also engaged with SIRO and with Eir in relation to the rollout of fibre broadband services. The first premises to receive service from SIRO were completed towards the end of 2023, and Openeir's IFN upgrade has been rolled out in Monaghan, Clones and Castleblayney, with further sites to follow. This will ensure access to gigabit connectivity for all those covered under this upgrade plan.

In the course of 2023, we also assisted in specifying the ICT and telecommunications requirements for The Ridge, the new Enterprise building in Castleblayney. We are also supporting the Capital Projects Unit in the specification and implementation of telecommunications and communications infrastructure in build projects which are being delivered under the auspices of Monaghan County Council, including C:TEK 2 and Newbliss Hub.

Vex Robotics and STEM Development



The Broadband Officer continues to work with the Department of Rural and Community Development on the development of digital activities within the BCP network. In November 2023 we also launched a new Primary school initiative, introducing Vex IQ robots into 11 schools as part of a STEM development programme. Training for participating teachers took place in Tullycorbet BCP.

Students work collaboratively to build and to program a robot under the teacher's guidance, culminating in a competition for all participating schools. The introduction of the VEX Robotics competition offers students a hands-on experience in STEM fields while emphasising the importance of teamwork and collaboration.

Cyber Security

Cyber-security is a top priority for the Council. A multi-layered cyber-security model is used to protect the Council's systems and data from cyber-attacks. This includes anti-virus, advanced threat protection, group policies, mail-filtering, DNS and web-filtering, firewalls and more. A Cyber Security Awareness training plan was developed for 2023 with additional cybersecurity resources and training distributed to Staff during Cybersecurity Awareness month in October. We continued to perform realistic phishing simulated emails to educate Staff and Councillors on how to identify phishing attacks. We replaced our Firewalls to the latest next generation technology

and also replaced our technology for remote access Virtual Private Network (VPN).

To ensure the protection of privileged accounts and resources we implemented a Privileged Account Management (PAM) system and Privileged Identity Management (PIM) system. In 2023 we implemented a SOC Security Operations Center (SOC). This provides 24/7 monitoring of our systems. The service provider responds to incidents and threats within defined timeframes based on the severity of the issue. This gives us peace of mind that security alerts are being monitored outside core business hours.

We continued to work on improving Monaghan County Council's security posture using best practice guidelines including the CIS Controls framework and the NCSC Cyber Security Baseline Standards. We continue to collaborate with the local authority national Information Security Officers Group (ISOG) and the regional ISOGs which are an invaluable resource for information sharing and learning.

Networks and Infrastructure

The Networks and Infrastructure team is responsible for managing the Council's ICT systems and services, on-premises and in the Cloud, and for managing the local and wide area network infrastructure in over 35 offices and buildings throughout the county including County Offices, MTek1 and 2, Planning Office, Municipal District Offices, Fire Stations, Libraries, Museum, and Water Treatment Plants.

Technical Support Team

The technical support team continued to deliver a high-quality technical support service to over 400 staff and elected members whether working in the Council Offices or from home. The number of issues logged in 2023 was 5,488.

Call Statistics	2023	2022	2021
Total Calls Logged	5,488	4,417	5,892
Avg. Calls per Month	457	368	491
Avg. Calls per Day	22	18	23
Resolved within 24 hrs	68%	49%	57%

I.S. Service Desk Statistics 2023

Following on from a successful pilot during Covid, in 2023 the Technical Support Team migrated all the legacy phone systems in the various offices of Monaghan County Council to Teams Telephony (324 users). For the first time, Monaghan County Council offices are operating through a unified, fully resilient cloud hosted phone system that supports remote working. In addition to providing cost savings and eliminating hardware lifecycle replacement, this system offers numerous new features.

MyCoCo

MyCoCo is a cloud-hosted multi-tenanted platform for delivery of local authority services online. The concept originated in Monaghan County Council in 2021 and since then MyCoCo has been successfully scaled up. At 31st December 2023 14 local authorities were live on MyCoCo delivering one or more services to their customers. Local authorities have been tasked with delivering 90% of services online by 2030. MyCoCo will help all local authorities achieve this goal.

The Public Sector Digital Transformation Awards is a chance to shine the spotlight on cutting-edge technologies and innovative approaches to digital transformation that have made a real impact, improved service delivery, and enhanced citizen experiences. MyCoCo is a build to share digital solution that enables Local Authorities to provide online services to the public.

Carmel O'Hare, Director of Services, won the inaugural public sector Digital Leader of the Year Award 2023 for her role in initiating and leading MyCoCo on behalf of the local authority sector.



Carmel O'Hare, Public Sector Digital Leader of the Year 2023 with Cathaoirleach Cllr. David Maxwell and I.S. Colleagues Deirdre McQuaid and Geraldine McManus

Roads & Transportation

Major Projects

N2 Ardee to Castleblaney Road Scheme

By late 2022 the project had significantly progressed the Phase 3 Design & Environmental Evaluation of the project and had met with landowners to receive feedback in relation to an initial design. The design was updated and published in Spring 2023, and the project team planned to complete the Phase 3 design process by Q3 2023, however the funding allocated to the project in 2023 was not enough to allow the design of the project continue. Additional funding was requested throughout the year, however no additional funding was received in 2023 and the project was effectively suspended throughout 2023.

N2 Clontibret to Border Road Scheme

The project entered Phase 3 (Design & Environmental Evaluation) in February 2021, however as no TII funding was received in 2022 and 2023 the project was suspended since early 2022. MCC made an application to the EU's 'Connecting Europe Facility' in 2023, and funding of €2.335m was secured for the Phase 3 design process, with match funding committed from the Department of Transport. The design process recommenced in Q4 2023 and is expected to be concluded in 2025.

NATIONAL ROADS

N54 Tullybryan

The Roads Department continues to work in partnership with TII to upgrade a 3.1km section of the N54, which will enhance road safety and east/west connectivity. The Total Scheme Budget for this project is €17.3 million. An Oral Hearing into the objections that were received against the CPO was held in November 2023. MCC are awaiting a decision from An Bord Pleanála to either confirm or annul the CPO.

N53 Ballynacarry Bridge

The Ballynacarry Bridge is located on the border with Northern Ireland on the N53 National

Secondary Road and A37 in County Armagh. The main objective of the new bridge project is to address safety issues, by improving alignment and incorporating road widening into the design. A consultant was appointed in April 2022 to progress the project through the various phases of the TII Project Management Guidelines. Non statutory public consultations were held in Q1 2023 in both NI & ROI, where a number of route options were presented with an opportunity for the public to provide feedback on any of the potential options. Throughout 2023, Environmental Surveys and Ground Investigations were completed along the preferred route and subsequent preparation of Environmental and Design Reports were finalised. In Q4 2023, TII approved the Detailed Design and preparation of planning documentation was commenced. Planning approval will be sought in both NI & ROI in Q1 2024.

Safety Schemes (National Roads)

Following a series of collisions, MCC collaborated with TII to develop a safety scheme along the N2 on the northern approach to Emyvale Village. Following an Option Selection process, it was decided to explore the feasibility of trialling a Speed Discrimination Traffic Lights System. As Transport Scotland were currently trialling a similar speed reduction system, MCC & TII continued to engage with their Road Safety Engineers throughout their trial period to obtain data on the effectiveness of such an intervention. Their trial ended in Q4 2023, however feedback from their overall findings was not positive, with improvements in speed reduction evident only in the early stages of the trial, but non-compliance levels began to rise throughout the year. This was very disappointing, as MCC intended to roll out this system in urban areas in County Monaghan as a cost effective, rapid build traffic calming measure. MCC & TII have decided to proceed with a roundabout option to reduce vehicular speeds, with Preliminary Design completed in Q4 2023.

In response to submissions from Elected Representatives and members of the public with regards to vehicle run off at Skinnagin Corner, N12, MCC carried out road surface testing and topographical surveys to check against required design standards. Results indicated that resurfacing and reprofiling the carriageway will improve its safety characteristics. MCC successfully applied to TII for funding to implement works at Skinnagin Corner.

National Road N2 Cycle Paths

Environmental and Detailed Design Reports for Emyvale Village (0.25km) and Corlat Roundabout to Collegiate College (0.65km) sections were completed in 2023 and submitted to TII. It is expected that both schemes will be constructed in 2024. As several proposed Active Travel facilities are proposed to converge at the Coolshannagh Roundabout, a Feasibility Study was prepared for this junction and subsequently approved by TII. An Options Selection Report was commissioned in Q4 2023 and it is anticipated that a preferred option for the roundabout will be selected in Q1 2024. This preferred option will influence how the proposed Active Travel infrastructure schemes, namely, the Coolshannagh to Ballyalbanny Section (0.80km) and the Coolshannagh to Corlat Section (2.4km) will approach and traverse the roundabout.

Pavement Renewals on National Routes

In 2023, the N54 (Broad Road, Monaghan Town) Pavement Rehabilitation Scheme was delivered. With a budget of €730,000 this scheme extended from the Dunnes Stores crossroads junction, in an easterly direction and involved pavement reconstruction and adjustment of the vertical alignment by raising road and footpath levels in order to alleviate the severity of flooding at this location. Drainage upgrade works were also implemented as part of this scheme.

With a combined budget of €590,000, resurfacing schemes were also carried out on the N12 (Killyneill), N53/N2 (Tullyvin Junction), N54 (Smithborough) and the N53 junction at Toome.



National Route Maintenance & Defects Works

Targeted Road Resurfacing and repairs were carried out to distressed sections along the N54 throughout Monaghan Town. Additional maintenance works such as isolated drainage improvement and hedge/verge maintenance were implemented throughout the network, including

landscape maintenance of the N2 roundabouts. Other works included installation of an acoustic barrier along the N2 at Monanny.

Ulster Canal Greenway – Phase 2 (Smithborough – NI Border)

Transport Infrastructure Ireland became the Approving Authority for the Monaghan - NI Border section of the Greenway in 2023. An Bord Pleanála held an oral hearing into the objections received against confirmation of the Compulsory Purchase Order for this section of Greenway in December 2023. Monaghan County Council await a determination from An Bord Pleanála.

Consultants progressed the design of the Smithborough - Monaghan section of the Greenway and compilation of Part VIII planning documentation. Submission of the Part VIII planning application to MCC is programmed for Q1 2024 subject to TII approvals.



Ulster Canal Greenway – Phase 3 (Smithborough – Clones)

Consultants completed the preliminary design of the Smithborough - Clones section of Greenway in line with TII requirements. Site Surveys including ground investigation works and topographical surveys of the preferred route were completed to inform the design. The Draft Design Report was submitted to TII in Q4 2023 for approval. Submission of the Part VIII planning application to MCC is programmed for Q1 2024 subject to TII approvals.

Non-National Roads

Non-National roads account for 95% of the network and are funded from grants from the Department of Transport and the Council's own resources. In 2023 Monaghan County Council received an allocation of €16,222,270 from the Department of Transport and provided almost €4.9 million from its own resources which included technical and administrative costs.

Restoration Improvement Grant

In 2023 Monaghan County Council strengthened 47km of road under the RI Grant. Twenty-four of the twenty-five programmed roads were completed with the exception of the Mall road in the Monaghan MD due to Uisce Eireann works.

In addition to the twenty-four programmed roads, five roads, Parnel St Carrickmacross, Church Hill Clones, Loch Mor Avenue Ballybay, R185 Monaghan and the L1610 Ballinode were also completed under the RI grant in 2023.

The cost per square metre to strengthen the road in 2023 was €43/m² compared to €41/m² in 2022.

Restoration Maintenance

In 2023 72km of the road network was resealed under the RM programme. MCC were allocated just over €2m in 2023 for the restoration maintenance grant.

The cost per square metre for surface dressing in 2023 was €5.46 compared to €5 in 2022.

Discretionary Grant

A grant allocation of €2,071,500 was received in 2023 from the Department of Transport under the Discretionary Grant. The funding is predominately used by the MDs to carry out maintenance works such as minor pavement improvement works, drainage renewal, footpath restoration, pothole repairs, gully cleaning, hedge and verge trimming and the renewal of road signs and markings on Regional and Local Roads. This was the same allocation as 2022. Therefore, similar funding is expected in 2024.

Specific Improvement Grants

Brackley Bridge Rehabilitation Works

Brackley Bridge and the remaining road safety audit recommendations were completed in 2023.

R181 Drumillard to Cavan Border

Works on Phase 1, a 1.3km section of road surface on the R181 just south of the L4005 Junction (Mucky Duck) was completed in 2023. Additional drainage, upgrade of the road markings and signing has been provided. Over €870,000 was spent on phase 1. In 2024 it is MCCs intention to appoint a land valuer to value the land to be acquired to complete phase 2-4 of the R181 Road Improvement project.

R180/R181 Junction

The Junction realignment safety scheme on the R180/R181 in Lough Egish commenced in 2023, works are ongoing with the bulk excavation and structural retaining being completed. The Remaining Junction improvement works are programmed to be completed in Q2 of 2024



L63101 Drumary Bridge Replacement

The design was completed and the preliminary design report was reviewed by the department of Transport. Site investigation works will commence on site in Q1 2024 and it is envisaged that construction of the bridge will commence in 2024

N2-N12

The Department of Transport give approval to increase the scope of N2-N12 project to include a section from the Annaghah roundabout on the N2 to Old Cross Square in Monaghan town. The extension of this project will open up development lands and improve connectivity to the town centre. Funding of €50,000 was granted in 2024 to progress a feasibility report.

Glen Road Culvert

The contractor for the upgrade of the Glen Road

culvert was appointed in 2023. Construction works commenced in January 2024 and it is programmed to be completed in July 2024.

Low-Cost Safety Improvement Schemes

An allocation of €265,000 was received from the Department for 2023 for eight low-cost safety schemes. Six were completed with the remaining two schemes due for completion in early 2024. A funding application for 35 low-cost safety schemes totalling over €1.2m was made to the Department.

Training Grant

In 2023 the Regional and Local Road Grants included €53,000 for non-national road training for Local Authority engineering and administration staff. It is estimated that a similar figure will be available in 2023.

Local Improvement Schemes

Monaghan County Council completed thirty lanes under the LIS scheme thanks to funding of over €1.3million from The Department of Rural and Community Development. In total over 9.4km of lanes were improved. Monaghan County Council will be inviting new applications for the LIS in 2024.

Community Improvement Scheme

An allocation of €354,150 was received from the Department of Transport in 2023, which, together with community contributions, enabled the resurfacing of four roads. Three local tertiary roads, LT-55121 (Tullyherim Lane), It-40045 (Lisirril/Coraghy) and the LT-8900001 (Donoge) were completed under the 2023 grant allocation.

Former National Roads

Resurfacing on the Old Ardee road has been completed in 2023. An application was submitted to the Department of Transport seeking funding for a number of sections of the former National Road for 2024.

Climate Adaptation and Resilience Works

Monaghan County Council have made progress on 5 climate adaptation schemes, with Kilmore East, Greaghdrumreask and Phase 1 of Annadrummon being complete in 2023. Significant progress has been made on the Kilnacran and the R181/N54 Clones schemes.

A funding application for 24 schemes totalling €2.865m was submitted to the DoT.

Pilot Schemes in 2023

Over 4.1km of local roads were strengthened under the 2023 RAP programme. The RAP programme will be rolled out on a regional basis with Monaghan County Council acting as the lead in 2024.

Monaghan County Council are progressing with Part 8 planning applications for a site in each MD to process RAP material.

Winter Maintenance



Monaghan County Council have completed upgrade works at the Lislanly depot to allow the use of brine on the road network.

Three new brine trucks were also purchased, and the existing fleet was upgraded to facilitate the use of brine. Brine is a more efficient environmentally friendly way of gritting our road network.

These works were funded by TII and the Department of Transport.

Active Travel

Monaghan County Council secured an allocation of €3,000,000 from the Active Travel Investment Grants for 2023.

Launch of completed upgrade works to Monaghan Town Greenway

Minister Heather Humphreys opened the newly upgraded Greenway. These works have been undertaken on the 4.5km stretch of the Greenway at a cost of €1.6million.



County Walking & Cycling Strategy 2021-2026

Several actions in the Walking & Cycling Strategy are completed or at various stages of progression. One of the actions within the strategy is to promote, encourage and increase the numbers of users to the recently upgraded Monaghan Town Greenway. The Active Travel Unit have produced large scale maps specifically for each of the local Primary and Secondary schools in the Town. New brochures have also been produced and distributed to hotels and local businesses which outline key points of interest along the 4.5k route.

Bike Week 2023

Bike week was another huge success in 2023. 23 different events which included E-bike and family guided cycles, bike skills workshops for children. Over 300 participants took part right across the County.

Community Arts Projects

Two projects commenced in 2023 which saw the Active Travel Unit engage with local primary and secondary schools. The first of these was the design and development of an Active Travel and Biodiversity mural for the flyover Bridge on the Monaghan Town Greenway. The second project is an outdoor gallery of artwork displayed along the Monaghan Town Greenway. The artwork is currently being collated and translated into 10 large panels which will be displayed along the Greenway from Gortakeegan to the Coolshannagh Roundabout.

Active Travel Schemes Constructed in 2023

Lurgans Carrickmacross

This active travel scheme saw the construction of a footpath on the LP-4931, to connect housing developments on top of Lurgans Hill to Carrickmacross town centre. The scheme involved

the installation of a new 120m long x 2m wide footpath, along with a masonry stone wall. There was also land acquisitions necessary to complete this project. Works were completed in June 2023.

Smithboro – Magherarney Footpath

The project includes the provision of a 1.8m wide footpath and lighting along the LT21501 link road, to improve road safety and access to the village for residents. To complete the Connectivity from new and existing footpaths onto the local primary school, the active travel unit have also incorporated dropped kerbs and the formation of a raised uncontrolled crossings.

Scotshouse Village Co. Monaghan

An Active Travel scheme was provided in Scotshouse Village to provide a safe pedestrian route down to the village for residents of the estate, and for children attending the local school. The works have created a safe walking route to this end of the village for the first time.



Inniskeen Pedestrian Crossing

A new Zebra crossing was constructed in Edenamo, Inniskeen close to the road junction at St Mary Mother of Mercy Church. The introduction of the infrastructure provides a safer walking route to school, Inniskeen GAA pitch and the Mary Mother of Mercy church

Road Safety

The Co Monaghan Road Safety Action Plan is being implemented over three phases, the first of which covers 2023 & 2024. The Co Monaghan Action Plan aims to deliver at a local level the national road safety strategy objective of reducing deaths by 15% and serious injuries by 10% by 2024.

The County Monaghan Road Safety Working Together Group continues to meet to review the progress of the implementation of the actions

contained the plan.

Provisional figures for 2023, released by the Road Safety Authority have shown a rise in the number of fatal accidents in County Monaghan. There were 7 fatalities in Monaghan in 2023 compared to 6 in 2022.

The annual Road Safety Shows for Transition Year students resumed in March 2023 when approximately 700 pupils attended events in the Iontas Theatre and the Garage Theatre. Organised by An Garda Síochána and sponsored by Monaghan County Council the event featured talks and demonstrations by members of Garda, Fire and Ambulance services together with an A&E consultant and undertaker among the speakers.

County Monaghan schools continued to perform

well at the Road Safety Authority's national 'Seatbelt Sheriff' competition. First class students from Scoil Naomh Pádraig, Corracrin, Emyvale were runners up with their "Driving Fast, Driving Slow, Seatbelt fastened on the Go!" poster.

The RSA's 'Check It Fits' child car seat testing service was well attended with two visits to Monaghan Town and one to Carrickmacross in 2023.

Corporate Services

Corporate Services provides support to Senior Management, the Cathaoirleach and Elected Members. It is also responsible for organising and managing monthly Council Meetings, Corporate Policy Group Meetings and Joint Policing Committee Meetings. The section is responsible for the collation of the Corporate Plan, Annual Report, Annual Service Delivery Plan, Monthly Management Report and the review of Risk Register.

Corporate Services also co-ordinates the compilation of the annual NOAC Performance Indicators for the Council and has a significant role in terms of governance, ensuring the Council is compliant with the Ethics Framework, Children First Act, General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR), Freedom of Information and Access to Information on the Environment legislation.

Register of Electors

Following the implementation of Part III of the Electoral Reform Act in 2023, significant changes occurred in electoral registration procedures, particularly pertaining to the transition from an Annual Cycle of Draft, Live, and Supplement Registers to the Rolling Register.

In 2023, the primary focus of the franchise team was the data clean-up process aimed at achieving the highest quality data set possible before the scheduled migration to the central database in 2025, as mandated by the Department for Housing, Local Government, and Heritage. The Department allocated funding to the local authorities to support the improvement of data quality on the Register and to enhance local awareness of the www.checktheregister.ie website, emphasizing the importance of updating one's details on the Register.

The priority was to capture missing details of the existing electors and ensure the completeness of the data (including PPSN, DOB, and Eircode). The initial general approach involved focusing on decreasing the starting figures as much as possible between July 2023 and February 2024, followed by a more targeted strategy to address specific areas such as individual townlands, housing

estates, and households planned for 2024.

Monaghan County Council's comprehensive local awareness campaign, conducted in September 2023, included leaflet distribution to every household in the county, billboards, radio advertisements, social media campaigns, temporary road signage, and community engagement. The campaign successfully led to increased engagement with checktheregister.ie and improvement of data quality as outlined in the figures provided below:

	<i>Start Year Figures 2023</i>		<i>Year End Figures 2023</i>	
Total Electorate	50,600		51,682	
Electors with DOB	37,801	74 %	39,238	75.92 %
Electors with Eircode	21,387	42 %	23,399	45.27 %
Electors with DOB & Eircode	17,218	34 %	19,350	37.44 %
Electors with PPSN	548	1 %	3465	6.70 %

Our efforts were noted and commended by the Department.

In addition to the campaigns, Monaghan County Council actively engaged with the community by participating in Social Inclusion Week and attending a community meeting of the migrant group, Failte Isteach Monaghan. During these engagements, the registration and voting processes were explained, and attendees were encouraged to register and exercise their right to vote.

Furthermore, Register field workers visited secondary schools within the county to register and pre-register students aged 16-18. They delivered presentations on voting participation, encouraging students to relay the message to their families about the importance of registering, updating, or confirming details on checktheregister.ie. The positive response and engagement from these initiatives have been

noteworthy, highlighting the success of community involvement in improving electoral processes.

Freedom of Information

Under the Freedom of Information Act 2014 members of the public have a legal right of access to records held by the Local Authority. **45 requests** were received by the Council in 2023, from members of the media, Oireachtas, business reps and the general public.

Access to Information on the Environment

AIE gives legal rights to those seeking to access information on the environment from public authorities. 14 requests were received by the Council in 2023.

Protected Disclosures

In accordance with Section 22 of the Protected Disclosures Act 2014, Monaghan County Council reports that it received no protected disclosures in the twelve-month period 1st January 2023 to 31st December 2023.

Twinning

Monaghan County Council is officially twinned with the following areas:

- Geel, Belgium (the parish of Tydavnet in North Monaghan is also twinned with this area)
- Prince Edward Island, Canada
- Miramichi, Canada

A group of 30 from Tydavnet travelled to the Dublin on Saturday 13 May to visit the exhibition on St Dymphna in the National Gallery depicting the paintings that formed the altarpiece from Tongerlo abbey telling the story of the saint.

The Nelson Doyle Dancers, Miramichi New Brunswick, visited Monaghan in August; a group of 35 stayed **4 nights** in Monaghan and attended the *Fleadh* Cheoil na hÉireann in Mullingar during their stay.

A delegation from Monaghan Co Co visited Prince Edward Island in June 2023 for the Irish Settler Days celebration.

A group of 12 from the Fort Augustus Irish Descendants Association visited Monaghan on Monday 21st August.

Civic Reception

Monaghan County Council hosted a Civic Reception to honour the remarkable achievement of the Carrickmacross Rounders teams in capturing three All-Ireland titles in 2023. The event was held in the Carrickmacross Civic Offices where commemorative plaques were presented by Cathaoirleach, Cllr David Maxwell to the captains of the Senior Men's, Mixed and Ladies teams.

Annual Awards Ceremony

The Members of Monaghan County Council hosted the 16th Annual Awards Ceremony on 18th April 2023 to recognise those individuals/groups in County Monaghan who, during 2023, have excelled in the following areas:

- Sport and Recreation
- Arts & Culture
- Youth
- Community
- Environment & Heritage

21 individuals/groups were acknowledged for their contribution to our society.

Internal Audit

Internal Audit is an independent, objective, assurance and consulting activity designed to add value and improve the operations of Monaghan County Council. Working in partnership with management, the Internal Audit Unit brings a systematic, disciplined approach to evaluate and improve the effectiveness of internal controls, risk management and governance processes within the organisation. It provides a level of assurance to the Council, Chief Executive, Management Team and the Audit Committee in relation to internal control arrangements within Monaghan County Council.

The following Internal Audit reports were presented to the Audit Committee in 2023:

- Cash Point Checking (which includes annual stock take in the Motor Tax Office) for the year 2022.
- Audit Report on SICAP for Year 2021.
- Review of NOAC Performance indicators for year 2022.
- Machine Yard Store Stock take 2022.

- Public spending code – Ard An Radhairc, Carrickmacross.
- Public spending code – N2 Clontibret to the Border Road Scheme.
- Public spending code – Housing Adaptation Grant Scheme.

The following Audit Reports were also compiled during the year for referral to the Senior Management Team and Audit Committee:

- Cash Point Checking (which includes annual stock take in the Motor Tax Office) for the year 2023.
- Annual Stocktake in the Machine Yard Store for year 2023.
- Audit Report on SICAP for year 2022.

The Internal Audit Charter was reviewed and approved by the Audit Committee on 31st January 2023 and 28th November 2023.

Meetings in 2023

The following is a summary of the meetings held in 2022:

Council meetings (including AGM & Budget meeting):	16
Corporate Policy Group (CPG)	14
SPC – Economic Development and Enterprise Support	05
SPC – Transport, Community Rural Development	04
SPC – Climate Action and Environment	03
SPC – Housing, Social and Cultural	04
Monaghan Municipal District	11
Carrickmacross-Castleblayney Municipal District	11
Ballybay-Clones Municipal District	12
Audit Committee	05
Museum Advisory Committee	02
Local Sports Partnership	02
Speed Limits Committee	04
Heritage Forum	04
Monaghan L.I.S. Committee	02
An Coiste Logainmneacha	00
Joint Policing Committees (JPC)	04
Coiste Gaeilge	01
Traveller Accommodation Committee	02
Local Community Development Committee (LCDC)	08

General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR)

Data Protection and GDPR

Monaghan County Council is committed to the protection of personal data and respects the fundamental rights and freedoms of individuals. It collects and processes a significant amount of personal data and Special Category personal data in various multiple formats daily to provide the most effective and high-quality service to meet the needs of the citizens, communities, and businesses within the County.

In 2023, Monaghan County Council continued to develop best practice to ensure compliance and demonstrate accountability under GDPR and data protection. This work included developing and implementing the necessary policies, procedures, and protocols, processing personal data in an open and transparent manner, processing data subject access requests and An Garda Síochána requests, delivering staff awareness raising and training and notification of data security breaches.

Under GDPR individuals have a number of rights which include a right of access to the personal data the council hold on them. In 2023, the council received and responded to eight number data subject access requests.

In addition, the Council dealt with the following requests/incidents:

Data Subject Access Requests	8
CCTV requests	25
Data Breach Notifications to the Data Protection Commission	6

Ethics

Section 19 of the Local Elections (Disclosure of Donations and Expenditure) Act 1999 requires each elected member to furnish to the Local Authority, not later than January 31st, a donation statement indicating whether during the preceding calendar year, the member received a donation exceeding €600. 17 completed forms were received on or before the closing date of January 31st. One form was returned on 03 February 2023. A Nil Return was received from all 18 Members.

Part 15 of the Local Government Act 2001 obliges each member of the council and relevant staff to

complete a form in respect of their declarable interests held during the prescribed period and furnish the annual declaration to the Ethics Registrar no later than the last day of February. 18 completed forms were received, from elected members, by the closing date of the last day of February 2023. 68 relevant staff were asked to complete a declaration form; 64 completed forms were received from the relevant staff before the last day of February 2023, with 4 staff completing their forms in March 2023.

At the end of 2023 there was one ongoing investigation regarding a possible contravention in respect of Part 15 (Ethical Framework for the Local Government Service) of the Local Government Act 2001 and the Code of Conduct for Councillors.





Communications

Monaghan County Council use a mix of digital and traditional communication tools to proactively and positively tell the story of Monaghan County Council to our audiences. Internal Communications provide staff with up-to-date news and information. In 2023, the number of staff using the Reach app has increased and a fortnightly staff newsletter was introduced to improve internal communications. Our external audiences are kept up to date through a variety of channels including our website, the local press and broad casting media, social media platforms and Corporate publications.

The Council uses its website www.monaghan.ie as one of its core communications vehicles which is available twenty-four seven three hundred and sixty-five days of the year. The Council uses the website as a primary tool in getting the Council's messages across to our audiences for proactive use in terms of the Council's services, news, and events and in the case of reacting to crisis or emergency situations. During 2023, the council engaged with the local and national broadcasting media on a regular basis and provided timely and accurate media statements and press releases to deliver high quality and positive publicity.

Our Social Media platforms contribute to the promotion and awareness of the Council and are used to broadcast information about our services, news, and events. Social Media has allowed the

Council to expand its communications network and to engage more effectively with the public. In 2023 the number of followers has increased significantly on our Social Media platforms. Details are set out in the table below.

Social Media Platform	Reach – number of times your content is displayed, no matter if it was clicked or not.	Engagement (people liking, sharing and commenting)	New Followers	Total number of Followers
Facebook – 2023 	355,000 (65.3%) up from 2022 (all organic posts – no ad revenue)	16.1k (0.4%) up from 2022	Average follower count each month – 100 approx.	13,000 Followers
Twitter (X) – 2023 	169.8k	3.1%	n/a	5,335 Followers
Instagram – last 90 days - Jan 3 – Feb 1 	1,725	661	1133	1,153 Followers
LinkedIn – 2023 	12,479	3,682	877	1,199 Followers

- Facebook - most popular platform.
- Instagram and LinkedIn – growing platforms



Tuarascáil Bhliantúil Coiste na Gaeilge 2023

Díríonn Coiste na Gaeilge Comhairle Contae Mhuineacháin ar úsáid na Gaeilge a chur chun cinn sa Chontae chomh maith lena chinntiú go gcomhlíonann an Chomhairle a dualgais faoi Acht na dTeangacha Oifigiúla. Bunaíodh an Coiste agus toghadh na Comhairleoirí seo a leanas: An Comh. Pat Treanor, An Comh. Cathy Bennett, An Comh. Richard Truell, An Comh. Raymond Aughey agus An Comh. Hugh McElvaney.

In 2023 bhí an méid seo a leanas san áireamh i gníomhaíochtaí an Choiste:

1. Reáchtáil an Coiste 4 chruinniú.
2. D'éagraigh an Coiste ceolchoirm do Nollaig na mBan.
3. Bhain dhá ghrúpa pobail leas as maoiniú Sheachtain na Gaeilge.
4. Bronnadh 37 scoláireacht ar mhic léinn chun freastal ar an nGaeltacht.
5. Mhainigh an Coiste Comhaltas Uladh chun Omós na nUltach a óstáil, cumtha ag Michael Rooney, in Amharclann an Gharáiste.
6. Tugadh maoiniú do Chomhaltas Chontae Mhuineacháin chun úsáid na Gaeilge a chur chun cinn sa Fleadh.

7. Thacaigh an Coiste le Muineachán le Gaeilge chun campa samhraidh Gaeilge a chuir ar fáil.
8. D'oibrigh an Chomhairle i dtreo Roinn 10(a) den ghníomh a chomhlíonadh.
9. In 2023 chaith an Coiste beagnach €12000
10. I 2024 tá súil againn leanúint le dea-obair an Choiste agus a chinntiú go gcloíonn an Chomhairle go hiomlán le hAcht na dTeangacha Oifigiúla.

Coiste Gaeilge Annual Report 2023

Monaghan County Council's Coiste Gaeilge aims to promote the use of the Irish language in County Monaghan as well as insuring that the Council fulfils its obligations under the Official Languages Act. The Coiste has been established with the following Councillors elected; Cllr. Pat Treanor, Cllr. Cathy Bennett, Cllr, Richard Truell, Cllr, Raymond Aughey and Cllr. Hugh McElvaney.

In 2023 the Coiste's activities included the following

1. The Coiste held 4 meetings.
2. The Coiste organised a concert for Nollaig na mBan.
3. Two community groups availed of Seachtain na Gaeilge funding.
4. 37 scholarships were awarded to students to attend the Gaeltacht.
5. The Coiste funded Ulster Comhaltas to host Omós na nUltach, composed by Scotstown native, Michael Rooney, in the Garage Theatre.
6. Funding was given to Monaghan County Comhaltas to promote the use of Irish language at the Co. Monaghan Fleadh.
7. The Coiste supported Muineachán le Gaeilge to run Campaí Sproai, which is an Irish language summer camp.
8. The Council worked towards compliance with Section 10(a) of the act.
9. In 2023 the Coiste spent almost €12000.
10. In 2024 we hope to continue the good work of the Coiste and ensure the Council complies fully with the Official Languages Act.

Human Resources

Recruitment

Recruitment	2022	2023
Competitions held	34	49
Applications processed	720	1140
Interviews conducted	506	663
Candidates appointed/promoted	107	85

Headcount

The staff complement for Monaghan County Council at 31st December 2023 was:

Core Staff	Number	Whole Time Equivalent
Managerial	4	4
Clerical/Administrative	191	180.16
Professional/Technical	102	100
Outdoor	137	131.4
Total Core Staff	434	415.56
Contract Posts	12	10.66
Temporary/Seasonal	2	2
Retained Firefighters	49	N/A
Non DoEC&LG	4	1.86
Total Other Posts	67	14.52

Retirements during 2023

	Name	Grade	Section
1	Lee Conlon	Part -time Firefighter	Fire Services
2	Brendan Buckley	Civil Defence Officer	Fire/Building Control
3	Ann Murray	Administrative Officer	Community
4	Briege Brosnan	Cleaner	Corporate Services
5	John Murray	Head of Finance	Management Team
6	Brenda McElvaney	Cleaner	Corporate Services
7	Catherine Elliot	County Librarian	Library Service
8	Ciaran Trant	Tenant Liaison Officer	Housing Section
9	Kevin Clerkin	Acting Foreman Craft	Housing Section
10	Francis Meehan	W&S Caretaker	Water Services
11	Damien Douglas	Driver B	MD of Monaghan
12	Danny Murtagh	General Operative	MD of Carrickmacross-Castleblayney
13	Briege Quinn	Acting Head of LEO	Local Enterprise Office
14	Paddy Reilly	Caretaker	Courthouse

Workforce Planning App

In 2023 the HR department worked with a developer to create a Workforce Planning application that would digitise and automate the process for creating and approving business cases and maintaining a centralised database presenting current staff in their roles and departments and the vacancies within the organisation.

Phase 1 of the Workforce Planning App has gone live in early 2024 and the feedback received has been positive by Senior Management and Line Managers.

Phase 2 of the application will focus on digitising recruitment and is expected to 'go live' in 2024.

The primary goal of the Workforce Planning App is to create a system that will enable management to make informative decisions on future workforce needs and create greater efficiencies for the organisation as a whole.

Training & Development

The Human Resources Department engaged with line managers and staff in promoting their personal and career development thus enabling them to reach their potential and contribute fully to the achievement of the Councils strategic and business objectives.

A comprehensive training programme for staff was delivered in 2023 with the main focus this year being on Health & Safety Training, Statutory Training, Empowering our Leaders and Supervisors, Mentoring, Climate Action Training, Public Sector Duty and the development of a new ePMDS system which was introduced in 2023 to assist with capturing training needs and training was delivered to all line managers and their staff on this new system.

A total of 189 Training courses (Face to Face/Online), Seminars, Webinars and 19 conferences were attended by various staff in Monaghan County Council in 2023. This figure includes a total of 30

In-house training courses. Induction Training was delivered to 55 New Entrants.

Training Courses Held from 1st January 2023 to 31st December 2023

Training Courses/Workshops	189
Conferences	19
No of Training Days	1943.5

Health and Safety Training

Monaghan County Council are committed to promoting a positive safety culture and embedding good safety practices. The following training courses were delivered to employees together with a number of internal safety briefings to ensure staff adhered to Health & Safety practices in their everyday activities.

Health & Safety Courses delivered in 2023

Abrasive wheels
Advanced Road Reinstatement
Chainsaw Training
Safe Pass
Safe Use of Pesticide Training PA1 & PA6
Forklift
CSCS LUGS
First Aid/CPR Defib Training
Temporary Traffic Management
Operation of Lawnmower/Strimmer
CSCS Sign Lighting & Guarding
CSCS Health & Safety @ Roadworks
Driver CPC
Loading Shovel
Manual Handling
Winter Services Operators
Mobile Elevated Work Platform
Playground Inspections
Supervisory Training for GSS
Managing Aggressive Behaviour
Litter Warden Training
Hazard & Risk Assessment Training
Safe Systems at Work Training
Evacuation Chair Training
Working Near Water

Training for New Entrants

Induction Training was delivered to 55 new employees who joined Monaghan County Council in 2023.

Climate Action Programme Training 2023

Climate Action training continues to be a priority for Monaghan County Council

The following programme comprised of a suite of courses each tailored and designed to specific

target groupings within the Local Authority:

- Climate Action Delivering Action
- Climate Action - Empowering Change Training
- Climate Action and Economic opportunities
- Climate Action Plan Stage 2
- Climate Action Awareness Training

Learning and Development

The Training Department continued to build on its learning and development programme in 2023 with particular focus on providing staff with the necessary competencies required for their role. Monaghan County Council provided financial assistance to 29 staff members to undertake Third level/Professional development courses in 2023 and they also provided ongoing support to staff continuing learning in their third level courses from 2022.

Third Level/Learning & Development

Third Level Education	10
Certificate/Diploma/Degree in Local Government Studies	12
Leadership in Local Government	3
Leadership for Women	4

Work Life Balance

Monaghan County Council is committed to implementing the measures of the Work Life Balance and Miscellaneous Provisions Act 2023. The Act provides to support employees for a better balance of family life, work life and caring responsibilities. Provisions of the Act have come into effect throughout 2023 and the relevant Circulars are available to employees.

Monaghan County Council remains committed to a blended working policy that embraces the opportunities for remote and blended working, to deliver the highest standard of public services directly to citizens and local communities.

Monaghan County Council considers that blended working can increase flexibility, improve health and wellbeing, and enhance work-life balance. Blended working is part of our commitment to being an Employer of Choice

Health & Wellbeing

Monaghan County Council offered a range of work/life balance schemes to assist staff in achieving a work-life balance, these included Shorter Working Year Scheme, Maternity Leave Scheme, Parental Leave Scheme, Paternity Leave, New Parent Leave, Work Sharing, Career Breaks, Carer's Leave, Exam leave, Blended Working, Force Majeure leave, Bereavement Leave and the Cycle to Work Scheme.

Monaghan Co Council aims to promote Health & Wellbeing in the Organisation. Spectrum Life Employee Assistance Programme offers a 24/7 careline which is totally confidential and offers support and counselling to all staff in Monaghan County Council. A number of very successful events were organised by the Health & Wellbeing committee for staff throughout 2023:

- Wellness event – Christmas Photo Competition, Nutritional presentation & Jersey Day
- Wellness Walks during lunchtime
- Training on E-Bikes for use by staff in MCC

Gender Pay Gap 2023

Monaghan County Council published its Gender Pay Gap Report for 2023 on the 20th December 2023. The gender pay gap is the difference in the average hourly wage of men and women across a workforce. The Gender Pay Gap Information Act, 2021 requires organisations with over 250 employees to publish their gender pay gap data before the end of each calendar year and within six months of their reference date. Monaghan County Council and all local authorities in the country chose 30th June 2023 as the reference date.

The information must be published on the employer's website or in some other way that is accessible to all its employees and to the public.

Please see a copy of Monaghan County Council's Gender Pay Gap Report 2023 on Monaghan County Council's website or click here:

<https://monaghan.ie/humanresources/publications/>

The Municipal District of Ballybay-Clones

Roads Programme 2023

In 2023, Ballybay-Clones Municipal District undertook a substantial programme of road infrastructural development. The Municipal District carried out drainage, bitmac overlay and surface dressing works on five local roads and two regional roads in the district to the value of €2.1 million under the restoration improvement grants scheme. Additional funding allowed for the resurfacing of a further three local roads under the restoration improvement grants scheme. There were a further 28km of roads surface dressed throughout the Municipal District. The Municipal District also undertook extensive general repairs/maintenance to the road network in the district such as gully repairs/cleaning, road patching, hedge cutting, sweeping and scavenging. Climate Adaptation & Resilience funding seen the dredging of 4.5km to alleviate flooding.



RI Scheme R181



RM Scheme



Kilmore East, flood alleviation works

Low-Cost Safety Improvement Works

Two Low-cost safety improvement projects were completed in 2023 at Ture and Camphill.

Renewal Programme

O'Neill Park Clones

Funding secured from The Department of Children and Youth Affairs in the amount of €45,000 enabled the repair and upgrade the existing playground facilities at O'Neill Park Clones.



O'Neill Park Playground

Corrybrennan Playground Upgrade

The Department of Rural and Community Development approved funding in the region of €195,000 with match funding of €21,000 to upgrade the existing Corrybrennan Playground. Additional funding was sought and approved from the DCEDIY to the value of €18,000 + Match Funding of €6,000. Part 8 Planning has been approved. With the Council's match funding allocation of €27,000, the total budget for the project will come to over €240,000. Works are due to commence

in Q1 2024 with an estimated contract duration of 3 months.



Corrybrennan Park

Outdoor Recreational Infrastructure Scheme

Ballybay Lido

The Outdoor Recreational Infrastructure Scheme provided funding in the region of €150,000 to provide a beach/lido area along the shore of Lough Major in Ballybay Town Park. These works have enhanced the popular Ballybay Town Park, provided an amenity that is accessible to all outdoor and water-based enthusiasts and provide a safer walking loop by provision of footpaths along the access road into the park. The works have been greatly welcomed by the residents of Ballybay Town. It has provided an area where members of the public can meet and provide an amenity for sun bather, surfers, and water-based clubs in the area to practice with the new launch area provided.

Minister Heather Humphreys officially opened Ballybay Lido on June 8th 2023.



Official opening, Minister Heather Humphreys, Elected Members and Monaghan County Council Staff

Town & Village

Fermanagh Street Micro Park

The Department of Rural and Community Development approved funding for the Fermanagh Street Streetscape Enhancement Scheme. Part of this funding was approved for the introduction of a Micro Park and Green space on Fermanagh Street which will enhance the overall appeal of the town as a place to live, work and visit. The park will include seating for rest locations for pedestrians, and landscaping and planting to offer green space and biodiversity. It will also deal with another derelict site that is near some of the Clones Renewal Scheme sites. Works were completed in Q4 2023.



Fermanagh Street Micro Park

Street Scape Scheme

2 Street Scape Schemes have been rolled out in Clones, The Diamond Clones and Fermanagh Street. Craftstudio Architecture developed a plan for project delivery in keeping with the Heritage of the town.

The Diamond Clones received funding in the sum of €100,000 and Fermanagh Street received funding in the sum of €232,000,

providing grant assistance to property owners to paint and improve the facades of their buildings, works were completed in Q4 2023.



Drum & Rockcorry Vision Plans

Town & Village 2022 funding in Ballybay Clones Municipal District has enabled the development of vision plans for the villages of Drum and Rockcorry, with funding of €25,000 for each project. Consultants Sheridan Woods Architects & Urban Planners undertook public consultation which received a positive response. The vision plans identify key priorities for the villages to 2030 and beyond. The vision plans were officially launched by Minister Heather Humphreys in November 2023.

Active Travel

There is a wide range of Active Travel Projects being carried out in County Monaghan. There are currently ten projects ongoing in the Ballybay-Clones Municipal District. These include:

Low-Cost Junction Tightening - Newbliss (where R189 meets R183) with an allocation of €50,000. Clones Peace Link AT Scheme, which has a €75,000 allocation for 2023, with €700,000.00 approved by NTA for Construction.

Lough Egish Village AT Scheme with an allocation of €225,000,

SRTS - St Tiarnachs €10,000. Urban Mobility/Sustainability AT Plans (Castleblayney, Ballybay, Clones, Carrickmacross) €65,000.

Ballybay Footpath - R162 Monaghan Rd €57,000. Clones - Cannons Lane Footpath €56,000.

Clones – Tirnahinch Rd Footpath €323,000.

Smithboro - Magherarney Footpath €68,000.

Scotshouse Village AT €43,000.

Municipal District Meetings

The Elected Members held their AGM in June 2023. Cllr Sean Gilliland was elected Cathaoirleach and Cllr Pat Treanor Leas-Chathaoirleach.



Newly elected Cathaoirleach Cllr. Sean Gilliland and Leas Chathaoirleach Cllr. Pat Treanor (Outgoing Cathaoirleach Cllr. Hugh McElvaney and Leas Chathaoirleach Cllr. Sean Gilliland), Elected Members & Staff.

Rural Regeneration Development Fund

Ballybay-Clones Municipal District previously prepared substantial applications for the towns of Ballybay and Clones and were successful in obtaining funding for both towns.

The Ballybay Town project presents the opportunity to architecturally restore and develop the Market House, Main Street Ballybay. This structure has been vacant and idle for well over a decade, it has been in a state of disrepair for some time and Monaghan County Council envisage restoring it and utilising the building as a new Library and Community Hub.



Market House Ballybay

Rural Regeneration Development Funds allocated €400,000 to Monaghan County Council for the purchase of the Market House to progress this project. Design Consultants have been appointed.

Clones to Smithborough Greenway

Ballybay Clones Municipal District were successful in securing funding through the Carbon Tax Fund 2020 for €100,000 to further develop the proposals for the provision of a Greenway from Smithborough to Clones building on the feasibility study that was completed in mid-2019.

Clandillon Civil Consulting were appointed allowing for the completion of environmental studies, and route selection options. Extensive public consultations were undertaken prior to preferred route selection.



Public consultation

Following an additional procurement process, the Council appointed McAdam consulting Engineers to advance the project to the next phases, i.e. preliminary and detailed design and securing all necessary statutory approvals. The topographical survey of the route and site investigation works are complete. Preliminary design is complete, detailed design is ongoing in accordance with TII project management guidelines. Meetings with key stakeholders

and landowners along the route are ongoing. The design consultants prepared planning documentation. A design report for the project has been submitted to TII and a Part 8 planning application has been submitted to the council.

Ballybay to Castleblayney Greenway

The Ballybay – Clones Municipal District, and Carrickmacross – Castleblayney Municipal District previously agreed jointly to fund a consultant to carry out a feasibility study and constraints report for a proposed greenway along the line of the old railway line between Ballybay and Castleblayney, connecting Doohamlet. Funding was secured under the Departments Outdoor Recreation Infrastructure Scheme to advance the project. Clandillon Civil Consultants have progressed through to Phase 2 Option Selection.



Community Recognition Fund

The Community Recognition Fund 2023 aims to support the development of community infrastructure and facilities in recognition of the contribution being made by communities across the country in welcoming and hosting significant numbers of arrivals from Ukraine and other countries.

Ballybay/Clones Municipal District are delivering 3 projects through this fund, these include:

98 Avenue Bus Stop:

A funding allocation of €120,000 has been received. MD Engineering staff and a design

consultant have examined the site, to prepare a design proposal.

Outdoor Fitness Equipment Peace Link: -

A funding allocation of €45,000 has been received.

New Playground equipment for Ballybay Town Park: -

Funding allocation of €120,000 has been received.

Ulster Canal Restoration

the Ulster Canal Restoration project will see the restoration of the canal section by Waterways Ireland from Lough Erne in Co Fermanagh to Clones in Co Monaghan. This is a stretch of approx. 13.5 kilometres.

The project is currently in Phase 2 which focuses on the restoration of the canal between Clones and Clonfad in County Monaghan, including a canal basin marina and amenity area in Clones. Funding of €24million is secured to complete this phase from Shared Island Fund, Department of Rural Development and Department of Housing Local Government and Heritage.

Monaghan County Council, in collaboration with Fáilte Ireland and Waterways Ireland, is undertaking public consultation to gather input from local residents, community groups, businesses and wider organisations in the preparation of a Vision Plan to present a collective vision for the future of Clones Marina, in the heart of County Monaghan. The expected project completion date is 2027/2028



Proposed marina



Marina Site Visit, Cathaoirleach Cllr. Hugh McElvaney, Elected Members & Staff

Municipal District Offices

The Municipal District was delighted to be in a position to take part in the various lighting up of public building events throughout the year. These events were to raise awareness and highlight some very important issues that affect many throughout our communities.



Clones Municipal Offices

The Municipal District continues to build relations through its Town Twinning, hosting a delegation from Gergweis, Osterhofen, Bavaria, Germany with which it has been twinned for over 2 decades.



Twinning Visit

Ballybay/Clones Municipal District work

collaboratively with our communities, in response to community requests EV Charging Points were installed in Ballybay Town Park. This pilot project was rolled out in partnership with Easygo Ireland.



EV Charging Ballybay

Funding secured through CLAR and NTA Green Schools for traffic calming works enabled the installation of Speed Cushions on the approach to Corcaghan. Junction realignment on the Ballybay/Monaghan Junction in Ballybay was facilitated through Active Travel and Town and Village joint funding.



Corcaghan – speed ramps



Ballybay/Monaghan Junction

The Municipal District has installed Communication Boards at two locations in Clones & Ballybay Park Playgrounds. Communication Boards are primarily a communications support, with particular benefit to children or adults who may not communicate using speech. Playgrounds are important to aid children’s physical and mental

health. The Communication Boards will aid communication, increase socialisation, and provide learning for all users of the facility.

To have the ability to communicate is a necessity for everyone and to be understood is essential. Ballybay/Clones Municipal District understands that for someone who communicates using alternatives to speech, supports are useful to enable communication with everyone.



Communications board Clones Playpark

Proposals for 2024

The Ballybay Clones Municipal District contains over 40% of the county’s road network. Major investment is required, particularly on the regional road network to ensure that the network is maintained to a satisfactory standard. The Municipal District will continue to work with the elected representatives and staff from other sections in Monaghan County Council to ensure that funding is obtained, and all schemes delivered in 2024. Funding applications have been submitted for Low-Cost safety improvement works and bridge repair works in various locations in the Municipal District.

The Municipal District will continue to advance the projects in Ballybay and Clones, currently being funded under the Rural Regeneration Development Fund and seek to develop schemes for further funding submissions under this programme.

The Municipal District has made comprehensive submissions under the Departments Town and Village Renewal and Outdoor Recreation Infrastructure Scheme and will progress these schemes following receipt of funding.

We will continue to support community and business groups in their activities and work closely with the Councils Housing and Planning section to develop solutions and programmes of work to address dereliction within the Municipal District.

The Municipal District of Monaghan

Municipal District Meetings

The Municipal District held monthly meetings on the third Monday of every month except for August. At the AGM in June, Cllr. Cathy Bennett was elected Cathaoirleach and Cllr. Raymond Aughey was elected Leas-Cathaoirleach for one year. There were a number of other subcommittee meetings to discuss roads, budgets and other issues and programs within the district. The Schedule of Municipal District Works was presented and approved at the March Meeting.

Community Rossmore Park

Monaghan Municipal District continued to invest in and maintain the recreation areas of the park.

The Municipal District working with the Town Team secured funding through the Library Section and Creative Ireland to add three new Giants - Aillinn, Muireann and Thoth to the Drumlin Giant Trail.

The Municipal District installed a water drinker in the park. The drinker was provided through our Environment Section with a Grant from the EPA.

Coillte also secured a grant to install solar panels in the park. The Municipal District working with Coillte installed power supply and hand drier units in the toilet block.

St. Patrick's Day Parade 2023

Monaghan Municipal District held the Monaghan Town St. Patrick's Day Parade and kids activities on 17th March with the theme of **Pedal Power for the Future**. Thanks to the organising committee for planning the event and for all volunteers. Special thanks to An Garda Síochána, without their support the parade could not take place.

The Municipal District were delighted to invite the winners of the St. Patrick's Day Parade Floats/Windows to a presentation ceremony at the Municipal District meeting in April.

Community Recognition Fund

Belgium Park Football Field. The Municipal District secured €121,857 for the refurbishment of Belgium Park Football Field. These works under the Community Recognition Fund are 90% complete (refurbishment of the dressing rooms, new modular unit installed with toilet and additional changing space, new goal posts and netting, works to the entrance, ball stop nets, and re painting of the MUGA).

Rossmore Park. The Tourism Section secured €150,000 funding and assisted by the Municipal District advanced this project to tender stage. The project involves a significant extension of the playground and additional accessible picnic tables.

Monaghan Harps Handball wall.

were also granted €7,190 to provide two number, one-wall public handball areas for the public.

Outdoor Recreational Infrastructural Scheme (ORIS)

Hollywood Park received an ORIS Grant of €276,385 which was match funded by Monaghan Municipal District in the amount of €30,710. This project started on site Q4, 2023. Bog Garden. The Municipal District was successful in securing €30,000 grant and provided the match funding to design and construct a Canal Bog Garden / public park at Killyconnigan. Works completed Q4, 2023.

Monaghan Town CCTV System

The Municipal District received the final Authorisation from the Garda Commissioner for the installation of the Monaghan Town CCTV system for 43 cameras at 17 locations in Monaghan Town. Installation and commissioning of the system to be completed in early 2024. The scheme is funding through the income from pay parking and a grant from the Community Based CCTV Scheme from the Department of Justice.

Car Parking

The Municipal District continued to promote the 'Pay by App' parking system, which was launched in March 2021 in Monaghan Town, supplementing the existing facility to pay by cash. This APP allows customers to pay remotely online by phone or other devices.

The Municipal District operated a free Christmas parking from 12 noon each day and it ran from the first week in December 2023 to 2nd January 2024.

A new car park with 88 parking spaces opened at the Broad Road in November.

A replacement program for pay parking machines continued with 12 new machines purchased again in 2023.

Monies raised via Pay Parking within Monaghan Town is reinvested into the Municipal District through the upkeep of Rossmore Park, supporting the Town Team, and funding of projects/events in the district. This funding is to be utilised to fund the CCTV system.

Walking Tours

Walking tours continued every Saturday at 12 noon from the 30th March to the 31st August. Walks were free to join and start from the Westenra hotel. Walks funded by Monaghan Municipal District.

Tidy Towns

The National Tidy Towns Awards. Glaslough Tidy Towns retained their gold medal standard and Monaghan Town achieved the silver medal award with many of the other villages achieving very high standards.

Monaghan Municipal District continued to work closely with Tidy Towns Groups within the district on a number of projects.

Assistance was also given to Community Groups/Residents Associations throughout the year.

Monaghan Town achieved the Top 10 in the National **IBAL litter league** this year.

Public Open Spaces

The Municipal District managed and maintained many of the public open spaces in

the district including Belgium Park football field. The council adopted the grass cutting plan to meet pollinator friendly guidelines. Several areas were planted with Pollinator friendly flowers including housing estates, parks, the Greenway and the approach roads to Monaghan town, with over 100,000 bulbs planted in the last two years.

Community Grants

The Municipal District and Community Section held the funding presentation ceremony for the Community Grants in May to which all recipients of funding were invited to and presented to on the night.

Playgrounds

Monaghan Municipal District carried out weekly inspections and maintained 16 playgrounds in the district.

A new playground was completed in Mullan village Q4, 2023, funded by CLÁR funding.

Active Travel Projects

The Municipal District assisted the Active Travel team on projects with the Monaghan Municipal District.

Sliabh Beagh Cross Border Partnership

The Municipal District and Tourism Section managed the Sliabh Beagh Cross Border Partnership committee. The Municipal District provided seed funding to jointly procure Consultants to complete a feasibility study / project development to seek Shared Ireland funding.

Promotion & Town Enhancement

Historic Towns Initiative

MCC secured funding under the **Heritage Town Initiative** which aims to re-establish residential use in our towns. This involves external conservation works to eight buildings and internal refurbishment to two buildings for residential use in Dublin Street. Works on site commenced in Q4, 2023 and are planned to be completed Q2, 2024. **Grant funding, €247,952** The Municipal District agreed to match fund this grant. **€12,300** for the preparation of the initial application and **€22,400** to engage Conservation Architects to manage the works.

Town & Village Renewal Scheme

Works began on site Q4, 2023 for the Streetscape Enhancements of Market Street and Park Street. This is a joint project between MCC and the Tidy Towns.

- Total Project Cost: €166,950
- Grant Aid: €136,635
- Match Funding: €30,315

The project was match funded by property owners with a supplement of €3,075 from the Municipal District.

Roads

2023 Roads Restoration Improvement Program

Drainage works commenced in the district in February. A total of 6.5km of Local roads and 3.3km of Regional Roads were drained and re-surfaced under the Road Restoration, 2023 program.



Figure 3: Restoration Improvement Grant. Surface Overlay strengthening works of the R 142 at Killyvine



Reclaimed Asphalt

4km of Local Roads were drained and resurfaced under the Reclaimed Asphalt Pavement pilot project 2023.



Figure 1 : Laying of Reclaimed Asphalt Pavement on the LP1210 at Derrygasson Lower

Restoration Maintenance Program

A total of 18km of local roads and 5.5km of regional roads were surface dressed under the Restoration Maintenance 2023 program.

General Road Maintenance

The parapet walls of 4 bridges were re-built following vehicle damage.

Verge trimming on National Roads was completed twice, including litter and Ragwort removal in 2023 program.

Tree cutting works were also completed on national roads under this project.

The Municipal District completed a program of hedge cutting works on council owned property and in strategic locations within the district as part of road safety.

The Municipal District completed a Roads (large patching) contract on regional and local roads.

Footpath replacements works were carried out in a number of areas within the district.

Road marking works were completed on regional and local roads within the district.

Drainage works were completed on regional and local roads throughout the year.

Winter Maintenance program commenced on 16th October 2023 and will continue until 5th May 2024.



Figure 3 & 3 : Pre and Post work photos of verge (Appage) repairs on the L73-4203 at Garraun

Retail Strategy for the Town / District – Town Team

Retail Strategy for the Town/District

Monaghan Municipal District as part of the Town Team continued to support and promote the county town.

Monaghan Town Voucher

Sales for the Monaghan Town Voucher has grown year on year. This has helped to reduce economic leakage whilst supporting over 200 businesses within Monaghan Municipal District.

The Growth of the Monaghan Town Voucher

Monaghan Town Voucher	
Year	Yearly Sales
2016	€340,000
2017	€485,720
2018	€746,200
2019	€877,440
2020	€984,620
2021	€1191,230
2022	€1706,340



Town Voucher System

The Municipal District investigated the Gift Card as an alternative to the paper-based voucher to manage the Monaghan Town voucher.

Town Promotions

Monaghan Town Team/Monaghan Municipal District continued to promote and highlight the shops, businesses and hospitality which accept the town vouchers, through media channels, radio advertising and town events.



Successful events were run in 2023 with the Summer Movie Festival in July, Street Food Festival in May, the Halloween Festival including Fireworks and Christmas Street Food Festival in December.

The Town Team held a very successful Monaghan Town Business Awards in November after the launch in September by Minister Heather Humphreys TD, elected Municipal District members, Monaghan Local Enterprise Office, and the Monaghan Town Team.

A number of competitions ran in 2023 to promote the Monaghan Town Vouchers and encourage everyone to spend their vouchers in store in order to be entered into the competition. These competitions provide an extra boost to the town.

TY Young Cook of the Year Award

The county competition was held in Monaghan Institute with the regional final in Cavan Institute managed by CMETB.

This competition was supported through funding allocation from Monaghan Municipal District, Monaghan Environment Section and Monaghan Local Enterprise Office with

representation from the 3 sections at the events.

Greenspace Initiative

The Greenspace in the Diamond was put in place from May to November and proved popular again with people using the benches and area to dine and socialise. The Farmer's Market has continued each Friday in this area along with multiple events at various times.

Destination Towns - Event Space

Monaghan Municipal District/Tourism Section to deliver the Event Space in Church Square. The Square is being extended with the relocation of the taxi rank and removal of the Right Turn lanes. The project is funded through

Failte Ireland, €497,962 and match funded by the Municipal District, €165,987.

Christmas Light Switch On Event 2023

Monaghan Municipal District along with the committee planned the Christmas Lights Switch-On Event on the 19th November. The Municipal District provided and managed the Christmas lights and Christmas tree for Monaghan town.

Féile Oriel 28th-30th April

The organising committee organised a great line up of events for the return of the Féile Oriel festival. The Municipal District provided sponsorship for the event.

The Municipal District of Carrickmacross-Castleblayney

Road Infrastructure

Regional and Local Roads:

In 2023, the Municipal District (MD) managed an investment of €4.86million in the Regional and Local Road network. Some 14km of the non-national road network was strengthened under the Restoration Improvement Programme and a further 27km was resealed under the Restoration Maintenance Programme. Additionally, the Climate Adaptation and Resilience Works Programme 2023 provided for Phase 1 flood mitigation works to the LP3720 at Annadrummond.

Funding received under the 2023 Safety Improvement Works on Regional and Local Roads programme also enabled the implementation of safety improvement measures at 5 No. locations within the District, and monies secured under the Former National Road Rehabilitation Grant provided for 850m of resurfacing and drainage works on the LP4922, Ardee Road in Carrickmacross town.

Active Travel

The MD continued to work closely with the Active Travel Unit throughout 2023. There are currently 6 No. schemes on going in the District, with a combined value of €360,500.

Regenerating our Town and Village Centres

The MD remained actively involved in facilities investment throughout 2023. In Castleblayney Town, “The Ridge” Enterprise Hub officially opened in June and is now fully occupied. A joint initiative with Castleblayney Community Enterprise and Enterprising Monaghan, the 1,350 sqm provides 28-unit business units.



"The Ridge" Enterprise Hub, McGrath Road, Castleblayney

In Carrickmacross, construction of the new C:TEK II Co-working Enterprise Hub continued apace, with works due to be substantially completed in early Q3 2024. At a total estimated cost of €3.8 million, the project shall realise the delivery of a new 1,450sqm Co-Working Enterprise Hub. The Hub shall provide workspace for business start-ups, re-locating enterprises and co-workers seeking to locate in Carrickmacross Town. The development will support talent retention within the South Monaghan area, provide a regional base for former commuters, and attract new start-ups from within the community and Northern Ireland.



C:TEK II Co-working Enterprise Hub under construction

The MD, in partnership with Farney Community Development Group (FCDG), plan

to restore in full the Carrickmacross Workhouse site. MD staff are progressing the engagement of a multi-disciplinary design team to complete detailed plans and costings for the restoration and re-development of the rear derelict buildings, together with an extended new-build multi-purpose Community Hub. The programme for the delivery of the current Category 2 enabling project anticipates a project duration of 12 months from the date of the appointment of consultants.



The Workhouse, Carrickmacross

Investing in Public Spaces

Public Realm, Heritage and Amenity enhancements in the Village Heart and St. Mary's Space areas of Inniskeen Village:

In 2023, the Executive engaged consultants to progress the scheme through to construction tender stage. The scheme is currently at Design Stage. Subject to securing Part 8 planning approval, it is envisaged that works shall commence in Q2 2024.



Inniskeen Public Realm Spatial Plan

Developing Outdoor Recreational Amenities

In June 2023, Minister Heather Humphreys

T.D. officially opened the following outdoor recreational schemes:

- Dog walking park at Drummond Otra, Carrickmacross
- Phase 1 Biodiversity and Pollinator measures at Tullynaskeagh East & Gallows' Hill
- Onomy Walk and Exercise Trail - 720m long nature-based walking trail, interspersed with items of recreational exercise equipment.
- Outdoor Education Space at the Point, Black Island



Dog Walking Park @ Drummond Otra



Tullynaskeagh Linear Park

Additionally, the MD progressed the development of angling and boating facilities at both Lough Nagarnaman and Rahans Lake.

Community Actions

The MD continued to work closely with communities to better target investment and improve the built environment.

Lough Muckno Christmas Market:

The Executive, in partnership with the Muckno Mania Festival Committee, continued to build on the strong tradition of community-led events in the Municipal District. Taking

advantage of the almost purpose-built Hope Castle avenue, Sunday the 3rd of December 2023 saw the realisation of the inaugural Lough Muckno Christmas Market. A dedicated working group, comprising members of Muckno Mania Committee and Municipal District staff worked tirelessly throughout October and November to deliver a truly magical and community-inspired event.



Crowds enjoying the festive fayre @ the inaugural Lough Muckno Christmas Market

Municipal District staff continued the development of community-based CCTV Schemes for both main towns in the District. Following a presentation on both schemes to the National CCTV Advisory Committee in May 2023, the Committee advised that they would be recommending the approval of both schemes to the Garda Commissioner's Office. It is hoped that these schemes will become operational in the latter half of 2024.

The MD engaged regularly with both the Carrickmacross Chamber of Commerce and Castleblayney Town Regeneration Team to foster economic growth in both towns. These groups assist in planning and provide valuable feedback on proposed initiatives.

Tidy Towns - The MD continued its support of these groups by way of annual contributions and logistical assistance throughout the year. In 2023, Carrickmacross Tidy Towns finished runners-up in the Best Kept Towns competition. The competition, run jointly by the Northern Ireland Amenity Council and the Department of the Environment and Local Government, is an all-island competition in which some of the best towns in the SuperValu Tidy Towns competition compete against their counterparts in Northern Ireland's Best Kept competition.

Tourism Initiatives

The MD continued to work collaboratively with the Tourism Officer to deliver tourism initiatives within the District. In August 2023, the Team completed the phased redevelopment of The Monaghan Way walking trail from Castleblayney to Inniskeen. Following a trail inspection by Sport Ireland Outdoors, the Monaghan Way walking route from Inniskeen to Annadrumman, including 3 No. new looped walks, has been added to the National Trails Register.

Corporate Procurement

Overview

In early 2023 the OGP launched an update of the eTenders portal, this required a restructuring of how MCC would use and operate the portal. The launch of the new eTenders portal aligned with the Senior Management decision to put in place a centralised Procurement Unit to manage procurement activities and ensure a consistent approach to procurement throughout the council. The Council's procurement activity for 2023 remained consistent with 2022 figures. In 2023, The Procurement Unit published a total of 81 competitions (Call for Tenders (CfT)) using eTenders and 18 tenders through the www.supplygov.ie platform. Twelve of the competitions advertised on eTenders were for values above the EU procurement thresholds (i.e. €5,358,000 for works or €215,000 for goods or services).

Procurement Procedures

The Council's Procurement Procedures Rev 5. were updated on the SharePoint portal in May 2022, taking account of the updated EU thresholds for procurement and structural change of procurement personnel within the sections. Following the establishment of the Procurement Unit and the update of the eTenders portal, these procedures are continuously reviewed. The procedures ensure that procurement is conducted in line with the requirements of Public Sector reform, the Office of Government Procurement, EU Directives and National Guidelines. A step-by-step guide to the Procurement procedures and associated forms are available on the Council's SharePoint, for use by all staff.

In March of 2023 '*Circular 05-2023 - Initiatives to assist SMEs in Public Procurement*' was issued by the Department of Public Expenditure. This circular set out new thresholds and procedures for the procurement of Goods, Services and Works. Following the issue of Circular 05/2023 and the release of the new e-Tender portal, all procurement with an estimated value above twenty-five thousand euros is managed through the Procurement Unit.

Procurement Team

The Procurement Officer role was filled in early 2023 and a centralised Procurement unit was established consisting of three staff members. This unit is there to guide, support and promote procurement activities across the Local Authority, to ensure that goods, services and works comply with all relevant legislation and guidelines while managing risk and achieving value for money. The Procurement Unit upload all tenders/quotes over a value of €25k on behalf of the Council, which in turn creates a full audit trail and a consistent and clear approach to MCC's procurement.

Public Spending Code

The Council issued a Quality Assurance Report to NOAC in May 2023, to confirm compliance with the Public Spending Code (PSC). The report included an inventory of all projects/programmes costing greater than €0.5m, distinguishing between capital and current expenditure and categorised by expenditure being considered, expenditure being incurred, and expenditure recently ended. The PSC also requires the Local Authority to publish procurements with a value of more than €10m and to submit a self-assessment checklist.

Model Publication Scheme

The Council is obligated to report quarterly on public contracts (tenders) awarded for the Model Publication Scheme, which is part of the Freedom of Information regime. This publication relates to all public works/supplies/services contracts with a value over €25k. To date, all Sections have assisted in the compilation of contracts awarded for 2023 and this information has now been published on the Council's website and can be found on the following link:

<https://monaghan.ie/corporateservices/procurement>

Office of Government Procurement

The Council has signed a 'Memorandum of Understanding' with the Office of Government Procurement (OGP), which sets out the principles governing the procurement relationship between

the two parties. The arrangement recognises that the Council and the OGP are engaged in a partnership focussed on delivering efficient and suitable procurement services and value for money, ultimately assisting the local authority in meeting service delivery needs. The Council continues to avail of OGP frameworks for all procurement processes, where possible.

Green Procurement

Green Public Procurement, GPP, requires changes to procedures and behaviour throughout an organisation. While there is an element of 'learning by doing' planning helps to limit the risks attached to GP. In 2023 Monaghan County Council facilitated twenty-one staff members to attend GPP procurement training.

Strategic Policy Committees

The role of Strategic Policy Committees is to formulate policy proposals, evaluate and report on policy implementation for consideration; provide policy centred committees which can harness the experience of external bodies in the formulation of policy. The Committees are not designed to deal with routine operational matters in relation to the delivery of services.

The SPCs which consists of elected members of Monaghan County Council and others who are nominated by / or representative of the sectors relevant to the work of the particular SPC. Monaghan County Council has 4 Strategic Policy Committees (SPCs):

SPC 1 - Housing, Cultural and Social

SPC 2 – Community & Transport

SPC 3 – Planning & Economic Development

SPC 4 - Environment and Transport

Report of Strategic Policy Committee Activities during 2023

Housing, Cultural and Social SPC

(4 meetings held in 2023)

The SPC approved the following Policy Documents

- Library Bye Laws

The SPC also received presentation on the following.

- Affordable Housing
- Capital Delivery Programme / Housing for All
- Energy Efficiency Retrofit Programme
- Arts Development Strategy 2024-2030
- Disability Strategy
- Peace Campus / Museum / New Libraries Update
- Housing Need and Demand Assessment
- Croi Conaithe / Vacant Homes Grants Scheme
- Tenant Incremental Purchase Scheme
- Local Authority Home Loan

- Scheme of Priorities for Serviced Sites
- Housing Care Leavers

Community & Transport SPC

(4 meetings held in 2023)

The SPC received presentations on

- LIS
- Monaghan LECP
- Rapid Build Active Travel Facilities
- Peace Plus
- Leader
- Ukrainian Response
- Climate Adaptation Strategy Regional & Local roads
- E-Scooters, E-Bikes & E-Mopeds Briefing Presentation
- All Ireland Rail plan
- Public Lighting
- Traffic Calming Policy

Planning & Economic Development SPC

(4 meetings held in 2023)

The February meeting of the Planning and Economic Development SPC received a presentation from KPMG on the Development of the Local Economic Community Plan. There were 3 further meetings in March, May & June to agree various elements of the LECP. Policy discussions also took place in February on the Residential Zoned Land Tax and the formal review of the Development Plan 2025-2031.

The May meeting of the Planning and Economic Development SPC considered a presentation from Mr Finbarr Daly, Enterprising Monaghan, on the Activities of the Social Enterprise and a synopsis of the Economic Plan for Monaghan. Mr. Kevin McNally, Town Regeneration Officer and Mr. John Reilly, Vacant Homes Officer also delivered a presentation on regeneration, dereliction & vacancies in County Monaghan.

At the third meeting in September, there was a presentation on the Draft Tourism Strategy 2023-2028 by Mr. Alan Hill & Ms. Deirdre Lewis, followed by a presentation by Chief Fire Officer Dermot Brannigan on the Operational Plan for the Service (Section 26) 2023-2027.

A special SPC workshop / meeting took place in November to develop a new policy to address dereliction across the county. The workshop was facilitated by Mr. Kevin McNally, Town Regeneration Officer.

Climate Action & Environmental Services SPC

(4 meetings held in 2023)

The Climate Action & Environmental SPC held 4 meetings in 2023 where members received presentations on a wide range of topics.

Members were given a comprehensive report by KPMG who conducted a Climate Change Risk Assessment on behalf of Monaghan County Council. Climate change poses a critical challenge for our county, and the assessment outlined the current and future climate risk and impacts. Monaghan County Council will need to proactively plan for and adapt to the current and future climate change risks identified in the report and implement through the LACAP process.

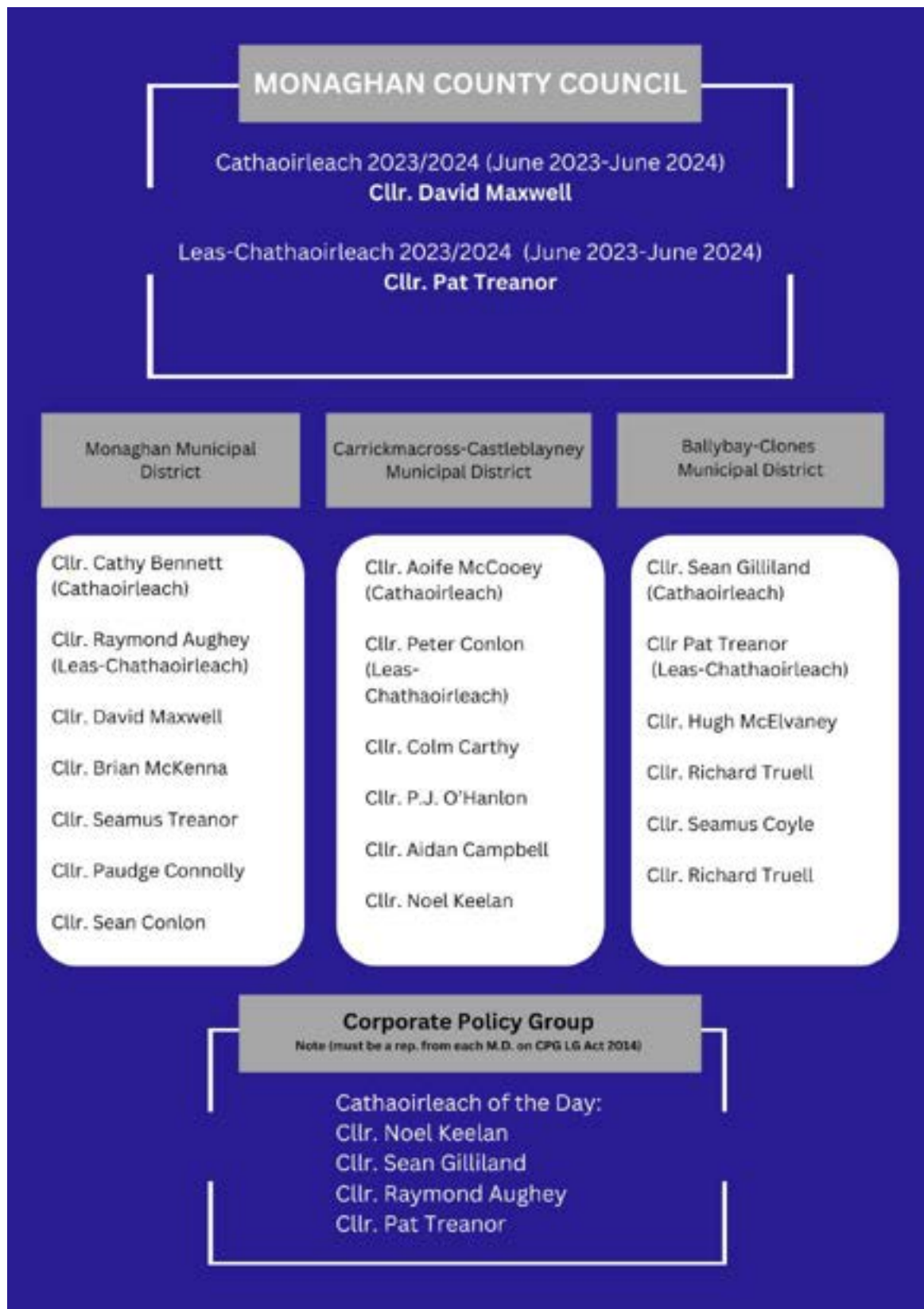
In addition, the Climate Action team updated the members on the Draft Climate Action Plan. This outlined the structure and framework of the Plan and a recap of baseline evidence base and stakeholder engagement options.

Other presentations to members included:

- RMCEI
- Hedgerow Conservation Guidelines
- National Biodiversity Action Plan
- Draft Climate Action Plan

Members were also advised on the continuing principal activities in which the Council has been engaged in 2023 relating to a number of issues. These included, Biomethane Strategy, Green Your Festival and Retrofitting Your home.

Councillor Representation on External and Council Committees



Strategic Policy Committees

SPC for Housing, Social
and Cultural

Cllr. Pat Treanor, Chair
Cllr. Aidan Campbell
Cllr. Colm Carthy
Cllr. Peter Conlon
Cllr. Aoife McCooley
Cllr. P.J. O'Hanlon

SPC for Economic
Development and
Enterprise Support

Cllr. Sean Gilliland,
Chair
Cllr. Sean Conlon
Cllr. Noel Keelan
Cllr. David Maxwell
Cllr. Brian McKenna
Cllr. P.J. O'Hanlon

SPC for Transport and
Community

Cllr. Raymond
Aughey, Chair
Cllr. Sean Conlon
Cllr. Sean Gilliland
Cllr. Hugh McElvaney
Cllr. Brian McKenna

SPC for Climate Action
and Environment

Cllr. Noel Keelan, Chair
Cllr. Raymond Aughey
Cllr. Cathy Bennett
Cllr. Seamus Coyle
Cllr. Pat Treanor
Cllr. Richard Truell

Co. Monaghan Joint Policing Committee

Chair - Cllr. Brian McKenna
Cllr. P.J. O'Hanlon
Cllr. Noel Keelan
Cllr. Aoife McCooley
Cllr. Pat Treanor
Cllr. Cathy Bennett
Cllr. Raymond Aughey
Cllr. Aidan Campbell
Cllr. David Maxwell
Cllr. Sean Gilliland
Cllr. Richard Truell
Cllr. Colm Carthy
Cllr. Hugh McElvaney

**Local Community
Development
Committee**

Cllr. Seamus Coyle

Cllr. Cathy Bennett

Cllr. David Maxwell

Audit Committee

Cllr. Raymond Aughey

Cllr. David Maxwell

**Standing Orders &
Procedures
Committee**

Cathaoirleach of the day

Cllr. Richard Truell

Cllr. David Maxwell

Cllr. Brian McKenna

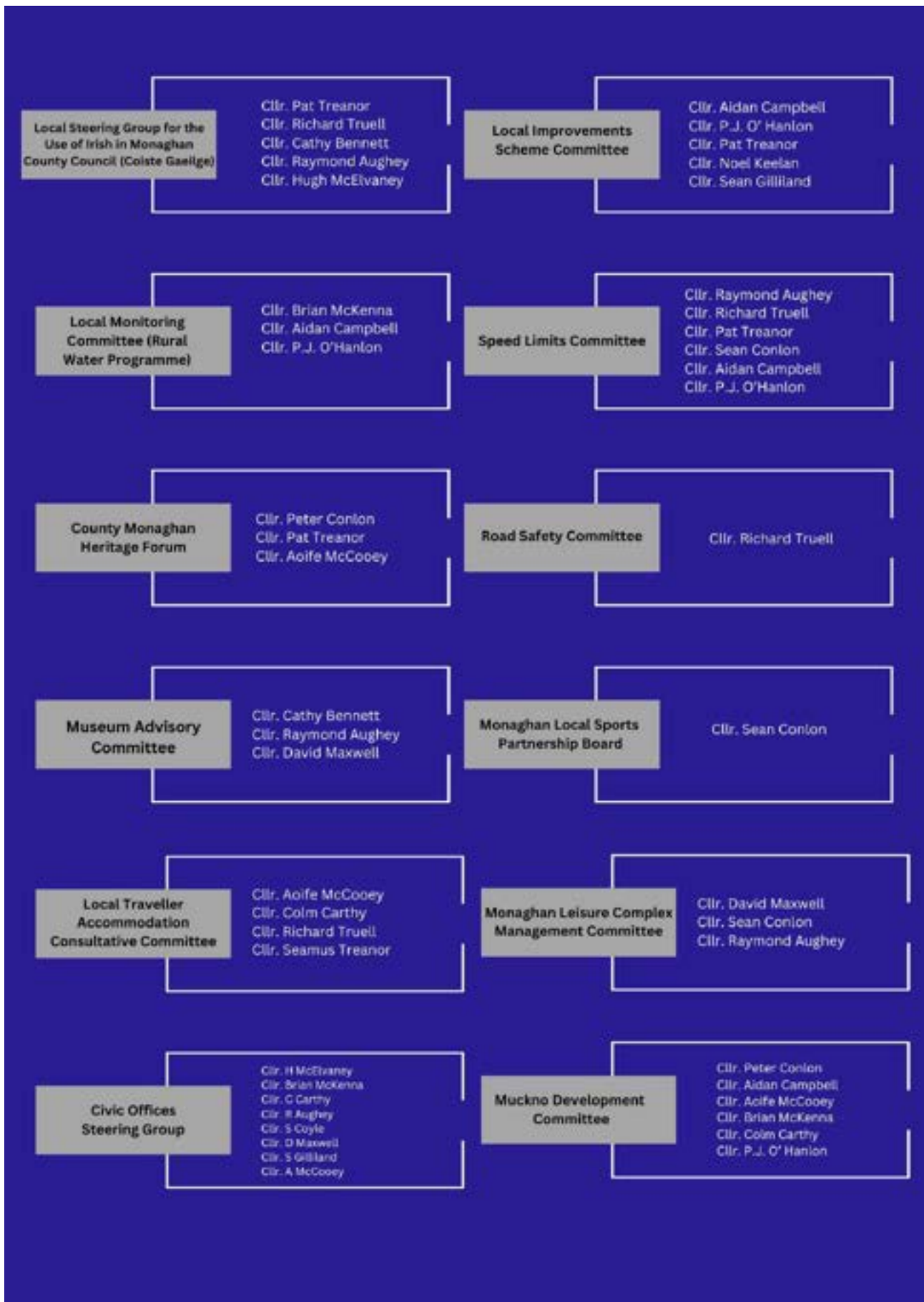
Cllr. Pat Treanor

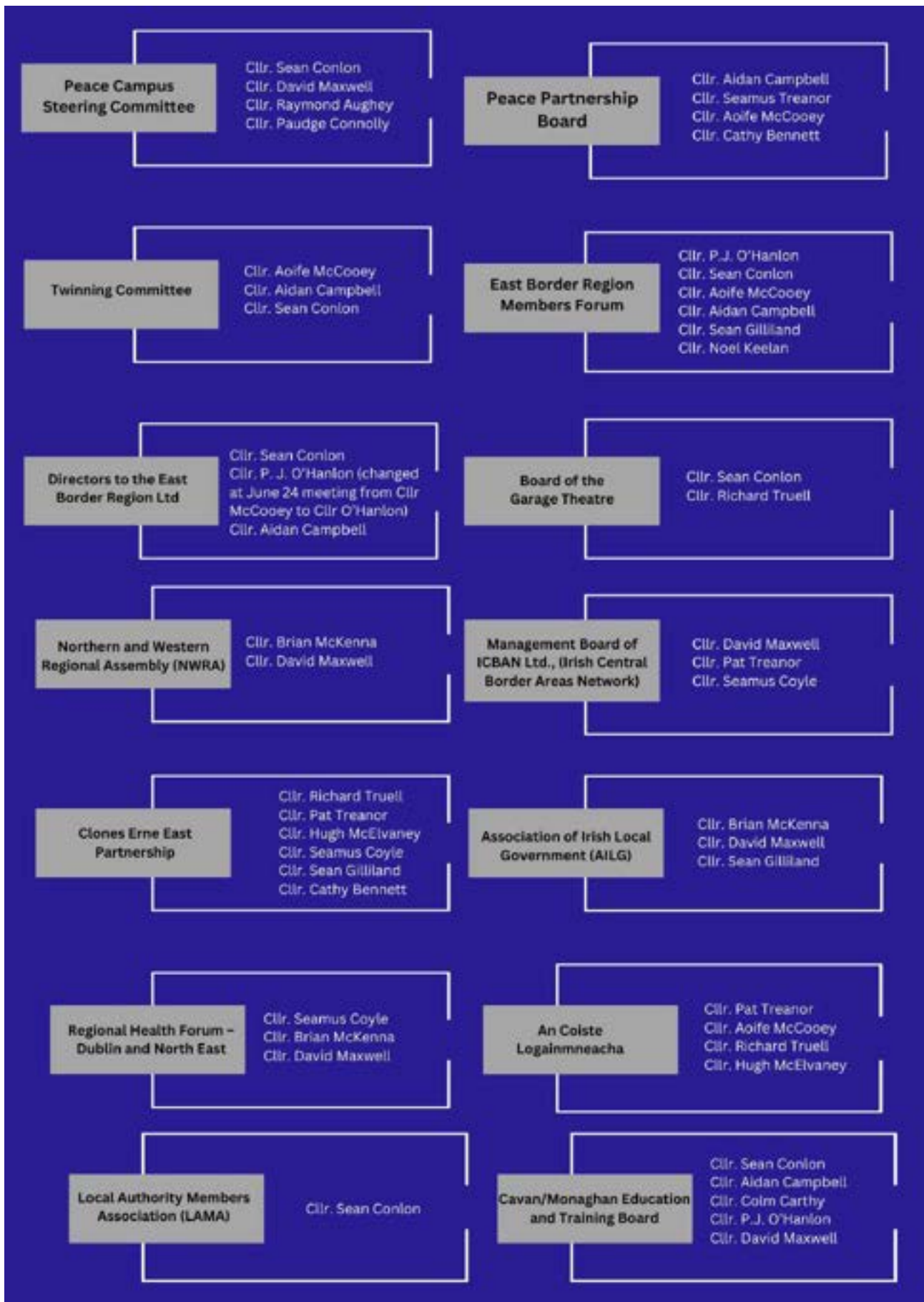
Cllr. Seamus Coyle

Cllr. Hugh McElvaney

**Appointment of members
to witness the affixing of
the Official Seal**

All Members of Monaghan County Council
appointed to witness the affixing of the Official
Seal.





**North Eastern Regional
Drugs and Alcohol Task
Force**
Cllr. Colm Carthy

**Irish Public Bodies
Mutual Insurances**
Cllr. Richard Truelli

**Connecting to Life
Suicide Prevention
Working Group**
Cllr. Colm Carthy
Cllr. Raymond Aughey

**Cavan/Monaghan Drugs &
Alcohol Forum**
Cllr. Cathy Bennett
Cllr. Richard Truelli
Cllr. Seamus Coyle

**Monaghan Tourism &
Recreation Forum**
Cllr. Peter Conlon
Cllr. Aoife McCooey
Cllr. Sean Conlon
Cllr. Seamus Treanor

**Comhairle na nOg
Steering Committee**
Cllr. Aoife McCooey

**Monaghan Walking &
Cycling Forum**
Cllr. Richard Truelli
Cllr. Sean Conlon
Cllr. Noel Keelan

Conferences/Training Attended by Members in 2023

Promoting Authority	Subject/Theme	Venue	Dates	Number of members Attended
Celtic Conferences	Local Authority Procurement Process	O'Donovan's Hotel, Clonakilty, Co. Cork	20 th , 21 st and 22 nd January 2023	1
AILG	A Briefing on the Electoral Reform Act	Tullamore Court Hotel	23 rd February 2023	7
AILG – Module 1	A Briefing on the Electoral Reform Act	Radisson Blu Hotel Limerick	23 rd February 2023	5
AILG – Module 1	A Briefing on the Electoral Reform Act	Radisson Blu Hotel Limerick	25 th February 2023	2
AIR - Association of Irish Regions Conference	Regional Seminar and Training Event Climate change, the energy transition, demographic shifts, and others – what role can our regions play?	Four Seasons Hotel & Leisure Club, Monaghan	7 th - 9 th February 2023	6
LAMA	Spring Seminar	Westlodge Hotel, Bantry, Co. Cork	2 nd - 4 th March 2023	6
AILG – Module 2	Climate Action Plan	Fairways Hotel, Dundalk	25 th March 2023	4
AILG	Annual Training Conference 2023	Hotel Kilkenny, Co. Kilkenny	19 th -20 th April 2023	7
CARO	Climate Action	Tullamore Court Hotel, Co Offaly	26 th April 2023	1
AILG – Module 3	Planning Legislation	Mullingar Park Hotel, Co. Westmeath	15 th June 2023	5
AILG – Module 3	Planning Legislation	Avalon House Hotel, Castlecomer	17 th June 2023	1
AILG – Module 4	Uisce Éireann (Irish Water)	Radisson Blu, Co. Sligo	22 nd July 2023	6
AILG	Autum Seminar – The Future of Local Government	Sligo Park Hotel, Co. Sligo	13 th -14 th September 2023	6
ICSH Conference	National Social Housing	Clayton Whites Hotel, Co.Wexford	18 th -19 th October 2023	2
AILG – Module 5	Personal Security	Kilmore Hotel, Co. Cavan	19 th October 2023	1
AILG	Personal Security	The Rose Hotel, Tralee, Co Kerry	21 st October 2023	3
Celtic Conferences	First Home Scheme	O'Donovans Hotel, Clonakilty, Co Cork	20 th -22 nd October 2023	2
LAMA	Autumn Seminar	Ard Rí House Hotel, Tuam, Co. Galway	25 th -26 th October 2023	5
AILG – Module 6	Road Safety	Tower Hotel, Co. Waterford	16 th November 2023	2
AILG – Module 6	Road Safety	Clayton Hotel, Co.Galway	18 th November 2023	4
Celtic Conferences	Irish Social Welfare System	O'Donovans Hotel, Clonakilty, Co Cork	1 st – 3 rd December 2023	2

Appendix I Members Expenses

Payments to Elected Members from 1st January – 31st December 2023

Name of Councillor	Representational Payment / Salary (Subject to PAYE etc.)	Local Representational Allowance (T&S, Vouched & Unvouched)	Cathaoirleach / Leas Chathaoirleach / Cathaoirleach of MD Allowance (Subject to PAYE etc.)	SPC Chair Allowance (Subject to PAYE etc.)	Travel & Subsistence (Training, Conferences, Crossborder and Other Meetings)	Foreign Travel (Twinning etc., Cost of Flights and Expenses)	Security Allowance	TOTAL PAID
Cllr. Aidan Campbell	€28,724.00	€7,881.12			€0.00			€36,605.12
Cllr. Aoife McCooey	€28,724.00	€6,551.16	€7,889.02		€275.70	€2,697.89		€46,137.77
Cllr. Brian McKenna	€28,724.00	€4,572.36			€3,616.99			€36,913.35
Cllr. Cathy Bennett	€28,724.00	€5,186.52	€6,000.00		€0.00			€39,910.52
Cllr. Colm Carthy	€28,724.00	€9,041.16			€1,914.85			€39,680.01
Cllr. David Maxwell	€28,724.00	€6,186.48	€4,928.22		€4,895.49		€1,390.00	€46,124.19
Cllr. Hugh McElvaney	€28,724.00	€3,186.48			€0.00			€31,910.48
Cllr. Noel Keelan	€28,724.00	€9,186.24		€6,000.00	€1,891.51			€45,801.75
Cllr. Pat Treanor	€28,724.00	€6,808.68	€2,110.98	€6,000.00	€1,658.21			€45,301.87
Cllr. Paudge Connolly	€28,724.00	€5,858.12			€5,469.36		€2,114.91	€42,166.39
Cllr. P.J. O'Hanlon	€28,724.00	€6,486.24			€0.00			€35,210.24
Cllr. Raymond Aughey	€28,724.00	€4,436.52		€6,000.00	€0.00		€1,240.00	€40,400.52
Cllr. Richard Truell	€28,724.00	€7,554.58			€4,262.42		€1,581.19	€42,122.19
Cllr. Seamus Coyle	€28,724.00	€7,389.27			€599.54			€36,712.81
Cllr. Seamus Treanor	€28,724.00	€5,186.52			€509.90			€34,420.42
Cllr. Sean Conlon	€28,724.00	€7,386.48	€9,444.39		€3,223.20	€2,697.89		€51,475.96
Cllr. Sean Gilliland	€28,724.00	€8,089.23	€6,000.00	€6,000.00	€0.00			€48,813.23
Cllr. Peter Conlon	€28,724.00	€6,623.64			€574.53			€35,922.17
Totals	€517,032.00	€117,610.80	€36,372.61	€24,000.00	€28,891.70	€5,395.78	€6,326.10	€741,256.28

Appendix II - Financial Statement 2023

Summary of Expenditure, Income and Balances

The Capital Account expenditure of €55,099,431 reflects the investment by the Council in improving the infrastructure in the County.

Capital Account

Activity by Programme Group

	2023 Expenditure	2023 Income	2023 Net cost
Housing & Building	19,823,240	13,848,828	(5,974,412)
Roads Transportation & Safety	7,870,980	8,063,123	192,143
Water Services	186,821	77,573	(109,248)
Development Management	9,855,002	9,349,018	(505,984)
Environmental Services	685,947	1,580,637	894,690
Recreation & Amenity	13,193,241	5,479,063	(7,714,178)
Miscellaneous Services	3,484,201	1,376,865	(2,107,336)
Total Expenditure / Income	55,099,431	39,775,107	(15,324,325)

	2022	2023
Balance (Debit) / Credit January 1	11,201,204	6,118,312
Expenditure	53,739,278	55,099,431
Income	46,489,230	39,775,107
Transfers to Revenue	(1,163,037)	(1,244,402)
Net Transfers from Revenue Account	3,330,194	4,535,401
Balance (Debit) / Credit December 31	6,118,312	(5,915,014)

Revenue Account

Activity by Division

	2023 Expenditure	2023 Income	2023 Net cost
Housing & Building	11,645,203	13,123,965	1,478,762
Roads Transportation & Safety	29,363,500	22,047,709	(7,315,791)
Water Services	10,937,784	10,980,770	42,986
Development Management	14,105,078	8,477,587	(5,627,491)
Environmental Services	7,667,510	1,659,048	(6,008,462)
Recreation & Amenity	6,112,896	439,290	(5,673,606)

Agriculture, Education, Health & Welfare	578,380	434,992	(143,388)
Miscellaneous Services	4,665,807	5,342,350	676,543
Total Expenditure / Income	85,076,159	62,505,710	(22,570,448)

Net Cost of Programmes to be funded from County Rates and Local Government Fund **(22,570,448)**

	€
Rates	14,651,949
Local Property Tax	11,692,672
Surplus / (Deficit) for Year	3,774,173
Transfer to Reserves	(3,647,846)
Overall Surplus/ (Deficit)	126,327
Balance (Debit) / Credit @ 1st January	404,993
Balance (Debit) / Credit @ 31st December	531,320

Revenue Account

Income and Expenditure Account	2023		2022	
Income				
State Grants and Subsidies	46,767,176	52.6%	39,716,979	49.3%
Contributions from other Las	296,708	0.3%	258,578	0.3%
Goods and Services	15,441,827	17.4%	14,714,240	18.3%
Local Property Tax	11,692,672	13.2%	11,819,136	14.7%
Rates	14,651,949	16.5%	14,096,674	17.5%
Total Income	88,850,332	100.0%	80,605,607	100.00%
Expenditure				
Payroll Expenses	30,923,924	36.3%	29,234,053	37.51%
Operational Expenses	43,345,111	50.9%	38,721,559	49.69%
Administration Expenses	3,287,982	3.9%	3,144,214	4.03%
Establishment Expenses	1,729,119	2.0%	1,533,568	1.97%
Financial Expenses	4,754,667	5.6%	4,512,765	5.79%
Miscellaneous	1,035,357	1.2%	781,336	1.00%
Total Expenditure	85,076,159	100.0%	77,927,495	100.00%
Surplus for Year before Transfers	3,774,173		2,678,111	
Transfers to Reserves	(3,647,846)		(2,403,527)	

Overall (Deficit)/Surplus for Year	126,327	274,584
General Reserve at 1st January	404,993	130,409
General Reserve at 31st December	531,320	404,993

APPENDIX III - STATEMENT OF INTERNAL FINANCIAL CONTROL (SIFC)

Introduction

I, Robert Burns, Chief Executive (CE) of Monaghan County Council am responsible for the annual financial statement (AFS), prepared by the Director of Finance, in accordance with the accounting code of practice issued by the Minister under section 107 of the Local Government Act, 2001.

I certify that the financial statements of Monaghan County Council for the year ended 31 December 2023, are in agreement with the books of account and have been prepared in accordance with the accounting requirements of the Minister of Housing Local Government and Heritage.

The AFS are subject to external audit, by an auditor of the Local Government Audit Service, whose purpose is to form an independent opinion of the accounts and state whether the annual financial statement presents *fairly the financial position* of the local authority and of its income and expenditure for the period in question, and whether the transactions of the local authority under which they purport to have been carried out. The AFS reports on the day-to-day activities of Monaghan County Council in the form of the Statement of Comprehensive Income & Expenditure, summarised by Division. The Statement of Financial Position outlines Monaghan County Councils overall financial position as of the 31st of December 2023.

The *Statement of Comprehensive Income* represents expenditure and income on the day-to-day running of Monaghan County Council.

The key sources of income for Monaghan County Council are as follows:

	2023	2022
	€	€
Goods & Services	15,441,827	14,714,240
Grants & Subsidies	46,767,176	39,716,979
Other Contributions	296,708	258,578
Rates	14,651,949	14,096,674
Local Property Tax	11,692,672	11,819,136

Activity on the Income and Expenditure account for 2023 is as follows:

Over expenditure occurred on all Divisions with the exception of Division G. This over expenditure will require the approval of the members by resolution in accordance with the provisions of the Local Government Act, 2001. A report on the over expenditure and Transfers to Reserves will be presented at the May 2024 Council Meeting.

	2023 €	2022 €
Income	88,850,331	80,605,606
Expenditure	85,076,159	77,927,495
Transfers to Capital	(3,647,846)	(2,403,527)
Surplus/(Deficit) for	126,327	274,584
Opening Revenue Reserve	404,993	130,409
Closing Revenue Reserve	531,320	404,993

The opening revenue surplus for Monaghan County Council at 1st January 2023 was €404,993. The Council recorded a surplus of €126,327 for the year ended 31st December 2023 resulting in an increased cumulative surplus of €531,320.

The *Statement of Financial Position (Balance Sheet)* represents the total financial activity of the council for the year together with comparative year figures as appropriate.

The statement includes assets and liabilities as follows:

- Assets both recently constructed/purchased and historical assets
- Work in progress and preliminary schemes- mainly roads and housing
- Long Term Debtors – housing loans
- Current Assets- including Stock, Debtors, Cash at bank
- Current and long term liabilities- mortgage and non-mortgage loan borrowings
- Various Reserves/Balances

The Net Assets of Monaghan County Council at the end of 2023 total €1,536,334,953 and are as follows:

	2023	2022
	€	€
Fixed Assets	1,512,446,439	1,503,510,982
Works in Progress	34,123,973	14,738,931
Long Term debtors	27,817,403	23,080,190
Current Assets	14,922,447	26,584,815
Current Liabilities	(13,472,716)	(12,910,351)
Net Current Assets/ (Liabilities)	1,449,731	13,674,464
Creditors (Amounts greater than 1 year)	(39,502,593)	(35,439,961)
Net Assets/(Liabilities)	1,536,334,953	1,519,564,606

A *Statement of Funds Flow* was introduced as part of AFS 2011. While the guidance of International Accounting Standard 7 Statement of Cash Flows has been followed, the business of local authorities is substantially different to most private sector organisations and therefore some minor changes to the format have been agreed to ensure the data displayed is meaningful and useful within the local government sector.

System of Internal Financial Controls

As CE of Monaghan County Council, I acknowledge my responsibility for ensuring that an effective system of internal financial control is maintained and operated by Monaghan County Council. This responsibility is exercised in the context of the resources available to Monaghan County Council. Also, any system of internal financial control can provide only reasonable and not absolute assurance that assets are safeguarded, transactions authorised and properly recorded, and that material errors or irregularities are either prevented or would be detected in a timely manner. Maintaining the system of internal financial controls is a continuous process and the system and its effectiveness are kept under ongoing review.

Financial control environment

As CE of Monaghan County Council, I confirm that a financial control environment containing the following elements is in place:

- Financial responsibilities have been assigned at management level with corresponding accountability.
- Reporting arrangements have been established at all levels where responsibility for financial management has been assigned.
- Formal procedures have been established for reporting significant control failures and ensuring appropriate corrective action.
- There is an Audit Committee which as part of its work programme regularly review the internal financial control system.
- Procedures for all key business processes have been documented.
- There are systems in place to safeguard the assets.

Administrative Controls and Management Reporting

As CE of Monaghan County Council, I confirm that a framework of administrative procedures and regular management reporting is in place including segregation of duties and a system of delegation and accountability and, in particular, that:

- procedures for key business processes have been documented
- there are systems aimed at ensuring the security of the ICT systems
- there are systems in place to safeguard the assets of the local authority and
- there are appropriate capital investment control guidelines and formal project management disciplines in operation.

Procurement compliance

Monaghan County Council ensures that there is an appropriate and ongoing focus on good practice in tendering and purchasing and that procedures are in place to ensure compliance with all relevant procurement guidelines.

Internal audit and Audit Committee

As Chief Executive, I can confirm that Monaghan County Council has an internal audit function with appropriately trained personnel, which operates in accordance with a written charter. Its work is informed by analysis of the financial risks to which Monaghan County Council is exposed and its annual internal audit plans are based on this analysis. I am satisfied that there are procedures in place to ensure that the reports of the internal audit function are followed up.

I can confirm that Monaghan County Council has an effective audit committee which carries out an annual effectiveness review of their activities. I can also confirm that an Audit Committee is in place in accordance with the requirements of Section 122 of the Local Government Act 2001 (as amended).

The statutory functions of audit committees as set out in section 59 and 60 of the Local Government Reform Act 2014 are as follows:

- I. to review financial and budgetary reporting practices and procedures within the local authority that has established it;
- II. to foster the development of best practice in the performance by the local authority of its internal audit function;
- III. to review any audited financial statement, auditor's report or auditor's special report in relation to the local authority and assess any actions taken within that authority by its chief executive in response to such a statement or report and to report to that authority on its findings;
- IV. to assess and promote efficiency and value for money with respect to the local authority's performance of its functions; and

- V. to review systems that are operated by the local authority for the management of risks.

I recognise that the audit committee plays a crucial role in the governance framework of local authorities, particularly in the context of increased public sector accountability. They have an independent role in advising the Council on financial reporting processes, internal control, risk management and audit matters as part of the systematic review of the control environment and governance procedures of the local authority.

I acknowledge the Audit Committee's role in the risk management process and in the continuing review of the control environment and governance procedures in Monaghan County Council.

Risk and control framework

Monaghan County Council has implemented a risk management system which identifies and reports key risks and the management actions being taken to address and, to the extent possible, mitigate those risks.

A corporate risk register is in place which identifies the key risks and evaluates and grades them according to their significance. The register is reviewed and updated by the Management Team on a regular basis. There is also a risk register in place for each service division and these are also reviewed and updated on a regular basis.

The outcome of these assessments is used to plan and allocate resources to ensure risks are managed to an acceptable level. The risk register details the controls and actions needed to mitigate risks and responsibilities for the operation of controls are assigned to specific staff.

As Chief Executive, I confirm that key risks and related controls have been identified and processes have been put in place to monitor the operation of those key controls and report any identified deficiencies.

The Statement of Internal Financial Control will be included in the draft Annual Report submitted to Council members by 30 April 2023 and thereafter included in the published Annual Report prepared and adopted by the Council by 30 June 2023.

Signed by:

Dated:



26/03/24

Chief Executive