



# BikeWeek



## Introduction

Bike Week 2023 for Offaly was coordinated by Offaly Sports Partnership on behalf of Offaly County Council; and was supported by local clubs and schools throughout the county. The focus of Bike Week in Offaly was to provide people of all ages and abilities with a variety of cycling events and to create awareness of cycling as an enjoyable form of transport and physical activity.

Following a two year hiatus as a result of Covid, 2023 saw the return of in person mass participation events for Bike Week 2023. Among the events delivered were: -

- the inaugural Grand Canal Greenway Relay
- club supported events in Birr, Daingean and Ferbane
- ebike the blooms events
- school cycle events in Clareen, Crinkle, Daingean and Tullamore

400 participants of all ages and abilities took part across the 10 events / activities delivered in Offaly during National Bike Week 2023, although some of the activities were also delivered pre and post Bike Week 2023 due to difficulties sourcing ride leaders and volunteers during Bike Week itself.

## Bike Week Highlights

### *Grand Canal Greenway Relay*

The most significant event delivered as part of Bike Week 2023 was the inaugural Grand Canal Greenway Relay from Edenderry to Pollagh (approx. 50km).

The event came about following a meeting of the Offaly Sports Partnership's Management Committee in November 2022. At the time of the meeting, a call had issued for funding for Bike Week 2023; and the meeting were asked if any of the members were interested in establishing a Bike Week working group to coordinate cycling events for the week. A member of the management committee, Ray Spain, did express interest in establishing a working group to progress Bike Week activities; and after speaking with the local cycling clubs, a date was set in December 2023 to host an initial meeting on same. At this very first meeting, the concept of a Grand Canal Greenway Relay was mooted. Various other meetings were held to progress the idea across the first quarter of 2023; and in April, the Grand Canal Greenway Relay event was finally launched.

Taking cognisance of the theme of Bike Week, "*Communities Cycling Together*", two route options for the Grand Canal Greenway Relay were agreed: -

Option 1 - Edenderry to Pollagh: 50km for experienced cyclists

Option 2 – stages event for recreational cyclists and families. This particular route option was further broken down into four stages: -

- i. Edenderry to Daingean – 17km
- ii. Daingean to Tullamore – 14.5km
- iii. Tullamore to Rahan – 8.5km
- iv. Rahan to Pollagh – 8km

Across the entire event, 125 people of all ages and abilities took part. Each of the clubs (Team 905, Edenderry; Grand Canal Wheelers, Daingean; Tullamore Cycling and Touring Club; and Lynx Cycling Club, Ferbane) along the Grand Canal Greenway Relay route provided ride leaders and refreshments to support the delivery of the event; while Offaly Civil Defence provided first aid cover on bicycles, etc. along the route.

With the dawning of a glorious day, the event kicked off in Edenderry; and meandered its way along the Grand Canal Greenway to Pollagh.



### *Lunchtime cycle, Birr*

After a two year hiatus, the lunchtime cycle in Birr returned. 50 pupils and teachers from Gaelscoil na Laochra and Oxmanstown national school; alongside 10 ride leaders from the Wolftrap Cycling Club participated this year; and had the chance to cycle through the Rás Tailteann stage 1 finish on John's Mall.

St Brendan's Boy's National School who would have typically participated in the lunchtime cycle were unable to participate this year as they had organised their own school cycle day in Lough Boora; hopefully, they will make a welcome return to the event next year.



Many thanks also to the Birr Civic Offices and Library for the use of their car park as an assembly point; and the Community Gardaí in Birr for their support of the event.



### *School cycle day, Daingean*

In addition to the Grand Canal Greenway Relay, the Daingean Grand Canal Wheelers coordinated the delivery of their "Peatlands Tour" on the 6<sup>th</sup> May; and supported the delivery of a school cycle day for 30 pupils from Daingean National School along the Grand Canal Greenway from Daingean to Ballycommon.

### *School cycle day, Fербane*

Following the success of their 2022 school cycle day, Lynx Cycling Club once again teamed up with St Cynoc's Senior School to deliver a school cycle day with 30 4<sup>th</sup> to 6<sup>th</sup> class pupils. The day started off with some schoolyard games; and concluded with an 8km cycle around the town.







### *School cycle days, Tullamore*

Following the success of their school day cycles in 2022, Coláiste Choilm Boys Secondary School hosted two school cycles days for 90 of their students. The students cycled from Tullamore to Rahan along the Grand Canal Greenway



### *Learn to Cycle programme for children with additional needs*

In late 2022, Offaly Sports Partnership secured funding to support the delivery of a “*Learn to Cycle*” programme for children with additional needs across six schools with special education needs units in Offaly.

The participating schools were grant aided to purchase a range of bicycles, scooters, etc. in advance of the delivery of a three week “*Learn to Cycle*” programme for their pupils in quarter 1 of 2023; however a number of setbacks hindered the delivery of the programme and it was deferred for delivery across the month of May. To date, 36 pupils with additional needs from four of the six schools have completed the programme.

Offaly Sports Partnership also ran a daily feature on “*opportunities for family cycling in Offaly and its surrounds*”; and spotlit the various cycling clubs – Team 905, Edenderry; Grand Canal Wheelers, Daingean; Tullamore Cycling & Touring Club; Lynx Cycling Club, Ferbane; and the Wolftrap Cycling Club, Birr - in Offaly across Bike Week 2023. The family cycling opportunities highlighted included Lough Boora Discovery Park, the Old Rail Trail in Westmeath, Biking the Blooms (Kinnitty mountain bike trails), the Grand Canal Greenway and Bord na Móna’s Mount Lucas Windfarm.

## Feedback

Feedback from stakeholders and participants across the range of events has been extremely positive as can be seen from the below testimonials and social media postings: -

Claire Dempsey

Awh thanks Olivia, it's great to have them (*photos from the day*)!! Again fair play to you and very well done, brilliant day, look forward to next year ☺

Hi Olivia,

Thank you for accommodating us and for a wonderful event

Regards, Joe Dooley

Thanks Olivia, we had a great day. You did a fantastic job organising it.

Regards, Mary Killeen

Hi Olivia,

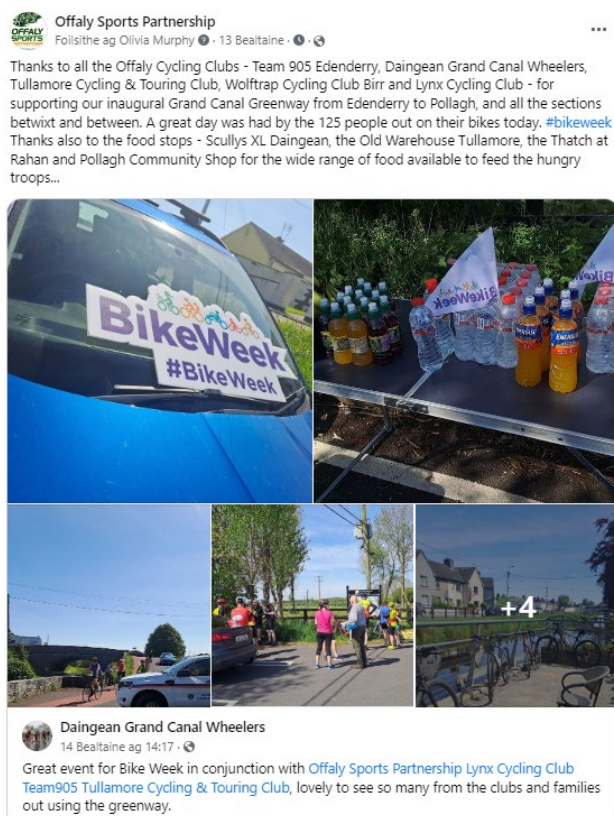
Our little Laois group enjoyed the Grand Canal cycle so much. Appreciate Olivia, a lot of work involved in organizing. Thank you and all your team. We will be back to the greenway again.

Kind regards, Olive Lacey

Hi Olivia

First of all, thanks for all your work on national bike week. I have spoken to the other cycling clubs and Martina from Tullamore since my return, and apart from the good words about the event, the common commentary from all was praise for your work and organisational skills. I would also like to add my voice to the appreciation for all your work before the event and pulling everything together. For the first year, the event was a tremendous success. Roll on next year

Thanks Ray







### Offaly Sports Partnership

Fóilsithe ag Olivia Murphy · 13 Bealtaine ·

Thanks to all the Offaly Cycling Clubs - Team 905 Edenderry, [Daingean Grand Canal Wheelers](#), Tullamore Cycling & Touring Club, Wolftrap Cycling Club Birr and [Lynx Cycling Club](#) - for supporting our inaugural Grand Canal Greenway from Edenderry to Pollagh, and all the sections betwixt and between. A great day was had by the 125 people out on their bikes today. [#bikeweek](#) Thanks also to the food stops - Scullys XL Daingean, the Old Warehouse Tullamore, the Thatch at Rahan and Pollagh Community Shop for the wide range of food available to feed the hungry troops...



### Lynx Cycling Club

13 Bealtaine ag 21:39 ·

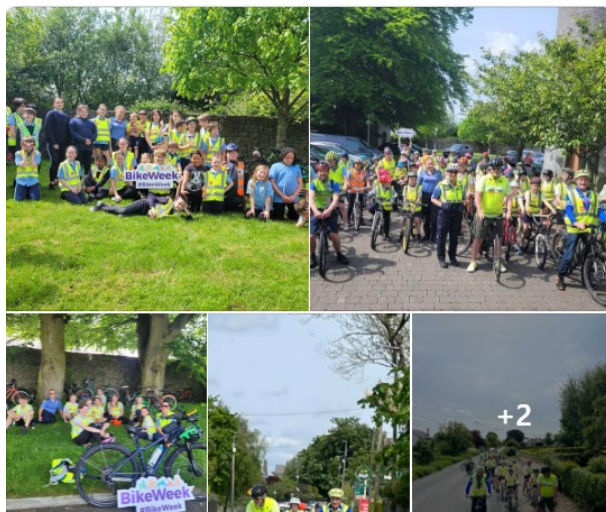
Today was great start to bike week with the sun shining all the way from Edenderry to Pollagh. Today all the clubs in Offaly along with the [Offaly Sports Partnership](#) organised the Grand Canal Greenway Relay. Great to see so many on the canal. [Tullamore Cycling & Touring Club](#) [Wolftrap Cycling Club](#) - [Birr Daingean Grand Canal Wheelers Team905](#)



### Offaly Sports Partnership

Fóilsithe ag Olivia Murphy · 17 Bealtaine ag 23:40 ·

Thanks to An [Garda Síochána Laois Offaly](#), Wolftrap Cycling Club Birr, Gaelscoil na Laochra and Oxmanstown NS for a great lunchtime cycle around Birr and Crinkle today. 50 children and 20 ride leaders and volunteers passed through the Rás Tailteann stages finish at John's Mall before returning to the car park at Birr Civic Offices for a well deserved snack



### Garda Síochána Laois Offaly

17 Bealtaine ag 22:11 ·

As part of National Bike Week Birr Gardai took part in a cycle around Birr town today with local primary schools, a great day was had by all as the sun shone ☀️🚲👦👧

[#bikeweek2023](#)

[#communityengagement](#)

[#Offalysportspartnership](#)