



A meeting of Laois and Offaly Education and Training Board was held on Tuesday 26 September 2023 at 4:30pm at Tullamore College, Riverside, Tullamore, Co Offaly.

PRESENT

Ms. Evelyn Dunne (Chairperson)
Ms. Molly Buckley
Cllr. John Carroll
Mr. Dave Cullen
Cllr. Eddie Fitzpatrick
Mr. Jim Cashen

Cllr. Pdraig Fleming
Mr Shane Flesk
Cllr. Robert Mc Dermott
Mr. Niall Tully
Cllr. Frank Moran
Cllr. Barry Walsh

IN ATTENDANCE

Mr. Joe Cunningham, Chief Executive (CE)
Ms. Josie Lalor, Corporate Services

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Ms. Maura Brophy, Cllr. Caroline Dwane Stanley, Cllr. Neil Feighery, Cllr. Catherine Fitzgerald Mr. Frank Smith

2. MINUTES OF LOETB BOARD MEETING

The minutes of the previous meeting, which took place on 25 July 2023 were circulated to members. Members approved the minutes and they were signed by the Chairperson.

Proposed: Barry Walsh
Seconded: Eddie Fitzpatrick

3. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

The CE provided an update regarding requirements for additional primary school accommodation for Portlaoise. He is awaiting further information from the Dept. of Education (DE) and will provide an update at the next Board meeting.

4. GOVERNANCE

Update from Critical Systems Oversight Committee:

Corporate Risk Register

The CE confirmed to the Board that the Corporate Risk Register had been approved at the last Audit and Risk meeting that took place in July.

Charities Governance Code:

The CE informed the members that the Charities Governance Record form is available on SharePoint. This form needs to be completed by all the members and returned to Josie Lalor before the closing date of 31 October 2023.

Risk Updates:

The Risk register was approved at the last Audit and Risk Committee meeting. There was one removal and no additions made to the Risk Register. The members noted the changes.

Review of Risk Appetite Statement:

The Risk Appetite Statement for 2023 was reviewed and approved at the Audit and Risk Committee meeting. The Members noted same.

CSOC Terms of Reference

The CSOC Terms of Reference were also approved at the Audit and Risk Committee in which the members noted same.

Conflict of Interest

As per Schedule 3, Paragraph 10, Section 3 of the ETB Act 2013 and the Agenda Notice, no conflicts of interest were declared.

5. FINANCE

The Chief Executive informed the members that the Finance Committee meeting was held on the 14 July. The finances up to 31 July 2023 were discussed and are available on SharePoint for members to review. The Finance Department is continually monitoring income and expenditure from both DE and SOLAS as well as other third-party funding.

6. CORRESPONDENCE

Item No	Correspondence From	Date / Ref No.	Details	
1.	Department of Education	CL.0030.2023	Home Tuition Grant Scheme- Maternity Related Absences	Noted by members
2.	Department of Education	CL. 0031.2023	Home Tuition Grant scheme for children without a school place	Noted by members
3.	Department of Education	CL.0032.2023	Supervision and Substitution Scheme	Notes by members
4.	Department of Education	CL.0034.2023	DEIS (Delivering Equality of Opportunity in Schools)	Noted by members
5.	Department of Education	CL.0035.2023	Teacher Supply Post Primary Teaching Hours Extension Scheme	Noted by members
6.	Department of Education	CL.0036.2023	Publication of Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools	Noted by members

7.	Department of Education	CL.0037.2023	Partial Absences for Medical-Related Service Appointments	Noted by members
8.	Department of Education	CL.0038.2023	Building Momentum: A New Public Service Agreement 2021-2022	Noted by members
9.	Department of Education	CL.0039.2023	Primary Mathematics Curriculum for Primary and Special Schools	Noted by members
10.	Department of Education	CL.0041.2023	Revision of Teacher Salaries under the Building Momentum	Noted by members
11.	Department of Education	CL.0042.2023	Revision of Salaries for Special Needs Assistants (SNAs) under Building Momentum - A New Public Service Agreement 2021-2023	Noted by members
12.	Department of Education	CL.0043.2023	Revision of salaries of certain grades other than Teachers and SNAs employed by ETBs under Building Momentum - A New Public Service Agreement 2021-2023	Noted by members
13.	Department of Education	CL.0044.2023	Revision of Salaries of School Secretaries and School Maintenance Staff in Community and Comprehensive Schools under Building Momentum - A New Public Service Agreement 2021-2023	Noted by members
14.	Department of Education	CL.0045.2023	Revision of salaries for Clerical Officers and Caretakers employed in National Schools under the 1978/79 Scheme and Clerical Officers employed in Post Primary Schools under the 1978 Scheme under Building Momentum - A New Public Service Agreement 2021-2023	Noted by members

7. NOMINATION FOR LOETB BOARD MEMBER

The CE requested to defer the nomination for parent representative on the Board as clarification is required from DE regarding the nominating body for parent representatives. The members agreed to defer the nomination until matters were clarified.

Proposed: Frank Moran
 Seconded: Molly Buckley

8. MINUTES OF COMMITTEES OF THE BOARD

The following minutes of the Committees of the Board were circulated to members before the meeting for noting.

Audit and Risk Committee Minutes 14 July 2023

Finance Committee Minutes 14 July 2023

Birr OETC Committee Minutes 7 June 2023

Board of Management Minutes:

St Fergal's College Minutes 6 June 2023

Tullamore College Minutes 18 January 2023

9. SOLAS ANNUAL REPORT AND FINANCIAL STATEMENTS 2022

The CE informed members that the report has been uploaded to SharePoint for review.

10. UPCOMING GOVERNANCE FORUM TRAINING

The above Governance Forum training is scheduled to take place on the 5 October 2023. The CE has requested that any interested Board members should give their names to Josie Lalor who will register them for the above training.

A member asked about the possibility of receiving training on Boards of Management and Child Protection. The CE informed the member that new handbook for Boards of Management is being finalised by ETBI and training will be provided thereafter. Once the training is available, the members will be notified.

11. MEMO CL.0003.2018 – RE: SELECTION BOARD FOR LEADERSHIP

The above memo was brought to the Board for approval which outlines that if no ETB member is available for the above selection boards, the following panel is endorsed by the CE and agreed by the board.

Mr Paddy Scales

Ms Aoife Elster

Mr PJ Lalor

The members of the Board approved the same.

Proposed: Evelyn Dunne

Seconded: Padraig Fleming

12. CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S REPORT



Schools Directorate

Schools

Adapted Vocabulary Enrichment Programme (VEP)

All schools will be represented at the Adapted Vocabulary Enrichment Programme (VEP) training provided by the National Council for Special Education (NCSE) on 21 September in Limerick. VEP is a literacy initiative that supports the development of vocabulary skills for small groups and individuals with speech, language and communication needs.

SEN Provision Mapping Initiative

The SEN Provision Mapping Initiative rolled out by ETBI and Mary Immaculate College, has moved into a second cycle (2023 – 2025). All nine schools are engaging with the initiative to implement provision mapping for inclusion in our schools. This process allows schools to identify, list, and evaluate the evidence-informed provisions and supports in place for students across the Continuum of Support.

LOETB/Laois Education Centre Leadership in Practice Webinar Series

This series for LOETB schools' current and aspiring leaders will commence on 3 October. There are four individual sessions in the series on topics such as Dealing with Difficult Conversations, Day-to-day practicalities of the API and APII position, the role of the year head, and the vision for school development.

STEAM/Computer Science

LOETB Schools Support is involved in two key projects to support STEAM/Computer Science in our schools. In partnership with Laois and Offaly County Councils and Atlantic Technological University, LOETB is administering and facilitating a scheme where teachers are fully supported to qualify as Leaving Cert Computer Science Teachers. This initiative is currently in Year 2, with a cohort of eight LOETB teachers participating.

LOETB is leading out a new initiative in our schools - in partnership with Laois and Offaly County Councils - where each of our nine schools will have access to a programme of STEAM initiatives, revolving around coding, robotics, design (through Minecraft), and digital story-telling (through podcasting). LOETB teachers and students are provided with state-of-the-art equipment and training throughout the programme.

Youth Services

LOETB Youth Work Plan

The LOETB Youth Work Plan is currently being finalised after extensive consultation.

Local Creative Youth Partnerships: After-School Music Programme

This programme resumed in early September in partnership with Music Generation Laois and Music Generation Offaly. The LOETB schools taking part are Oaklands Community College, St. Fergal's College, Portlaoise College, Dunamase College, and Ard Scoil Chiaráin Naofa.

Other partnerships with Music Generation Laois include CAMHS (Child and Adult Mental Health Service) Friday Club along with the Traveller Friday Club which takes place in Laois Music Centre.

Electric Youth

Youth work Ireland Laois in association with Electric Picnic created Electric Youth a programme that offers young people the opportunity to perform at the Electric Picnic's Hazelwood Stage in September. This programme is funded and supported by the Local Creative Youth Partnership.

Laois Pride Parade

Laois Offaly Local Creative Youth Partnership were one of the sponsors of Laois Pride Parade took place on 9 September organised by the Midlands LGBTt+ Project. The parade was followed by a Laois Pride Community Day.

The Ploughing Championships

Attending the Ploughing championships again this year were young people and groups funded through the Local Creative Youth Partnership performing in the Creative Ireland space under the guidance of Music Generation Laois and Music Generation Offaly.

Culture Night

This is a public event that takes place each year on the third Friday of September, celebrating culture, creativity, and the arts. The Local Creative Youth Partnership are funding events across Laois and Offaly to promote that a rich culture is alive, treasured, and nurtured in young people's lives.

Music Generation

Music Generation Offaly

The school programmes are getting underway with 10 musician educators working in 18 primary schools and 3 secondary schools. Thanks to funding from Laois & Offaly Local Creative Youth Project we can continue to deliver our programmes in 2 LOETB schools. It is hoped to extend our programmes into the remaining LOETB secondary schools this year.

ETB Anthem Competition

One of our musician educators worked with Tullamore Community Training Centre and we are delighted that their entry came runner-up. Planning is underway in collaboration with Music Generation National Development Office to mark their success.

Sing out! 2023

Part 2 will take place in Esker Arts on 12 October with workshops led by Melody Hynes, an award-winning Barbershop composer and conductor. This is a joint project with Music Generation Westmeath and choirs from Ard Scoil Chiaráin Naofa, Clara and Oaklands Community College will be taking part.

Planning is underway for events throughout 2024 as part of the Music Generation 10-year celebrations. There is a funding application in process towards costs.

REALT (Regional Education and Language Team)

Enrolment statistics for the start of any school year are incomplete until schools finalise their enrolment numbers and report to the Department of Education on 30 September. Approximately 380 Ukrainian people have been accommodated in Stradbally. The numbers are in a constant state of flux, with new people arriving and others being moved to more long-term accommodation (e.g. to Cork, Offaly, and Wicklow). Consistent with advice from the Department of Education, every indication from Government has been that this is a temporary arrangement of a maximum of six weeks.

Tullamore saw extra Ukrainians arrive over the summer. Nearly all have been offered school places, but there is a small number still awaiting places in primary schools. In Tullamore, delays have meant that the planned modular units are not expected to be handed over for occupancy until late October. Rathdowney is on a similar timescale. As of yet, the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth (DCEDIY) has not provided information on potential new arrivals, and this is putting local schools at a disadvantage in relation to forward planning. A new centre catering for about 30 people is in the process of opening in Edenderry. A much larger centre is in the process of opening on a phased basis in Banagher.

FET Directorate

Inclusion

The FET service has strengthened its commitment to accessibility and inclusion through the appointment of our first Access Officer. This officer will promote consistency of learner supports across all FET Centres and Services, acting in an advisory capacity in the development of policies,

promoting access to assistive technology, and representing LOETB on relevant groups such as the Connecting for Life Midlands (suicide prevention).

The National Adult Literacy for Life (ALL) Office has launched a promotional campaign for the month of September and LOETB participated through social media and a Midlands 103 interview. LOETB is leading the development of a Regional Literacy Coalition which has already led to a collaboration with Alone and Vodafone supporting referrals to digital courses. Literacy awareness workshops are being delivered throughout September in the libraries with additional funding from the National Office.

The *Building Bridges Prison* project is underway with an NZEB training facility to be developed in the Midlands, and other initiatives undertaken such as the successful *Peer to Peer Literacy Ambassador* programme (developed in Portlaoise in conjunction with NALA). The purchase of additional equipment under this fund has enabled new programme delivery such as barista, new music awards and agricultural science.

Apprenticeship

The Plumbing apprenticeship provision has increased to 52 apprentices annually in Mountrath. A new electrical training unit has been secured by METAC and is currently being developed to provide a further 28 electrical training places. It is envisaged that this training facility will be complete within the next 6 weeks with the new apprentices scheduled in early November. This will double our current annual provision in Mountrath to 168 apprentices. The new Kilcruttin site in Tullamore will house an additional 180 electrical apprentices annually and is due to open in late 23/early 24.

Mental Health Initiative: Due to the apprentices predominately being from a high-risk category for mental health challenges, self-harm, and suicide (young males 18-25), a new mental health initiative is being piloted across the two current apprenticeships sites by LOETB. This will include a 3-hour workshop for all apprentices on *mind your mental health* which will take place with the first group of 28 in the coming weeks, delivered by Mental Health Ireland. The apprenticeship staff team is also undertaking a training workshop which will provide awareness and information on mental illness and suicide, information on risk factors and warning signs as well as advice on how to support someone at risk.

There are currently 731 apprentices registered from Laois and Offaly with approximately 350 different employers, across 72 approved apprenticeships. 27 of these are craft apprenticeships and the remainder (45) are Post-2016 apprenticeships including supply chain associate specialist, farm manager, sports turf management, logistics and OEM engineering (Original Equipment Manufacturing). LOETB has applied for approval to train apprentices as accounts technicians and HR specialists.

Tertiary Programmes

LOETB's partnership with SETU to deliver two-degree programmes at Portlaoise Institute is progressing very well. At present, 12 students have accepted places on the Bachelor of Business Studies programme, and 13 students have accepted places on the Bachelor of Science in Software Development programme.

Once these programmes have started, LOETB will continue to work with SETU and other Higher Education Institutions to expand the range of tertiary programmes on offer across Laois and Offaly. These will include Art, Science, Engineering, and Nursing.

Mount Lucas

The NZEB & Retrofit Mobile Training Rig was officially launched on 23 August by Minister Simon Harris, TD. It will be on display at The World Skills Live show from 20- 22 September and will be on the road from 25 September in schools (Monday-Fridays) and available to sustainable Energy Communities and groups on weekends. The recent publicity had led to numerous schools from all over Ireland contacting the centre to find out more about booking the rig. This is set to increase

after World Skills Live event. We will be led by demand and will rotate on a geographic basis starting in Laois, Offaly, and Tipperary.

The mobile Site Simulators are now fully incorporated into the Utilities traineeship and 4-day New Entrants CSCS courses and are proving a useful addition for the training of novices. They also allow for reports on skills and competencies and corrective training.

National Demonstration Park & MMC

KSN Project Management Group has been appointed as a result of a tender process for the project management role in the Mount Lucas MMC Demonstration Park Project. LOETB and KSN have commenced meeting key stakeholders as the project advances towards a planning submission for the housing units in phase 1.

LOETB recently hosted MMC Ireland at Mount Lucas as we continue to refine our skills development provision in MMC so that it meets current and future industry needs, provides learners with currency in the labour market, and enhances the value of the Demonstration Park to the sector and the region. Over 50 companies involved in the MMC sector attended the event which included presentations on the Demonstration Park and input from LOETB's subject matter expert, T3 Training.

QQI Inaugural Review Implementation

The implementation of the QQI Inaugural Review (IR) recommendations is progressing well. The priority areas for the remainder of 2023 and Q1 2024 include:

- Commencement of the Self Evaluation of FET Centres and Services
- Giving opportunity to the learner voice
- Restructuring of the governance structure with amendments to functions and terms of reference for all groups
- SharePoint development – the initial area of priority is QA
- Communications: Targeted social media campaign, the Official Languages Act, Communication Strategy, internal communication
- Continued policy development and review
- Progression Pathway for school leavers to FET

The FET IR Implementation Group will meet in late September to further review the timelines and set out the priorities for the remainder of 2024.

Green Skills

The '*New Beginnings*' programme is an employed traineeship with Bord Na Mona facilitating a Start Your Own Business Programme as a redeployment option; this is a 20-week programme during which Bord Na Mona will continue to support the workers. There are currently 10 participants on the programme and, over the duration of the programme, they will complete modules in creativity and innovation and Start Your Own Business. They will also develop a business plan and their technical skills in areas such as Solar PV, Retrofit, and Mechanical Engineering. The training is currently taking place in the Accelerate Green Building in Boora, with the aim of the programme to develop and foster an enterprise culture in the Midlands.

LOETB will commence its first Pre-Apprenticeship programme in ICT in collaboration with FIT (Fast-track to IT). The pre-tech apprenticeship is aimed at people who wish to pursue a Tech Apprenticeship but are unsure of which programme to choose or who may not currently meet entry criteria. This pre-apprenticeship programme will offer learners a pathway into Network Engineering or the Cybersecurity apprenticeship.

OSD Directorate

Human Resources

The following posts have been filled since the last ETB meeting:

- 1 Grade VII Training Services
- 1 Grade VII Community Training Officer
- 33 teaching posts
- 1 Acting Principal Coláiste Naomh Cormac
- 1 Acting Deputy Principal Coláiste Naomh Cormac
- 7 Adult Educators
- 1 Community Education Facilitator
- 2 Electrical Instructor
- Academic Personal Assistant Panel
- 6 SNA posts
- SNA panel
- Substitute teacher panel
- Bus Escort panel
- FET tutor panel
- Personal Assistant panel
- Adult Education Guidance Counsellor
- Musician Educators
- Grade VII REALT

The following posts have been advertised:

- Enterprise Support Officer
- 1 Programme Coordinator Portlaoise
- 3 API posts Portlaoise College
- 1 Acting API Tullamore College
- 1 Programme Coordinator Oaklands Community College
- 6 teaching posts

Payroll Report

Payment Date	Totals	Staff Paid
07/07/2023	€1,261,626.32	1028
21/07/2023	€1,463,480.41	1084
04/08/2023	€1,208,992.56	885
18/08/2023	€1,284,448.34	943
01/09/2023	€1,219,663.16	946

Report on Pensions to date since 01/01/2023

Pension Description	No.
Members Retired/Pensions issued	5
Widow/Widower Pensions issued	3
Members/ Widows to return pension forms	0
Total Pensions issued to date:	8

In 2023, we have requested service to be transferred to LOETB for 22 members, 17 of which are complete, and we received 36 requests to transfer out service, 25 of which are complete.

Pensioner Increases

NSSO is working on application of 1 March 2023 increases. LOETB has 13 outstanding queries which have been checked and returned to NSSO on 23 August for payment.

Pension Liability Project

LOETB has been working on this project since March 2023. All pension data for the year ending 2022 was submitted to the Actuary on 8 June. An Actuarial Valuation Report Pension Scheme Disclosures for the year ending 31 December 2022 was issued to LOETB on 14/07/2023.

Single Pension Scheme Remediation Project

LOETB commenced initial engagement with ESBS on the SPS Remediation Project on 10 July 2023. It is a statutory requirement that LOETB gives each member an annual Pension Benefit Statement. To facilitate this, an examination of all data on 1009 members of the SPS Pension Scheme has now commenced. Once complete, Benefit Statements for 2013-2022 can be issued in full. LOETB will then be able to submit data files to DPER for SPS Databank. LOETB is in the final stages of checking data supplied by ESBS and working through any outstanding queries. Further meetings are planned with ESBS to bring this project to a conclusion in the next few weeks.

Service Project - updating service on Core system (non SPS schemes):

Year Started with LOETB	Number of Employees	Number Service Updated on Core
2022	1	1
2021	21	21
2020	8	8
2019	15	15
2018	16	16
2017	6	5
2016	11	11
2015	6	6
2014	5	5
2013	6	6
2012	14	13
2011	14	10
2010	24	16
2009	16	8
2008	23	2
2007	38	5
2006	27	0
2005	15	3
2004 – 1990		5

To date, we have completed service for 156 members on Core System.

Finance

Budgets

School and centre budgets continue to be monitored on a monthly basis.

Income and Expenditure

Draft summary of finances to end of July 2023.

Summary of Workings to End July 2023									
ITEM	Opening Grant Cash Balance	Adjustment to Opening Balance	Receipts	Credits Transfer	Receipt Targets	Payments	Closing Grant Cash Balance	% of Overall Total	
	Main Scheme Grant	985,570	0	19,829,957	0	0	(21,852,174)	(1,036,647)	-5.08%
Associated Main Scheme Grants	1,484,582	0	913,446	0	0	(570,540)	1,827,487	9.38%	
Capital Schedule	12,992,898	0	1,962,500	0	0	(4,467,209)	10,488,188	75.88%	
Further Education & Training	677,443	0	28,763,787	0	0	(25,228,916)	4,212,314	16.39%	
Youth Affairs	60,670	0	66,355	0	0	(541,212)	(414,187)	-0.78%	
Agency	817,543	0	1,741,688	0	0	(2,182,614)	376,617	4.13%	
Self Financing	52,327	0	370,681	0	0	(388,617)	34,390	0.09%	
Third Party Funds	0	0	8,949	0	0	(8,949)	0	0.00%	
Totals	17,071,032	0	53,657,362	0	0	(55,240,231)	15,488,162		

NTMA

On Investment end July		€14,039,079
Interest Earned to end of July		€50,927
Interest Rate		1%

Investment Term	7 day	€14,039,079
	30 day	0

Corporate Services

Capital Projects and Buildings Works

Clonaslee College

- Additional SEN Accommodation 2022 & 2023 – currently with Project Management Team/Reconfiguration works finished on 25 August 2023 with a few snags to be completed.
- Main Project – Masterplan for site completed by Design Team

St Fergal's College

- Summer Works Scheme Roof Works 2022 approval received from DoE – works commenced in September 2023.
- All Weather Pitch. Consultant preparing Tender Documents for upload to Etenders.
- Approval received for Modular Accommodation through the Department Framework. Drawings/Location prepared by MCOH and currently working with Consultants and Department of Education regarding options & spaces

Portlaoise College

- Extension – waiting on Stage 1 meeting to be held in October 2023.
- Application sent to DoE for Additional Accommodation

Ard Scoil Chiarain Naofa, Clara

- New School – Design Team has sketch proposals to be presented to Offaly County Council – Stage 1 report being finalised.

Oaklands Community College, Edenderry

- New School – Stage 2a completed and approved. Preparation of planning application ongoing.

Coláiste Naomh Cormac, Kilcormac

- Additional Accommodation – ASA Unit 1002m, installed, final snags being reviewed.
- Science Rooms – Report and Costings completed and sent to DoE

Tullamore College

- Additional Accommodation – new brief proposed and awaiting an update from DoE.

Banagher FET Centre

- Electric Board to be installed in autumn.

National Construction Training Centre, Mount Lucas

- Expression of Interest Stage 3 and Stage 4 on ETenders

Kilcruttin Electrical Apprenticeship

- Consultant appointed – Works started on 14 August 2023.

Tullamore FET Centre

- Upgrade of classroom to science room – works ongoing
- EV Chargers – 3 tender responses are currently being evaluated

Procurement

The Procurement Section are currently working on the following projects for tendering:

- Art & Craft/Science/Home Economics Equipment – Multi-Party framework.
- Catering Schools – Tender Awarded – 2 companies for schools.
- Print & Design – Tender Competition evaluated, sent to OGP for review.

- Class materials Woodwork/Metalwork/ICT training/Video Production/Scaffolding Materials/First Aid/PPE/Lifejackets/Stationery/Rental machines Mount Lucas/Employee Assistance Programme: all extended as per agreements.
- Working with St. Fergal's College and DoE (Furniture & Equipment) on replacement equipment for practical subjects.

ICT

- Portlaoise Institute & Ard Scoil Chiaráin Naofa, Clara now operating using cloud services. Onsite server no longer required.
- Darktrace email security solution rolled out to 180 key email addresses throughout the organisation.
- Discussions taking place to see if an email security solution can be rolled out throughout the organisation to capture both staff and students.
- Ongoing work with Internal Audit Unit and KOSI regarding ICT Audit and Cyber Security baseline standards.
- Existing projects include Dunamase College and Clonaslee College new classrooms.
- Currently reviewing requirements for new electrical apprentice building in Tullamore and additional rooms for Clara FET Centre at a second location.
- Still engaging with providers in relation to a privileged access management solution and also a cloud-based asset management solution.
- ICT fit out of Mount Lucas NZEB mobile training rig completed on time for Ministerial launch.
- Regular maintenance, prevention, and replacement requests on an ongoing basis across schools, centres, and offices

Corporate Services (General)

- Supporting Offaly schools with the planning for County Sports (28 September)
- Expanding review of insurance cover for existing facilities in cooperation with IPB.
- Dealing with routine FOI/GDPR requests.
- Continued refinement of Critical Incident Response procedures.
- Progressing Radon surveys with a number of facilities following from changes to EPA Radon Map.

Joe Cunningham
26 September 2023

Members thanked the CE for the detailed report and a discussion took place.

A member informed the meeting of the expected completion date for the houses intended for Ukrainians in Rathdowney and how this delay has made it challenging for schools to estimate the number of students they will be receiving and make necessary arrangements for these students. A member also informed the meeting that a premises in Clara is also being considered for Direct Provision and that this would also impact on available school places locally.

A member noted that the Ukrainians were contributing to the local community in Portlaoise and thanked them for their contribution to the community.

A member also asked about the apprenticeship provision given the national emergency around skill shortages and enquired if we were increasing our numbers on these programmes to address this issue? The CE acknowledged the issue and informed members that additional apprentice training facilities were being developed in Tullamore for Electrical and in Mountrath for Plumbing. The plan is to move to three intakes annually instead of two which will also help alleviate the backlog.

A member congratulated the FET Service on the number of farm courses that are now being run in the locality. The CE informed the board that the courses are now been run in several locations and are linked with Gurteen College.

13. VOTES OF SYMPATHY

The Board extends its sympathy to the following staff members on their recent family bereavements:

- Mary Connell – QA Support Office
- Ann Denmead – Admin Offices, Portlaoise
- Mary Lawlor – Portlaoise College
- Evin Milne- Coláiste Naomh Cormac
- Siobhan Bowe – Banagher College
- Paula Mc Redmond – QA Support Office
- Claire Young – Ard Scoil Chiaráin Naofa
- Jeff Phelan – Ard Scoil Chiaráin Naofa

14. VOTES OF CONGRATULATIONS

A vote of congratulations was passed to:

- Tullamore Football Senior football team
- Carrig and Riverstown Intermediate hurling team
- The members extended their congratulations to former Co. Laois VEC member, Charlie Flanagan TD, on his recent announcement that he will not seek re-election at the next General Election.

15. AOB

- The CE asked members who had not claimed their travel this year to do so by the end of November and that the staff in the Finance section were available to help with claim submission.
- St Fergal's College, Rathdowney – Ms Ciara Carroll to remain on the BOM as a community representative.

Proposed: Evelyn Dunne
Seconded: John Carroll

13. DATE & VENUE OF NEXT LOETB BOARD MEETING

The next LOETB Board meeting will take place on Tuesday 28 November 2023 in the Portlaoise, Venue to be confirmed.

Signed: *Evelyn Dunne*
Evelyn Dunne (Dec 5, 2023 00:35 GMT)

Date: Dec 5, 2023

Chairperson