



# ANNUAL REPORT 2020

Compiled by staff of  
Offaly Sports Partnership



Offaly Sports Partnership is a multi-sectoral subcommittee of Offaly County Council. It is hosted by the Community & Culture Section of Offaly County Council; and receives its core funding from Sport Ireland.

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## **2020, A Year in Review**

### **Introduction**

Above all else, 2020 will be remembered for the worldwide impact of the Covid19 pandemic with populations living under lockdown and restriction in their daily life. Despite these challenges, Offaly Sports Partnership strived to continue to deliver an inclusive physical activity and sport programme for underrepresented groups, schools, clubs and organisations. Responding to the challenges caused by the pandemic was to the fore in the work of the sports partnership. The importance of staying active was essential to the mental health of the county in a most difficult year.

However, much of the work of the Offaly Sports Partnership in 2020 occurred on a start / stop basis. The sports partnership “hit the ground running” at the start of the year before the first lockdown in March. Thereafter it supported the efforts of the Community and Culture section, Offaly County Council to ensure that helplines and supports for vulnerable groups were in place. The sports partnership delivered a range of responses to help groups and individual stay active. It ran socially distanced fitness camps, 1:1 physical activity supports for people with disabilities and managed a return to sport grant scheme for local sports clubs and organisations supporting the delivery of physical activity programmes. A number of planned programmes had to be deferred because of restrictions, and health and safety concerns

### **Investment in the year**

Continuing investment possibilities through various agencies including Dormant Accounts, Department of Transport, Tourism & Sport, Healthy Ireland, the Health Services Executive and Sport Ireland resulted in Offaly Sports Partnership securing €588k in financial contributions and €402k of benefit in kind contributions.

## **2020 Highlights**

Highlights of 2020 included: -

- the hosting of Operation Transformation in Offaly
- integration projects including the third annual Diversity Games delivered in conjunction with Athletics Ireland and the Athlone International Arena
- the delivery of Offaly's Longest Day physical activity challenge supported by Healthy Ireland
- the delivery of socially distanced summer fitness camps in a Covid compliant environment
- the delivery of 1:1 physical activity supports for people with disabilities in a Covid compliant environment
- the delivery of physical activity programmes for disadvantaged communities, older adults, people of an ethnic minority, and women and girls in a Covid compliant environment
- the delivery of Healthy Ireland funded physical activity and sport programmes as part of the Healthy Offaly programme
- the delivery of sports leader training for over 250 transition year students in post primary schools across the county
- supports for 45 clubs as part of Sport Ireland's covid19 return to sport scheme administered by the sports partnership

## **Going forward into 2021**

Facing into another uncertain year as a result of the ongoing Covid19 pandemic, Offaly Sports Partnership will be: -

- launching its newest strategic plan for the period 2021 – 2025
- formally adopting Sport Ireland's governance code
- establishing a new community sports and physical activity hub in Daingean following the allocation of Sport Ireland Dormant Accounts funding
- supporting clubs through the administration of a second covid19 return to sport grant scheme; and a general club development grant scheme
- continuing to promote inclusive physical activity and sport programmes for underrepresented groups including disadvantaged communities, older adults, people with disabilities, people of an ethnic minority background, the unemployed, women and girls, and youth at risk in a Covid compliant environment

## **Management committee, working groups & staffing**

### **Offaly Sports Partnership management committee**

In 2020, the management committee of the Sports Partnership comprised representation from: -

- Offaly County Council – representatives included Martin Daly and Brian Pey across the year. The management committee would like to acknowledge the work of Martin Daly, Senior Executive Officer, Community and Culture, Offaly County Council in his tenure as Offaly County Council’s representative to the management committee of Offaly Sports Partnership; and wish him well in his retirement.  
The management committee would also like to thank Brian Pey for his inputs to the management committee in Martin Daly’s stead
  - Offaly County Council public representation - Cllr John Carroll, Birr Municipal District; Cllr Noel Cribbin, Edenderry Municipal District; and Cllr Danny Owens, Tullamore Municipal District
  - An Garda Síochana (one representative) - Sgt David Scahill
  - Health Services Executive (one representative) - Clodagh Armitage
  - Laois / Offaly Education and Training Board (one representative) - Cllr Eddie Fitzpatrick
  - Local Community Development Committee Liaison—Cllr Declan Harvey
  - The private business sector (three representatives). Representatives included Sean Campbell; Pippa Hackett; and Sean Loughnane
  - The sports sector (six representatives). Representatives included Darren Butler, Athletics Offaly; Eamonn Brady, Combined Counties Football League, Football Association of Ireland; Robert Mc Dermott, Leinster Rugby; Miriam O Callaghan, Offaly Camogie; Jude Feehan, Community Games; and Marie Moran, Offaly Rowing Club
  - Third level sector (one representative) - Joe Meegan, Athlone Institute of Technology
  - Public Participation Network disability sector representative – Sheila Foy
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### **Executive committee & Working groups of Offaly Sports Partnership**

Following the onset of Covid19 health restrictions, the 2020 executive committee comprising Miriam O Callaghan (Chair), Pippa Hackett (Vice Chair), Darren Butler (Financial monitor), Martin Daly / Brian Pey (Offaly County Council representative), Cllr Declan Harvey (Offaly Local Community Development Committee liaison) and Eamonn Bray (Sports representative) oversaw the work of the sports partnership between April and October 2020. As part of this work, the Executive drafted standing orders to allow for remote meetings of the management committee of the sports partnership.

Following the Sports Partnership's AGM (deferred twice in April and September due to covid19 health restrictions) in December 2020, a new Executive committee was elected comprising of Robert Mc Dermott (Chair), Jude Feehan (Vice chair), Darren Butler (Financial monitor), Brian Pey (Offaly County Council representative), Cllr Declan Harvey (Offaly Local Community Development Committee liaison) and Miriam O Callaghan (Sports representative).

The management committee would like to acknowledge Miriam O Callaghan's stewardship of Offaly Sports Partnership since her election as Chair in 2011; and Eamonn Brady's tenure as sports representative to the executive committee. Whilst Ms O Callaghan has stepped down as Chair, she continues as a member of the executive committee in her new role as sports representative, replacing Eamonn Brady.

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## Staffing in 2020

In 2020, Offaly County Council continued to facilitate the employment of Offaly Sports Partnership staff.

The Coordinator and Administrator roles were 100% funded by Sport Ireland; with Eamonn Henry and Olivia Murphy continuing in their respective positions. The Sports Inclusion Development and Community Sports Development Officer roles were funded to a maximum value of €35,000 each; with Jean Brady (Sports Inclusion Development Officer) and Denise Coghill (Community Sports Development Officer) continuing in their respective positions.

The Healthy Offaly Coordinator funded by Healthy Ireland continued to be attached to Offaly Sports Partnership.

In the second half of the year, Offaly Sports Partnership were also informed that they had been successful in securing funding from Sport Ireland to host an ASPIRE graduate placement in 2021. This placement was advertised in quarter 4 of 2020, and it is anticipated that interviews will be held in January 2021 to fill the position

Offaly County Council continued to facilitate the FAI's employment of a "Soccer in the Community Officer"; and the extension of contracts for Leinster Rugby Club Community Rugby Officers. Gary Seery, FAI development officer continued to roll out grassroots soccer programmes; while Leinster Rugby's club community rugby officers continued to roll out grassroots rugby throughout the county.

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### **South Offaly sports hub / Contracted tutors**

Much of the work of the Sports Partnership throughout the year was also made possible through the efforts of the south Offaly sports hub and contracted tutors who assist us in the delivery of a range of actions, activities and events.

The south Offaly sports hub, supported by Sport Ireland Dormant Accounts, supported the delivery of a range of outreach programmes to schools, clubs and organisations; as well as continuing to secure greater usage of the facilities at the Crinkle Sport and Recreation Centre by local schools, clubs and organisations.

Contracted tutors supported the delivery of education and training programmes, the Healthy Ireland funded “fit class” programme, the sports inclusion disability programme, school programmes and women in sport programmes

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The management committee and staff of



wish to express their thanks to all those that helped in the delivery of our programmes in 2020.

*“Go raibh míle maith agaibh!”*

## **Implementation of Active Offaly 2016 - 2020**

### **Strategic plan and long term framework guiding the work of Offaly Sports Partnership**

#### **Pillar 1 - Instil fundamentals & Improve youth fitness**

Offaly Sports Partnership is committed to instilling fundamentals and improving fitness levels among young people. A range of actions in the areas of instilling fundamentals, monitoring youth fitness and providing complementary schools physical activity programmes were written into our operational plan for 2020 to address this pillar.

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#### ***Instilling fundamentals***

Unfortunately, with the advent of Covid19, many of the Sports Partnership's schools' fundamentals programmes were cancelled as tutors were not permitted to attend schools in person to deliver programmes.

A similar situation occurred with the FAI soccer in the community officer and Leinster Rugby's club community rugby officers who whilst not in a position to attend schools in person to deliver sport specific fundamental movement skills programmes did transfer a number of their programmes online.

Prior to Covid19 health restrictions being enacted, the FAI soccer in the community officer delivered:

- primary school coaching for 120 pupils
- futsal for 45 young people between the ages of 10 and 16 years

The Leinster Rugby Community / Club Rugby Officer programme recommenced in September with 27 primary schools and one secondary school availing of tag rugby programmes to year end

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### ***Monitoring youth fitness***

Offaly Sports Partnership's Fit Class programme funded by Healthy Irelands was designed as a targeted physical activity intervention in up to 10 primary schools across Offaly. The programme commenced delivery in January 2020 following the recruitment of a "Fit Class" coordinator, Ailsa Hughes.

45 primary schools in Offaly expressed interest in participating on the programme. The fit class coordinator commenced programme delivery in three schools in advance of February midterm; while the south Offaly sports hub (supported by Sport Ireland dormant accounts funding) agreed to support delivery of the fit class programme in schools across south Offaly.

Following enactment of Covid19 restrictions in mid-March, face to face delivery ceased; however, in an effort to maintain programme delivery between mid-March and June, the fit class coordinator developed a range of online physical activity challenges (15 challenges in total) for children, young people, adults and families. Over 19,000 people viewed the challenges on the Sports Partnership's social media channels, Facebook/OffalySportsPartnership and Twitter/@OffalySP; while over 1,700 people viewed the challenges on Instagram/@OffalySP.

In school delivery recommenced in September / October 2020 in 11 schools in the south Offaly sport hub catchment area with plans put in place to deliver county wide after the Halloween mid-term. However, based on health and safety advice around individual tutors delivering in a multitude of schools, the county wide delivery aspect of this programme was deferred to 2021

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### ***Complementary schools' physical activity programmes***

Prior to Covid19 health restrictions being enacted, the FAI soccer in the community officer delivered SPAR 5s for 102 teams (60 schoolboy teams and 42 schoolgirl teams) in Offaly. 480 boys and 336 girls participated in the SPAR 5s programme this year

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## Pillar 2 - Increase adult & older adult participation

A range of actions in the areas of increasing adult and older adult participation, and the delivery of national physical activity programmes locally were written into our operational plan for 2020 to address this pillar. Key achievements under this pillar include: -

- in 2020, Tullamore played host to Operation Transformation. The Healthy Offaly coordinator liaised with the Operation Transformation film crew in the delivery of the seven “ad break” challenges, leader challenges and the national walk. Over 1,500 people participated across the range of activities on offer.



*Operation Transformation national walk day, Offaly*

- the FAI soccer in the community development officer delivered walking football programmes for 30 adults in two locations

- Denise Coghill, Community Sports Development Officer supported the delivery of a range of physical activity and recreational sport activities for 225 adults and older adults across the county.

Unfortunately, Covid19 had a significant impact on the Sports Partnership's work with older adults. The requirement for older adults to cocoon from mid-March had an immediate effect on programme delivery with all programmes cancelled; while the fact that many older adults may have other underlying conditions was a cause for concern during the reopening and the recommencement of the delivery of physical activity and recreational sport activities for this target group.

However, in an effort to support older adults to keep active during the initial and ongoing cocooning periods, Offaly Sports Partnership posted links to Age & Opportunity's active minutes programme on our social media channels. The programme commenced in March with sessions delivered three times per week on a Monday, Wednesday and Friday at 11am.



- financially supported by Healthy Ireland, this project was designed to encourage people to achieve 20 days of physical activity in the run up to the Longest Day on the 20<sup>th</sup> June 2020. Over 800 people signed up for the challenge. Following the success of the programme, it is anticipated that a similar programme will be run in 2021

- a significantly reduced programme of Bike Week events was supported in September



*Grand Canal Wheelers tour de Peatlands*



Sport Ireland also launched a four-week home exercise plan for older adults in October.

Following publication, copies of the plan were included in the October issues of Offaly's Age Friendly magazine which was delivered to 4,000 older adults across the county by An Post

### **Pillar 3 - Include the least active**

By far, Offaly Sports Partnership's largest area of work continues to be our commitment to delivering measures to involve, sustain and mainstream the inclusion of underrepresented groups in sport and physical activity in the county. As with pillars 1 and 2, the pandemic impacted this area of work. Nonetheless interventions reaching five of the seven underrepresented groups<sup>1</sup> identified in Offaly Sports Partnership's strategic plan were delivered.

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#### ***Low income communities***

Continuing support from Sport Ireland Dormant Accounts in 2020 ensured that the south Offaly sports hub, established in 2017, continued to outreach physical activity and sport programmes to low income communities in Birr and its environs. Among the programmes outreached were school fitness programmes and socially distanced summer fitness camps.

Denise Coghill, Community Sports Development Officer coordinated the delivery of socially distanced summer fitness camps for 100 children in Edenderry and Tullamore with the support of Derry Rovers Soccer Club and Tullamore SportsLink Ltd.

The FAI soccer in the community development officer delivered a late night league programme for 45 participants; however, this programme was cancelled after the first week as a result of the enactment of Covid19 restrictions. Two of four summer soccer camps for 150 children were delivered; the remaining summer soccer camps were cancelled due to a local Covid19 lockdown across Offaly

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***Older people*** (see increasing adult and older adult participation under pillar 2 heretofore)

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<sup>1</sup> Underrepresented groups identified in Offaly Sports Partnership's strategic plan, Active Offaly 2016 – 2020 include low income communities (rural and urban); older adults; people with a disability; people of an ethnic minority including Travellers; the unemployed; women and girls; and youth at risk

***People with a disability***

Jean Brady, Offaly Sports Partnership's sports inclusion development officer delivered a range of sport and physical activity programmes supporting the participation of 250 people with physical, sensory and intellectual disabilities; as well as those experiencing mental health difficulties.

Again, Covid19 had a significant impact on the Sports Partnership's work with people with disabilities. The requirement for people with disabilities to cocoon from mid-March had an immediate effect on programme delivery with all programmes cancelled; while the fact that many people with disabilities may have other underlying conditions was a cause for concern during the reopening and the recommencement of the delivery of physical activity and recreational sport activities for this target group.

In an effort to offset the difficulties experienced in delivering physical activity and recreational sport activities for people with disabilities, the sports partnership developed a range of 1:1 physical activity supports for people with disabilities and these were delivered to 50 people with disabilities by three tutors in the second half of the year.

For more information on the Offaly Sports Partnership's sports inclusion disability programme see appendix 1, sports inclusion development programme update for 2020 or contact Jean on 057 93 57463 or 086 7912508

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***People of an ethnic minority*** (see pillar 4, integration & celebration)

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## Women & Girls

The sports partnership continued to prioritise participation of women and girls in 2020. Activities delivered include: -

- Offaly Sports Partnership / Leinster Rugby second annual tag rugby blitz for 100 post primary girls from five schools on the 5<sup>th</sup> March



*Offaly Sports Partnership / Leinster Rugby second annual tag rugby blitz*

- Tullamore Golf Club “girls in golf” programme – unfortunately this programme has been deferred twice due to Covid19 restrictions. It is anticipated that the programme will now take place in 2021
- Denise Coghill, Community Sports Development Officer coordinated the delivery of womens’ fitness programmes including the 150-minute physical activity challenge with Pauline Curley for 100 women across various locations in the county between September and October

In addition, the FAI officer and Leinster Rugby community club rugby officers continued to deliver their soccer and rugby women in sport programmes. Among the programmes delivered were glow football for 55 girls from the Sacred Heart School Tullamore and walking football for 13 women; and the aforementioned Offaly Sports Partnership / Leinster Rugby tag rugby blitz for post primary girls.

## **Pillar 4 - Integrate & Celebrate**

In keeping with Offaly Sports Partnership's vision, mission and equality statement, we seek to ensure that people of all backgrounds and abilities living in Offaly will have the opportunity to integrate into, and be visible within our county's organised sports clubs and facilities.

Furthermore, as a county which loves sport and strives towards a more vibrant sports culture, the Sports Partnership will seek to acknowledge and celebrate the achievements of Offaly's sports' people.

A range of actions in the areas of integration and celebration were written into our operational plan for 2020 to address this pillar.

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### ***Integration***

#### ***1. People with a disability***

There was no focus on establishing integrated clubs as in other years; instead, Jean Brady our Sports Inclusion Development Officer worked with schools to support pupils / students and teachers to deliver integrated programmes as follows: -

- adapted physical activity workshops for teachers and special needs assistants (SNAs) in primary schools. These workshops introduced teachers and SNAs to adapted games and sports which could then be rolled out as part of PE classes for special education needs units, and integrated PE classes across the school. 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> class pupils in Geashill NS were also introduced to playground leadership and encouraged to lead playground activities with junior classes and their Cairdeas (special education needs unit for children with hearing difficulties) class



*adapted physical activity workshops for teachers and special needs assistants*

- disability in sport awareness training for TYs which gave the students the skills to deliver integrated physical activity programmes with the Irish Wheelchair Association and primary schools such as bocchia and inter schools' sports days for children with disabilities



*Disability awareness training – Oaklands Community College & Colaiste na Sionna (Banagher College)*

Jean also worked with a number of national governing bodies of sport, leisure facilities and community coaching volunteers in the delivery of inclusive sport programmes for people with disabilities. Among the programmes delivered were the Aura Tullamore / National Council for the Blind in Ireland Offaly Branch gym programme for people with sensory disabilities. Unfortunately, due to Covid19 restrictions, multi activity inclusive summer camps for children and young people with disabilities and their siblings, a staple of the sports partnership's summer sports inclusion development programme, could not be delivered in 2020.



## 2. People of an ethnic minority

Continuing funding opportunities with Dormant Accounts, via Athletics Ireland has ensured that Offaly Sports Partnership has been in a position to keep supporting our range of programmes which encourage children and young people of an ethnic minority to participate in mainstream sport.

Key programmes delivered in 2020 include: -

- the Integrated Academy for Athletics Performance (IAAP) supported 12 young athletes with individual training plans; and their ongoing involvement in the sport throughout the pandemic
- diversity games days for primary and post primary schools in the Athlone international indoor arena. The post primary school event took place on the 23<sup>rd</sup> January with 500 students from 14 post primary schools in attendance; while the primary school event took place on the 30<sup>th</sup> January with 500 pupils from 20 primary schools in attendance



*Diversity games days*

In addition, the FAI officer continued to deliver soccer programmes with a focus on the integration of people of an ethnic minority background into soccer. Among the programmes delivered were FARE week in six primary and two post primary schools, and three clubs

## **Pillar 5 - Improve capacity & Inform the sector**

In keeping with the primary functions of sports partnerships as identified by Sport Ireland, this pillar is concerned with improving the capacity of the wider sports and physical activity sector by providing education and training programmes; supporting clubs and organisations in securing funding; and acting as an information hub for the sector.

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### ***Education & training***

Covid19 health restrictions had a significant impact on Offaly Sports Partnership's education and training work in 2020: -

- two child protection workshops were held for 30 volunteers from eight clubs in quarter 1 of 2020. Thereafter, no further courses were delivered; however, Sport Ireland developed online versions of the three programme elements (safeguarding 1 – child protection, safeguarding 2 – club welfare officer, and safeguarding 3 – designated liaison person) and it is anticipated that Offaly Sports Partnership will recommence delivery of online child protection workshops in 2021
- two secondary schools – Colaiste na Sionna and Oaklands College - participated in disability awareness training with the intention of supporting TY students to support Jean Brady, Sports Inclusion Development Officer with Offaly Sports Partnership in the delivery of inter schools' activities and adapted recreational sporting activities for people with disabilities in their communities
- the dormant accounts funded community coaching programme was deferred for delivery to 2021
- 11 dormant account funded sports leadership training programmes for 251 students from four secondary schools took place in quarter 4 of 2020



*Colaiste na Sionna disability awareness training certification*

With regard to sport specific training, Offaly Sports Partnership with the support of Cycling Ireland delivered Ride Leader training for cycling clubs and staff of the sports partnership; while the FAI soccer in the community officer delivered 22 coach education programmes for 426 club volunteers



*Ride Leader training*

## Funding supports

Offaly Sports Partnership continued to support clubs to secure funding under sports capital and local funding schemes.

In an effort to support clubs returning to sport, the sports partnership administered a Covid19 return to sport scheme on behalf of Sport Ireland. 42 clubs were approved for funding to the value of €47,996 to assist them in their return to sport. Clubs supported included: -

1. Ballyfore GAA
2. Belmont GAA
3. Birr Camogie
4. Birr Development Co,  
t/a Birr Leisure Centre
5. Birr Golf
6. Birr Rugby
7. Birr Social
8. Birr Town Soccer
9. Bracknagh GAA
10. Camcor Warriors, Special Olympics
11. CCM Racing
12. Clara Ladies Football
13. Crinkle Sport & Recreation Centre
14. Derryarkin Motocross
15. Derry Rovers Soccer
16. Drumcullen Camogie
17. Drumcullen GAA
18. Eden Pitch & Putt
19. Edenderry Juvenile Athletics
20. Irish Parachute Club
21. Kinnitty Camogie
22. Midlands United Powerchair Soccer
23. Moneygall Soccer
24. Mucklagh Community Development
25. Naomh Mhuire Running
26. Naomh Molaoise Ladies Football
27. Offaly Rowing
28. Rhode Ladies Football
29. Seir Kieran GAA
30. Shamrocks GAA
31. Shamrocks Ladies Football
32. Shannonbridge GAA
33. Shinrone GAA
34. St Brigid's (Edenderry) Boxing
35. St Broughan's Ladies Football
36. Tubber GAA, Offaly
37. Tullamore Badminton
38. Tullamore Boxing
39. Tullamore GAA
40. Tullamore Sports Link
41. Tullamore Swim
42. Wilmer Tennis

A number of other clubs also drew down the balance of their outstanding club development funding first allocated in 2019 to support them in the delivery of club planning, coach training and women in sport supports within their clubs

## **Conclusion**

2020 proved to be an extremely tricky year in the life of Offaly Sports Partnership. National and local lockdowns, with ongoing health restrictions resulted in much of the work of the sports partnership being delivered on a start / stop basis or deferred / cancelled. Despite this, Offaly Sports Partnership rose to the challenge and identified new and innovative ways of delivering our sport and physical activity programmes across the county in schools, communities and for underrepresented groups. The sports partnership via Sport Ireland also supported clubs and organisations with funding in the reopening of sport and physical activity.

The ongoing impacts of the Covid19 pandemic will be experienced again in 2021 and possibly beyond. Much of our programme funding will be carried over for spend in 2021 and will focus on supporting schools, clubs, organisations and individuals in reintegrating into sport and physical activity.

Sincere thanks to the Executive committee of Offaly Sports Partnership who “kept the show on the road” throughout an extremely difficult six / nine-month period when restrictions were at their strictest. Offaly Sports Partnership has emerged stronger with protocols in place now for the hosting of remote meetings of the sports partnership management and executive committees, and working groups; and a new Executive committee to lead us into our next strategic cycle, 2021 – 2025.

We look forward to delivering a range of sport and physical activity programmes in 2021; and supporting schools, clubs, communities, underrepresented groups and individuals to get back into sport and physical activity in what can only be described as our new normal.

## Appendix 1

### Sports Inclusion Development Programme 2020

*(submitted to the Health Services Executive as a condition of their contribution towards Offaly Sports Partnership's Sports Inclusion Development Programme)*

Offaly Sports Partnership's Sports Inclusion Development Programme is supported by



#### Fáilte / Welcome

Jean Brady (pictured opposite), Offaly Sports Partnership's Sports Inclusion Development Officer (SIDO) continued in her role in 2020.

Ms Brady's role was made possible with funding from Sport Ireland, the Health Services Executive and Offaly County Council.

The SIDO's role is to: -

1. support the delivery of physical activity and sport programmes with the aim of increasing the number of people with disabilities (physical, sensory and intellectual; as well as those experiencing mental health difficulties) participating in sport and physical activity); and
2. create opportunities for improved quality of life for other target groups (e.g. older adults, women and girls, and youth at risk) of the Sports Partnership

In an effort to address these objectives, the SIDO has delivered a range of physical activity and sport programmes for 250 people with disabilities, and 250 people from other target groups of the Sports Partnership. The following pages will give an overview of the SIDO's work in 2020.

**Healthy choices, Healthy Community / Healthy Body, Healthy Mind programme:**

Healthy choices, Healthy Community / Healthy Body, Healthy Mind programmes kicked off in Tullamore on Monday, 13th January; and in Birr on the 17th February

**"Healthy Choices - Healthy Community"**  
8 week programme in association with  
Tullamore Community Mental Health Team, Offaly Local Development Company  
and Offaly Sports Partnership

**Begins: January 13th**  
**Ends: March 4th**



Healthy cooking demonstration once a week

Monday - exercise session (Town Park 11.15am)  
Wednesday - exercise session (Town Park 11.15am)  
Wednesday - cooking demo (Offaly Local Dev Company 2pm)  
Thursday - dog walking group (Canal Line 10am)

**3 exercise sessions per week**



Contact:



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**"Healthy Body - Healthy Mind"**  
8 week programme in association with  
Birr Community Mental Health Centre & Offaly Sports Partnership

Would you like to take part in a Walking Challenge?  
and make some healthy changes to your diet?



Healthy Eating Tips from a qualified Nutritionist

**... Come join us ...**  
**Mondays - 10.30am walk in Birr Castle**  
**Thursdays - 1.30pm Healthy Eating Tips in Birr C.M.H.C**  
**Start date - February 17th**

**Group Walks in Birr Castle**



For more Information:  
Ethna Carroll  
Senior O.T.  
0579120540



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The programme, run in conjunction with the HSE and Offaly Local Development Company offered a wide variety of people including local disability services, active retirement groups and those in the community a chance to exercise in a fun group setting and gain tips on healthy eating and cooking.

The programme was a great success with over 50 people of varied ages and abilities taking part across the two programmes

### ***Multi Sports Programme with the Cairdeas classes in Geashill N.S***

On Tuesday the 14th January I began a six week multi sport programme with the Cairdeas deaf unit in Geashill National School.

Each week the group were introduced to a new activity including sportshall athletics, bowling, bucket ball, boccia, sitting volleyball and Scooch.

It is hoped the teachers will continue the activities with the group once the six weeks has ended.



### ***The Public Sector Training Workshop***

I attended The Public Sector Duty Training Workshop in Tullamore Court Hotel on 15th January. The workshop was attended by Offaly County Council and members of the Midlands Conversation Group. 40 people attended the workshop which was led by Liam Cornally and Jimmy Dooner.



Following on from the training workshop I took part in the review process: Checking Offaly County Council for Accessibility on the 22nd January.

### ***NCBI Aura Fitness classes***

On Wednesday 29th January the NCBI members resumed their gym programme in Aura Leisure Centre Tullamore.



This is an excellent programme where participants have the opportunity to experience a range of classes including spinning, light weight exercises, core strengthening and flexibility exercises.

This is also a great way to promote social inclusion and integration in leisure facilities

### ***Multi Sports Programme with Rehab Care***

On Thursday 30<sup>th</sup> January a six week Multi Sports Programme began in Mucklagh Community Centre with participants from Rehab Care in Tullamore.



The group will take part in a range of activities throughout the six weeks including walking football, chair volleyball, pickleball, badminton, scooch and circuit training.

## Rock Steady Boxing

Following on from our successful Rock Steady Boxing taster session before Christmas a new programme began on Thursday 30<sup>th</sup> January in Tullamore.

**Rock Steady Boxing**  
for people with Parkinson's

Calling all people with parkinson's

- \* Underground Combat Sports Club Tullamore
- \* Thursdays
- \* 11am - 12.30pm

**ROCK STEADY BOXING**  
MIDLANDS

Rock Steady Boxing is a non contact fitness programme designed for people with Parkinson's. The exercises involved in Rock Steady Boxing combine physical activity and the learning of new skills which require the brain to adapt to new challenges and routines. Besides being fun and socially engaging, some of the reported benefits include increased independence and confidence as well as physical improvements.

For further information contact Jean  
(0867912508) (jbrady@offalycoco.ie)



Rock Steady Boxing is designed to help improve the movement skills and speech of people with Parkinson's.

Many thanks to our excellent instructor Mirek for all his great work with this group.

### ***Operation Transformation Ad Break Challenge***

On the 15th February the Operation Transformation team held their last Ad Break Challenge in Tullamore.

It was great to have our local Special Olympic gold medalist Oisin Feery lead out the ad break challenge and speak to the crowd and camera on how people should try to stay active.



### ***Playground Leader Training – Geashill Ns***

On the 17th and 19th February I delivered playground leader training to 15 fifth and sixth class students from Geashill NS.

Throughout the training I explained effective leadership, communication and organisation skills and how they are paramount when leading a group. I also demonstrated fun games that the children could lead on the playground during lunch breaks and in the morning before school began.

As there is a deaf unit in the school there was also an element of disability awareness training involved. I challenged the children to come up with different communication methods and ways of delivering each game to make sure that all activities would be inclusive for all children in the school.

### ***PWD Boccia Blitz***

Offaly Sports Partnerships annual boccia blitz for people with disabilities took place on the 18th February in Mucklagh Community Centre.

Over 60 people participated in the event from seven centres around the County including centres from Tullamore, Ballinagar, Edenderry and Birr. A great day was had by all.



Congratulations to IWA 1 who won the cup final on the day and the Phoenix Centre who won the shield final.

### ***Disability Awareness Training and Adapted Physical Activity Training***

#### ***Oaklands Community College Edenderry***

Throughout February three TY classes from Oaklands Community College in Edenderry completed disability awareness and adapted physical activity training.



During the six sessions the TYs learned about working with people who have a disability and how to adapt activities to include everyone

### ***Disability Awareness Training - Banagher College***

Disability Awareness Training was delivered to 70 students from Colaiste Sionna in Banagher at the end of February.



The students were taught how to deliver adapted physical activity games, run tournaments, play and referee Boccia.

A big thank you to Geraldine Walsh from the Irish Wheelchair Association who assisted with the training.

### ***Introduction to Boccia – Bracknagh Community Centre***

On the 25<sup>th</sup> of February I visited Bracknagh Community Centre where I introduced them to the game of Boccia.



Over 30 men and women turned out on the night and really enjoyed the game. The group have decided to meet up every Tuesday to play Boccia together and hope to run a community league in the future.

### ***IWA & Banagher College Boccia League***

The Irish Wheelchair Association are participating in a Boccia league with Transition Year students from Banagher College at the moment.

The programme began with a training day for the students involving learning how to play and officiate a boccia game. They also learned how to organise and run a tournament.

On Tuesday 4th March the first round of the league was held and a great time was had by all. The programme will run over four weeks with the winners being presented with the trophy on the final day.



This programme is an excellent way of promoting inclusion while also developing organisation and communication skills among the students. The participants from the Irish Wheelchair Association really enjoy interacting with the students and there is a great element of competition between the teams.

With the enactment of Covid19 health restrictions, the requirement for older adults and people with disabilities to cocoon from mid-March had an immediate effect on programme delivery with all programmes cancelled; while the fact that many older adults and people with disabilities may have other underlying conditions was a cause for concern during the reopening and the recommencement of the delivery of physical activity and recreational sport activities for these target groups. Despite these concerns, Offaly Sports Partnership continued to deliver a range of physical activity and recreational sport activities as follows: -

### ***Home Workout Newsletter***

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**Offaly Sports Partnership Home Workout 1**

This physical activity handout includes some gentle exercises that can be completed on a daily basis. The exercises will help maintain your mobility, strength and balance. All exercises can be done while sitting or standing. Remember to go at your own pace, breath normally and stop if you feel unwell. We hope you enjoy our workout and we look forward to bringing you a new home workout every 2 weeks 😊

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**Step 1 - Warm Up**

**Chair/Standing March**

1. Begin a marching action by raising your right foot and placing it down and then raising your left foot and placing it down.
2. Find a rhythm that is comfortable for you & continue for up to 60 seconds.



Offaly Sports Partnership were delighted to be able to contribute to the Offaly Age Friendly Alliance Newsletter 'Connecting the Faithful'.

This was a fortnightly newsletter which was delivered by An Post to those cocooning during Covid 19.

Through our Sports Inclusion Programme we created home workouts which were included in the newsletter to encourage those cocooning to keep active at home.

### ***1:1 physical activity supports for people with disabilities and older adults***

With the ongoing need for people with disabilities and older adults to cocoon in the latter half of 2020, Offaly Sports Partnership developed a programme of 1:1 physical activity supports these target groups delivered by three tutors.

47 people (including people with disabilities and older adults) were supported to avail of personalised 1:1 physical activity supports.

Each individual programme entailed an initial consultation, an eight week personalised exercise plan and a follow up consultation to discuss the plan and address any queries which may arise. Ad hoc follow ups were also carried out during the course of the programme should such a need be identified as part of the initial consultation. Some of the programme testimonials are outlined below: -

- ***“Parent of Male & Female 7 & 9 years of age:*** *Programme exceeded my expectation. Fantastic Programme tailored to childrens’ needs – minimal equipment which is excellent for me as a parent. Clear cut concise nature was fantastic to do at home. Instructor was amazing and worked so hard with children.”*
- ***“Parent of Female 18-24 years of age:*** *I found this programme excellent. Initially (child) only did minimum activity and was out of breath very easily. Gradually (child) improved and (tutor) changed the programme occasionally. To see (child) smile and run to (tutor) to do activities is uplifting for all our family. It is nice to see special needs finally thought of, a week is a long time to fill in for my kids and (tutor) was excellent and (child) did better than I ever could imagine. Even tried exercises she can’t master. With encouragement and music (child) thoroughly enjoyed it. I have tried evening classes with (child) but unfortunately between pace, noise level and others at it, it didn’t work out. Would love this programme regularly as having someone come in to do the class more motivating than ourselves. A massive thanks to (tutor) for showing love, care and respect to my two and speaking to them rather than over them.”*
- ***“Male 65-74 years of age:*** *I have really enjoyed the programme – my tutor was excellent. They explained everything thoroughly – I will keep up these exercises in the future.”*

## **Sport Ireland “activity for all” & “older adult home exercise” resources**

Sport Ireland launched two activity resources in October: -

- i. activity for all resource for people with disabilities
- ii. older adult four-week home exercise plan
- iii.



Both resources were widely distributed via Offaly Sports Partnership website and social media channels; with copies also made available via Offaly’s Age Friendly fortnightly magazine distribution network, and to older adults participating on outdoor fitness programmes and people with disabilities participating on the 1:1 physical activity support programme

### **Keep Well in the Community**



As part of the Keep Well in the Community initiative running from November 2020 to March 2021 Offaly Sports Partnership disseminated 150 “keep well” packs to people who participated on the sports inclusion development programme, and programmes of the sports partnership targeting older adults and women in an attempt to encourage them to remain physically active in the run up to the shortest day of the year (21<sup>st</sup> December); and on into the new year, with a focus on getting them out and about again when Operation Transformation hits the screen in January 2021

For more information on the Sports Inclusion Development Programme, contact Jean Brady, Sports Inclusion Development Officer, Offaly Sports Partnership on 086 7912508 or by email to [jbrady@offalycoco.ie](mailto:jbrady@offalycoco.ie)

## Appendix 2

### Community Sports Development Programme 2020



Denise Coghill (pictured opposite), Offaly Sports Partnership's Community Sports Development Officer (CSDO) continued in her role in 2020

Ms Coghill's role was made possible with funding from Sport Ireland. The CSDO's role is to work towards increasing participation by various communities; and people from other low participation groups in sport, physical activity and active recreation.

In an effort to address this objective, the CSDO has delivered a range of physical activity and recreational sport programmes for 250 people from various communities and target groups<sup>2</sup> of the Sports Partnership. The following pages will give an overview of the CSDO's work in 2020: -

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<sup>2</sup> Target groups identified in Offaly Sports Partnership's strategic plan, Active Offaly 2016 – 2020 include low income communities (rural and urban); older adults; people with a disability; people of an ethnic minority including Travellers; the unemployed; women and girls; and youth at risk

## ***Adult & Older adult programmes***

### ***Ballycumber walking football:***

Following a successful walking football programme before Christmas, a second 10 week walking football programme commenced in Ballycumber on 22<sup>nd</sup> January. 12 people took part in the programme



### ***Activator Poles for Older Adults***

On Tuesday 28th January a six week activator poles programme began in Mucklagh Community Centre.

The activator poles programme focuses on improving stability, core strength, posture and helps promote a functional gait pattern. The programme has been a great success to date with nearly 50 older adults turning up to Mucklagh every Tuesday afternoon.

Huge thanks to our instructor Moez who keeps the programme fun and energized each week.



### ***Chair Volleyball tournament***

On 25<sup>th</sup> February I hosted a chair volleyball tournament original for the older adult groups. This was a very successful event with great craic and enjoyment.



Six teams including older adults, mental health support groups and transition years took part on the day. Pollagh and Birr came first and second respectively.

Three Volleyball Ireland representatives were also in attendance on the day carrying out official and referee roles.

### ***Older adult come try sessions***

Across quarter 1, I coordinated delivery of four older adult come try sessions for 50 people in various locations across the county. Each session lasted approximately two hours; and activities delivered included activator poles, mobility exercises, pickleball, scooch, etc.

In some instances, six week follow on programmes commenced; however with the enactment of Covid19 health restrictions and the requirement for older adults to cocoon from mid-March, these programmes were cancelled. Offaly Sports Partnership did continue to support the delivery of physical activity supports for adults and older adults via: -

## Home Workout Newsletter



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## Age & Opportunity Active "movement minutes"

Join us live on Facebook  
this Thursday 19th and  
Friday 20th at 11am for  
Age & Opportunity  
Movement Minutes



#AgeandOpportunity

Offaly Sports Partnership also posted links to Age & Opportunity's movement minutes programme on our social media channels.

The active minutes programme is an Age & Opportunity Active led physical activity programme.

The programme commenced in March with sessions delivered three times per week on a Monday, Wednesday and Friday at 11am.

## Outdoor fitness programmes

With the slight easing of restrictions between July and September, a number of outdoor fitness programmes were delivered including five activator pole programmes for 65 older adults

### 1:1 physical activity supports for older adults

With the ongoing need for older adults to cocoon in the latter half of 2020, Offaly Sports Partnership developed a programme of 1:1 physical activity supports for various target groups of the sports partnership delivered by three tutors.

47 people (including older adults) were supported to avail of personalised 1:1 physical activity supports.

Each individual programme entailed an initial consultation, an eight week personalised exercise plan and a follow up consultation to discuss the plan and address any queries which may arise. Ad hoc follow ups were also carried out during the course of the programme should such a need be identified as part of the initial consultation. One of the programme participants (male, 65-74 years of age) said, *“I have really enjoyed the programme – my tutor was excellent. They explained everything thoroughly – I will keep up these exercises in the future.”*

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### **Community sport & Sport inclusion programmes**

#### **Healthy choices, Healthy Community / Healthy Body, Healthy Mind programme:**

Healthy choices, Healthy Community / Healthy Body, Healthy Mind programmes kicked off in Tullamore on Monday, 13th January; and in Birr on the 17th February

## "Healthy Choices - Healthy Community"

8 week programme in association with  
Tullamore Community Mental Health Team, Offaly Local Development Company  
and Offaly Sports Partnership

**Begins: January 13th**

**Ends: March 4th**



Healthy cooking  
demonstration  
once a week

Monday - exercise session (Town Park 11.15am)  
Wednesday - exercise session (Town Park 11.15am)  
Wednesday - cooking demo (Offaly Local Dev Company 2pm)  
Thursday - dog walking group (Canal Line 10am)

**3 exercise sessions per week**




Contact:






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## "Healthy Body - Healthy Mind"

8 week programme in association with  
Birr Community Mental Health Centre & Offaly Sports Partnership

Would you like to take part in  
a Walking Challenge ?

and make some healthy  
changes to your diet?



Healthy Eating Tips  
from a qualified Nutritionist

... Come join us ...

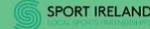
Mondays - 10.30am walk in Birr Castle  
Thursdays - 1.30pm Healthy Eating Tips in Birr C.M.H.C

Start date - February 17th

**Group Walks in Birr Castle**




For more Information:  
Ethna Carroll  
Senior O.T.  
0579120540





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The programme, run in conjunction with the HSE and Offaly Local Development Company offered a wide variety of people including local disability services, active retirement groups and those in the community a chance to exercise in a fun group setting and gain tips on healthy eating and cooking.

The programme was a great success with over 50 people of varied ages and abilities taking part across the two programmes

### ***Ride Leader training***



On Wednesday, 12th February I completed Cycling Ireland's Ride Leader training in the Tullamore Harriers.

The Ride Leader course is a one day training course which qualifies me to facilitate group cycles.

The award included Risk Assessment, Safety Checks, Assessing Riders Ability, Group Cycling, Group Management, Planning a Cycle and Leadership skills

### ***PWD Boccia Blitz***

Offaly Sports Partnerships annual boccia blitz for people with disabilities took place on the 18th February in Mucklagh Community Centre.

Over 60 people participated in the event from seven centres around the County including centres from Tullamore, Ballinagar, Edenderry and Birr. A great day was had by all.



Congratulations to IWA 1 who won the cup final on the day and the Phoenix Centre who won the shield final.

With the enactment of Covid19 health restrictions, the requirement for people to limit their social interactions from mid-March had an immediate effect on programme delivery with all programmes cancelled.



In preparation for the reopening of society from June, I supported the Healthy Offaly Coordinator to develop and deliver the Healthy Ireland funded Offaly Longest Day Challenge.

This challenge was designed to encourage people to achieve 20 days of physical activity in the run up to the Longest Day on the 21<sup>st</sup> June 2020. 800 people signed up for the challenge with over 250 diaries returned

### ***Summer Fitness Camps***

Following the lifting of Covid19 restrictions in July, I coordinated delivery of socially distanced summer fitness camps in three locations across Offaly – Crinkle, Edenderry and Tullamore. 150 children participated in the camps.

Many thanks to Crinkle Sport & Recreation Centre, Derry Rovers Soccer and Tullamore GAA for their support in hosting the camps

### ***Keep Well in the Community***



As part of the Keep Well in the Community initiative running from November 2020 to March 2021 Offaly Sports Partnership disseminated 150 “keep well” packs to people who participated on the sports inclusion development programme, and programmes of the sports partnership targeting older adults and women in an attempt to encourage them to remain physically active in the run up to the shortest day of the year (21<sup>st</sup> December); and on into the new year, with a focus on getting them out and about again when Operation Transformation hits the screen in January 2021

### ***Women's programmes***

#### ***Ferbane womens' group.***

On Monday, 3<sup>rd</sup> January I delivered a "come try" session for the Ferbane womens' group. I introduced them to a variety of activities they can participate in including boccia, chair exercises, chair volleyball and go for life games

#### ***Five-a-side Gaelic***

The week of 4<sup>th</sup> February saw the commencement of two six week five-a-side gaelic programmes for women in Ferbane and Lusmagh. Unfortunately, poor weather resulted in the postponement of the programme

#### ***Basketball***

On Wednesday 5<sup>th</sup> February a four-week basketball programme commenced. 12 women between the ages of 30 and 55 years took part on the programme



### ***Leinster Rugby Womens Blitz***

In line with our support of the 20x20 campaign there was a great day of rugby on the 5<sup>th</sup> March at the inter schools' rugby blitz for post primary girls. The blitz was hosted by Leinster Rugby and Offaly Sports Partnership.



In excess of 100 girls from five local post primary schools took part in the U-16 and U-19 competitions. Congratulations to the winners of both categories who advance to the Leinster competitions.

With the enactment of Covid19 health restrictions, the requirement for everyone to limit their social interaction from mid-March had an immediate effect on programme delivery with all programmes cancelled. Following the easing of restrictions between July and September, I coordinated the delivery of various womens' programmes including: -

- morning fitness for 18 women in two locations - Edenderry and Tullamore. Many thanks to Derry Rovers Soccer for permitting the use of their facility for the programme in Edenderry
- 150-minute physical activity challenge with Pauline Curley. The programme could only accommodate 14 participants and unfortunately had to be cancelled when stricter Covid19 health restrictions were reintroduced in October

For more information on the Community Sports Development Officer programme, contact Denise Coghill, Community Sports Development Officer, Offaly Sports Partnership on 086 7912513 or by email to [dcoghill@offalycoco.ie](mailto:dcoghill@offalycoco.ie)