



### Management committee biographies



Cllr Robert Mc Dermott – representing Edenderry Municipal District for this strategic cycle 2021 – 2025; Robert previously represented Leinster Rugby on the Offaly Sports Partnership management committee during the last strategic cycle 2016 – 2020.

Robert’s sporting background is in rugby. He was President of Leinster Rugby for the 2015 / 2016 season; and during this time initiated a club volunteer programme, as well as the “Sean O Brien Hall of Fame”. He continues to manage the Leinster Rugby Junior Team

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Jude Feehan – one of the longest serving members of Offaly Sports Partnership, Jude has a strong sporting background with stints in Athletics, Badminton, Community Games, GAA and Rugby at club, county, provincial and national level.

He has served as Company Secretary, National Secretary, Trustee and a Board Member of Community Games; and has chaired a number of the National Community Games committees in his tenure with the organisation.

Jude has also served as Vice Chair of the sport partnership in recent years; and has been heavily involved in progressing work in the area of governance.

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Joe Meegan – representing the Technological University of the Shannon Midlands / Midwest, Joe is a lecturer in Sports Management and Sports Coaching at the Athlone Campus. He is also a tutor with Sport Ireland with a focus on coaching children in sport. In his spare time, he volunteers with the St Francis Football Club in Athlone; and enjoys distance running

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Seán Campbell – representing the private sector, Seán works for Signify Ireland Ltd as an Electrical Engineer and is in the process of qualifying as a Chartered Engineer. He has a MSc in Energy Management and a Degree in Electrical Engineering; and designs energy saving solutions for local government bodies and private companies.

Seán’s sporting background is in GAA in Donegal; playing underage football and hurling for Aodh Ruadh, Ballyshannon. He also played rugby for Ballyshannon in the Ulster leagues for over 14 years at Junior and Senior level; has won an All-Ireland Colleges medal with DIT Rugby; and has coached a ladies’ rugby team, and underage rugby and hurling teams in Donegal.

Seán moved to Tullamore in 2012 and is married with three children

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Ann Dillon – Ann is the Chief Officer of the Offaly Local Community Development Committee (Offaly LCDC) which is the parent body under which Offaly Sports Partnership is constituted. She is head of the Community & Culture section within Offaly County Council which hosts the sports partnership; and was previously head of Corporate Services, Housing and Human Resources, Offaly County Council.

Her professional background is in community and local development; while her sporting background is as a camogie, squash and volleyball player.

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Clr Clare Claffey – representing Birr Municipal District, Clare lives in Banagher with her husband and children where the family is involved in camogie, hurling, Irish dancing and soccer.

She is an advocate for family and disability services; and has a strong belief in the value and importance of sport for health and well-being.

Clr Claffey also represents Offaly County Council on the Birr Outdoor Education Centre committee

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Cllr Danny Owens – representing Tullamore Municipal District, Danny has been involved with Offaly Sports Partnership for a number of years. He has also previously served on the Board of Sport Ireland.

An avid hurler with his native Kilcormac / Killoughey, he was a member of the first Offaly Senior Hurling team to win an All-Ireland Final in 1981. He has won two All-Ireland medals, five Leinster medals and one National Hurling League medal.

As team manager, he guided his native Kilcormac / Killoughey to its first Offaly Senior Hurling title in 2012; and went on to take them to the All-Ireland final in the same year. Under Danny's management, Kilcormac / Killoughey successfully defended their county title in 2013 and 2014.

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Clodagh Armitage – representing the Health Services Executive, Clodagh is a Health Promotion and Improvement Officer. Her professional background is in promoting physical activity and health sciences; while her sporting background is hockey. She has played hockey at international school level; and continues to coach and umpire with Tullamore Hockey Club.

Clodagh is interested in supporting the work of the sports partnership in increasing participation in physical activity with a particular focus on walking and cycling across all ages and abilities in Offaly.

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Van Gillessen – one of the newest members, Van has a life-long passion for adventure sports and outdoor living. With 20 years' experience as a Canoeing Ireland qualified level 3 instructor in canoeing and kayaking, he is based in the midlands but has instructed both nationally and internationally.

In 2003, he established Tullamore Canoe Club; and is the current chair. More recently, he has established "Paddle Together", a social enterprise working with Grand Canal Adventures in Daingean, Edenderry Canoe Club and Tullamore Canoe Club to promote canoe and kayak sports in the community. He also works as a Special Olympics canoe / kayak coach, supporting athletes from Tullamore Canoe Club to participate at national and international level

Van is working towards encouraging all people regardless of ability to participate in paddling adventures

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Breege Loftus – one of the newest members, Breege has been involved in sport all her life; different sports at different life stages and in different capacities. It has kept her active, reasonably fit and is a great social way of meeting many different people.

In her role on the management committee of Offaly Sports Partnership, she intends to champion social sport for all, with a particular focus on older adults who feel they can no longer play or participate. For her, social sport is about community, inclusion and having fun.

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Ciara Ní Chéilleachair – one of the newest members, Ciara has been involved in various sports throughout her sporting career including Athletics, Community Games, Ladies Gaelic and Rowing.

Since 1985 she has competed at all levels in rowing; and was the first woman to represent Ireland in the World Junior Championships in 1989. She has been Coach and Team Manager for the national u23 team, the World Student Games and the Senior World Championships. She has also served on Rowing Ireland's High Performance Committee and the Leinster branch committee.

Ciara is keen to encourage participation for all in sport

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Eileen O'Neill – one of the newest members, Eileen joined Tullamore Golf Club on her retirement; and within a very short space of time became heavily involved in the junior section of the club. Appointed as Junior Girls Convenor she worked as part of the junior committee, and in tandem with the junior convenor for boys to make the game of golf accessible to all juniors.

In addition to her involvement with Junior Girls in her own club, Eileen has worked with the Offaly Junior Golf Academy from its inception; and as part of the academy committee was instrumental in developing the systems and structures to enable the smooth working of the Academy in advancing golf for juniors in Offaly.

Of particular interest to Eileen is the promotion of girls' golf within her club and the academy. In addition to her selection to the Offaly Sports Partnership management committee for the period 2021 – 2025, she continues to support the development of junior golf within Tullamore Golf Club, and the Offaly Junior Golf Academy

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Carol Scott – one of the newest members, Carol is a registered midwife and nurse. Her interest in sport comes from her daughter’s passion for sport. Her daughter swims, takes part in athletics events, plays basketball and is involved in kayaking and canoe polo with the Tullamore Canoe Club.

As well as being a busy mum on the road, Carol is a volunteer with Special Olympics supporting her daughter’s participation in the range of sports above. She hopes to represent people with disabilities on the committee, ensuing that sport becomes more inclusive for all



Ray Spain – one of the newest members, Ray is best known for his involvement in hurling. He played for Birr, where he grew up; and for Drumcullen, Tullamore and Offaly. He has also played inter club tennis, basketball, golf and badminton. More recently, he has been involved in coaching and management across a variety of sports namely camogie, hurling, hockey and squash.

Ray has served on the committees of various clubs; and is an active hill walker, cyclist and golfer.