

Offaly Sports Partnership Annual Report

Compiled by Eamonn Henry, Coordinator Offaly Sports Partnership

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Introduction



The following report outlines the activities of Offaly Sports Partnership in 2010. It highlights the work undertaken in what was the final year of our first strategic plan.

Much of the year was taken up with an independent external review of our work since 2006, and the development of a new five year plan. This has resulted in a new plan which we feel is reflective of both national and local priorities, is ambitious for the future while recognising capacity limitations to achieving all of our aspirations.

2010 was also a year of continued demand for the services of the Partnership despite a reduced budget. I am happy to report that the majority of commitments were delivered on, though the final two months of the year proved problematic due to the harshest winter in living memory.

This report provides details of: -

- The Board and Executive of the Partnership
- Staffing and Personnel within the Partnership
- Progress on the four strategic themes of our first strategy
- The development of our new five year plan

Changes at Board and Executive

In preparation for the development of a new strategic plan covering the period 2011 - 2015, a call for nominations to the Board of the Partnership was made for the private and sports sectors. The following were appointed: -

- Private sector - Barry Keegan (unchanged)
- Sports sector - Karl Bond Snr (FAI), Jude Feehan (Community Games), and Gráinne McINTyre (Camogie), all unchanged; Eamon Flynn (GAA) replacing Hughie Egan, Tom Godley (Athletics) replacing Georgina Tuohey

The composition of the Board at the start of 2011 was as follows: - (see below)

Sector	Represented by
Patron of the Partnership	Matt Connor
Statutory Sector (4)	
Offaly County Council	Monica Cleary
Offaly VEC	Miriam O'Callaghan
Health Services Executive	Clodagh Armitage
An Garda Síochana	Sgt Ollie Baker
Local and Rural Development (1)	Padraig Boland
Offaly County Development Board	Cllr Eddie Fitzpatrick
Private Sector (1)	Barry Keegan
Disability Sector (1)	Kathleen Carroll
Third Level Sector (1)	Joe Meegan
Public Representatives (2)	Cllr John Carroll
	Cllr Danny Owens
Sports Sector (5)	
GAA	Eamon Flynn
FAI	Karl Bond Snr
Athletics	Tom Godley
Camogie	Gráinne McIntyre
Community Games	Jude Feehan

The AGM of the Partnership was held on the 13th April at which the officers and executive committee for 2010 was elected. The officers and executive committee for 2010 was as

follows: -

- **Chair** - Miriam O'Callaghan
- **Vice Chair** - Cllr John Carroll
- **Secretary** - Eamonn Henry
- **Financial Monitor** - Barry Keegan
- **County Manager's Representative** - Monica Cleary
- **County Development Board Liaison** - Cllr Eddie Fitzpatrick
- **Sports Sector Representative** - Gráinne McIntyre



Executive Committee members, left to right and top to bottom - Miriam O'Callaghan, Chair; Cllr John Carroll, Vice Chair; Barry Keegan, Financial Monitor; Eamonn Henry, Secretary; Monica Cleary, Employer's Representative; Cllr Eddie Fitzpatrick, CDB Liaison; Gráinne McIntyre, Sports sector representative

Staffing and Personnel

The Partnership continued to employ three full time staff in 2010 - Eamonn Henry, Coordinator; Olivia Murphy, Administrator; and Claire Grehan, Sports Inclusion Development Officer.



Three full time staff members of Offaly Sports Partnership in 2010 from left to right, Eamonn Henry Coordinator; Olivia Murphy Administrator; Claire Grehan Sports Inclusion Disability Officer

A number of contracted tutors, students on placements and GAA coaches also assisted in the delivery of the Partnership's programmes, and these are named below.

Sports tutors	Student placements	GAA coaches
Gordon Kennedy	Ana Carames	Brian Darby
Charlie McDonagh	Anne Marie McCarthy	Daniel Hctor
Buntu Mlisana	Odhrán McIntyre	Gerard Keyes
James Nolan		Mary Wyr

We wish to express our thanks to all those that helped in the delivery of our programmes; and our partners such as St Mary's Youth and Community Centre, the HSE and Offaly Local Development Company that hosted placements on our behalf.

Strategic Plan Implementation



During 2010, the Partnership completed implementation of our first three year strategic plan 2008 - 2010. The plan set out four strategic goals: -

1. Promoting inclusion (to increase the level of participation in sport by targeted low participation groups);
2. Building capacity (to build the capacity of sports clubs, schools and communities to deliver high quality sporting experiences);
3. Sustainable infrastructure (to support the development of sustainable sports facilities in the county);
4. Developing partnership (to develop a partnership approach to sports development in the county).

The following sections in this report will give an overview of work completed in 2010 under each of the strategic goals.

Strategic Goal 1: Promoting Inclusion

Offaly Sports Partnership is committed to the ideal of sport for all and believes that people of all ages, abilities, needs and interests have the right to partake in sport. In achieving this goal, the Partnership identified six low participation groups in the county for targeted support. The identified groups are: -



1. People with a disability;

2. Travellers;



3. Migrant communities;

4. Older people;



5. Disadvantaged young people;

6. Women.

Progress in reaching out to these groups is detailed on the following pages: -

1. People with a Disability

Claire Grehan is one of 17 Sports Inclusion Development Officers funded by Dormant Accounts and the Irish Sports Council in 2010, and she has continued her work begun in 2008, in bringing sport and physical activity programmes to people with physical, sensory and intellectual disabilities. In 2010, a total of 414 people with disabilities have been reached by Claire, and the organisations she works with. Among the activities organised and delivered, or jointly planned and delivered in conjunction with neighbouring Sports Partnerships were: -

- 4 come try days were delivered to 71 participants including children and adults with intellectual, sensory and other disabilities.
- 6 athletes participated in the Midlands Athletics programme, which was delivered in conjunction with the Irish Wheelchair Association, Laois and Offaly Sports Partnerships.
- 42 participants took part in a variety of kit fit programmes rolled out by Claire and supported by Aura Tullamore leisure centre and Rahan community gym. 10 participants took part in a gym / multi sport programme in Rahan, 9 took part in a gym / aerobics programme in Aura Tullamore and, 23 men took part in spinning classes in Aura Tullamore.
- 125 participants took part in three Midlands Boccia League outings, and



one Boccia Blitz. The Midlands Boccia League was delivered in conjunction with Westmeath Sports Partnership and was supported by teams from the National Learning Network (NLN) and Rehab Care. A second Boccia Blitz was delivered in conjunction with Tipperary Sport Partnership and was supported by teams from St Cronin's Day Services

- Midlands United Power Chair Football Club continues to flourish, despite the untimely passing of Stephen Devery (the team's 13 year old captain). "Ar dheis Dé go raibh a anam". They were runners up in the Association of Irish Powerchair Football (AIPF) League and Cup 2009 / 2010, and are currently top of the AIPF in the 2010 / 2011 league series.
- Following requests from disability groups for summer programme ideas, 31 participants enjoyed orienteering in Boora, Golden Grove and Tullamore Town Park.
- In conjunction with Special Olympics Ireland, Claire established a motor activities programme for people with severe to profound



intellectual disabilities. 14 participants availed the programme, and as a result of this programme, the Sisters of Charity affiliated to Special Olympics Ireland and received support in the way of equipment and funding from Special Olympics.



- Following a request from the NLN, a six week basketball programme was established by Claire. 14 participants took part on the programme, and at the conclusion of the programme, a basketball blitz was held in Moate where NLN representatives from Laois, Offaly and Westmeath competed against each other.

- Wheelchair Hurling has now been identified as a key priority area of development for the GAA. To introduce the concept of wheelchair hurling,

two come try days were carried out with the Irish Wheelchair Association (IWA) Sunshine Club. 12 people with physical disabilities attended the days and it is the intention of the Sports Inclusion Development Officers (SIDOs) in Offaly and Westmeath to establish a wheelchair hurling club in 2011.

- The Meet and Train Sports Ability programme was developed by Offaly and Westmeath SIDOs to create opportunities for people with disabilities to participate in a multi sport programme. 22 participants (14 from Offaly and 8 from Westmeath) took part in an eight week multi sport programme. Activities included orienteering, gym, parachute, aerobics, basketball and soccer. In



the 4th week of the programme, participants spent a day in Tullamore Harriers Athletics Stadium, while in the 8th week, participants spent a day in Athlone Institute of Technology Sports Centre.

- Following the success of the Partnership's Sportshall Athletics programme in mainstream schools, a pilot Sportshall Athletics programme was delivered in Ballinamere National School's special education unit catering for children with intellectual disabilities (i.e. autism). 12 participants took part on the programme, and as a result of this pilot, participants from the programme took part in the Sportshall Athletics programme being delivered in 30 mainstream schools in the county, and also competed in the inter schools Sportshall athletics championships in January / February 2011.



As a result of Offaly not having a development officer for soccer, Claire delivered a soccer programme in conjunction with the service providers to enable them to take soccer sessions on their own every other week. 26 participants benefited from this programme and service users are now better able to participate in the Football Association of Ireland's (FAI) Football for All league.

- To support delivery of the health fitness module implemented by the NLN, Claire delivered one multi sport programme to the NLN as part of this module in which 8 people participated.



- At the request of the Daughters and Sisters of Charity, Claire delivered two multi sport programmes to provide opportunities for service users to try out different sporting activities. 9 participants each (18 in total) from the Daughters and Sisters of Charity participated on this programme.

- One additional programme, specifically aimed at women with disabilities to become more active more often was also delivered by Claire to 21 women concentrating on aerobics and circuit training.



2. Travellers in Sport / 3. Migrants in Sport

Following the Partnership's 2010 grant submission to the Irish Sports Council (ISC) in which we requested that we be permitted to use carryover funds from programmes which were funded but not completed in previous years (e.g. Travellers in sport), and the ISC's permission to do so, a new integration programme was developed and delivered in 2010 to increase the participation of Travellers and Migrants in sport and physical activity.

Approximately 180 children in each of the two schools attended by Travellers and immigrants in Tullamore participated. The trained Traveller and immigrant tutors also provided support in helping children in other communities. In total, 360 children were supported to participate to their optimum in sporting disciplines.

Scoil Bhride, Tullamore (for example) which has the highest population of Travellers and immigrants in the county, participated in and won the Offaly inter schools athletics championships following a programme intervention. A number of the participants have now joined the local athletics club as a result.

While there has been some transfer of children into mainstream clubs, this generally remains a problem and the number of immigrants for example participating in the mainstream is not proportional to the overall size of the community. The Sports Partnership made a strong case to the Office of the Minister for Integration in this regard and is to receive support for 2011 to start to address this issue.



4. Older People in Sport



Go for Life activities were coordinated by Olivia Murphy, Administrator, Offaly Sports Partnership. The range of activities delivered included: -

Get active presentations - four groups and 65 participants attended the get active presentations.

Physical Activity Leader training - 19 participants from 12 active retirement groups attended this training.

Short mat bowling - One active retirement group requested and received short mat bowling training during the course of the year. 13 participants attended this training.

o50s boccia - 40 participants from five active retirement groups underwent this training. Of these five groups, three went on to participate in the Offaly o50s Boccia League, supported by Go for Life.





o50s bocchia league - Following the limited success of the o50s Men's Bocchia programme, this programme was expanded in 2010. As a result of the expansion of the programme, Active Retirement groups and Men's groups now participate with 10 teams from 7 groups involved in the programme. The participating groups are Ballycumber Active Retirement Group (2 teams - mixed), Ballycumber Men's Group (2 teams - men), Banagher Active Retirement group (1 team - mixed), Belmont Men's Club (1 team - men), Clareen Active Retirement Group (1 team - mixed), Clonbullogue Active Retirement Group (2 teams - 1 men and 1 women) and Rahan Men's Group (1 team - men). The 2010 league runs from September 2010 to May 2011, and it is envisaged that the top four teams from Offaly will compete against the top four teams in Laois in an inter county event in the latter half of 2011.

5. Disadvantaged Youth

The Golf for Disadvantaged Young People's programme was established to: -

- Run a training programme in golf for disadvantaged teenagers in the county who have no prior background in the game, and
- Link up golf clubs with youth organisations for delivery of the project

To begin the preparatory work for this programme, a working group was established. The programme itself will commence in 2011.

Shane Lowry (pictured right), Irish Open winner 2009 also permitted the Partnership to establish an annual tournament in his name for use in conjunction with this project similar to the way in which Pauline Curley lent her name to the annual Pauline Curley Relay Marathon for girls in post primary.



6. Women in Sport

Four women in sport programmes were delivered in 2010: -



Circuit training - Following the suspension of the circuit training programme commenced in 2008 and completed in 2009, additional requests were received in 2010 for programmes of this nature. Three programmes were developed and delivered as part of this project: -

The first programme linked into an overall personal development programme for teenage single parents in Clara town which was partly funded by the Department of Social Protection and positive feedback on



the circuit training was received.

The second programme was delivered in Rhode through the local parish development association. As a result there was increased participation of teenage girls in the local Community Games events, and a programme of coaching support was developed in conjunction with the local parish Community Games committee.

A third programme commenced in Killeigh parish. It grew out of a desire by a newly established community games committee to have winter training opportunities for the secondary school girls in the winter months.

Port 10k - In conjunction with our neighbours in Laois, the project was established to increase the participation in the cross county town of Portarlington through a meet and train programme, and the running of an inaugural 10k in the town.

A 10 week meet and train programme was set up in the town of Portarlington and over 60 people participated. The programme was delivered primarily on the local Coillte trail in Garryinch Woods.

Originally planned as a 10 week programme, two days per week, the majority of the group agreed to undertake a third training day after a few weeks in to the programme. Many of these continue to meet and train under the direction of the training leader. A major achievement of the project was the local volunteering and cooperation between organisations (e.g. development association, local athletic club etc).



Pauline Curley Relay Marathon - Following the successful running of the inaugural Pauline Curley Relay Marathon on 2009, this event was run again in 2010. Five schools (Gallen Community School, Ferbane; Sacred Heart School, Tullamore; St Brendan's Community School, Birr; Banagher College; and Tullamore College) and over 160 girls participated with St. Brendan's Community School retaining their title.



Fit for girls - This project was established to support secondary schools to identify and address the barriers preventing girls participation in sport in a school based environment, and is concerned with the development of plans by secondary schools to address the barriers preventing the participation

of girls in school and extra curricular sport and physical education. Two schools (St Brendan's

Community School Birr and Banagher College) participated on this programme. St Brendan's Community School, Birr have submitted their plan to the HSE and funding will be released for this school in 2011. Banagher College have completed their needs assessment and are currently in the process of drafting their plan for submission to the HSE.

Summary

In summary, Offaly Sports Partnership maintained its commitment to low participation groups in 2010.

It is clear that people with a disability received greater support than other groups thereby highlighting the difference that a dedicated officer can make.

Opportunities to secure match funding to invest in individual target groups reduced, and there will be a need for us to re-examine our approach to supporting these groups in our next strategic period, given the fact that resources continue to be reduced.

Strategic Goal 2: Building Capacity

Offaly Sports Partnership recognises that sports clubs, schools and communities, and especially volunteers in each of these areas have a major role to play in the future development of sport in the county. In working to build the capacity of the sports sector in the county, the work of the Partnership in 2010 has focused on:-

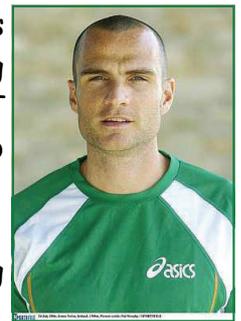
1. A continued commitment to improve fitness levels among children in the county with a particular focus on innovative programmes. The success of this measure was due largely to the further development of working relationships with international partners, national and local partners
2. Support of voluntary efforts;
3. Operating a club development grant scheme;
4. Continuing to pursue investment opportunities for the advancement of sport in the county.

The following pages present an overview of each of these areas of work.

1. Innovative programmes to improve children's fitness



Building on the work and recommendations of Emma Bunworth's (shown left) 2008 research into fitness and agility levels among school children in Offaly, and the work of James Nolan's FAST Kids (James shown right) in 2009, the Partnership continued to develop deeper strategic links with international, national and local partners. Details of the programmes delivered as a result of these collaborations are outlined in the following pages: -



Primary School Superstars - Following the success of this programme in 2009, the programme was delivered once again in 2010 with the aim of achieving maximum usage of Buntús equipment within primary schools. Approximately 300 children from four schools participated on this programme in 2010. The schools participating on the 2010 programme were Mucklagh, Croghan, Killeigh and Rath. A student placement on loan with the HSE was responsible for the roll out of this programme. Since 2009, 12 schools have participated on the programme.

Athletics integration programme in primary schools -

Following the Partnership's 2010 grant submission to the Irish Sports Council (ISC) in which we requested that we be permitted to use carryover funds from programmes which were funded but not completed in previous years (e.g. Travellers in sport), and the ISC's permission to do so, a new integration programme was developed and delivered in 2010 to increase the participation of primary children of immigrant and Traveller backgrounds in sport and physical activity. For more information on this programme, check out actions 2 and 3 under strategic goal 1 on page 8 of this report.





Primary school Sportshall Athletics - Two Sportshall Athletics programmes were delivered in 2010. The first of these programmes was a pilot programme delivered by the Sports Inclusion Development Officer in Ballinamere National School's special education unit catering for children with intellectual disabilities (i.e. Autism). As a result of this pilot, some of the participants on this programme participated in the Sportshall Athletics programme delivered by the Partnership in 30 mainstream schools in the county, and also had the opportunity to compete in the annual interschools Sportshall Athletics competition.

The second of these programmes was delivered to 30 mainstream schools with over 2,700 pupils benefiting. Of the 30 participating, 23 schools participated in an inter schools activity in January / February 2011 carried over from December 2010 due to the adverse weather conditions. The Partnership would like to thank Offaly GAA, the immigrant and Traveller coaches / tutors, FAST Kids and Ana Carames, a volunteer on the European Volunteer Programme, and St Mary's Youth and Community Centre for their support in delivering this programme. The feedback from schools has been positive, and is particularly evidenced by the fact that a number of schools now plan to purchase their own equipment stock and deliver the programme themselves.



The Sportshall Athletics programme is also being delivered in other cities and counties and as a result of the widespread popularity of this programme, a blitz featuring four counties (Laois, Meath, Offaly and Westmeath) was held in 2010. It is the intention of the Athletics Association of Ireland and local sports partnerships delivering sportshall athletics in their counties to host an inaugural Inter County Sportshall Athletics Championships in Athlone in March 2011.



Primary and post primary Relay Marathons - Three relay marathons were hosted by the Partnership in 2010.

The first of these events was the Internacional Maratón Simultáneo and came about as a result of an invitation from the AAA in the UK to participate in this event. 25 primary schools had children participate in this child friendly project from which 80 were chosen to represent Offaly (and Ireland) in the international event which was staged in a number of locations

worldwide (e.g. Canada, Ireland, Spain and the UK) simultaneously. Very positive feedback has been

received from children, parents, school teachers and schools on this project which captured the public imagination, and we would plan to maintain the international partnership for this moving forward into 2011.



The second of these events was the Pauline Curley Relay Marathon - for further information on this project, check out the report on the Pauline Curley Relay Marathon on page 10 of this report.

The third of these events was the John Treacy Relay Marathon - Following the success of the Pauline Curley Relay Marathon, Laois and Westmeath Sports Partnerships expressed interest in participating in a three county relay marathon aimed at boys and girls in post primary schools. Unfortunately, due to the adverse weather conditions (and frozen ice and snow on tracks) in the last quarter of 2010, this event was postponed until the first quarter of 2011, at which stage one school each from Laois, Offaly and Westmeath will participate in this event.

Other programmes - In addition to the programmes delivered on pages 12 to 14 of this report, the Partnership continued to deliver the Buntús programme of the Irish Sports Council within primary schools and childcare services. Nine teachers from Daingean National School availed of Buntús Generic training; while 13 childcare providers and 26 practitioners attended Buntús Strat training. In addition, staff of Partnership assisted the Offaly County Childcare Committee in the delivery of play mornings in Birr and Tullamore. 14 parents and toddlers attended the Tullamore morning, while 176 adults and 236 children attended the Birr mornings. Aspects of the Buntús Start programme were delivered at these events.



2. Support of voluntary efforts

A number of programmes were delivered in support of voluntary efforts in the sports and community sectors. Programmes delivered included: -



Sports sector training - four code of ethics awareness courses were delivered to 71 sports sector volunteers.

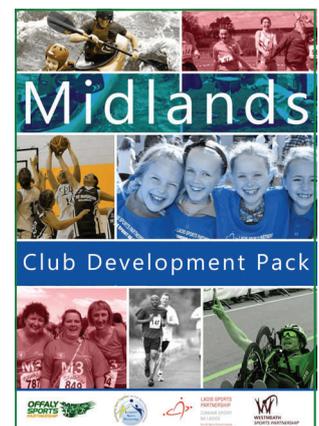
Support was also offered to two Community Games areas (one in Killeigh and one in Rhode) to assist them in re-establishing Community Games in the Killeigh parish, and to strengthen Community Games in the Rhode parish. Between the two areas, 166 participants were reached, and both areas had a large turnout at the County finals. In addition, some members went on and joined mainstream clubs as a direct result of this intervention.



Community sector training - a variety of training took place for the community sector including disability awareness training, Go for Life training for older peoples' groups and summer camp training for childcare providers. 424 people (e.g. childcare providers, older people, secondary school students, sports organisations and third level students) availed of this training.



In addition to the programmes outlined above, the Midlands Sports Partnerships (i.e. Laois, Longford, Offaly and Westmeath) began work on drafting a club development pack as a result of the interest expressed by clubs following the publication of the Midlands Sports Partnership booklet, "Volunteering in Changing Times" in 2009. The club development pack should be available to clubs and other interested parties in the first half of 2011.



3. Club Development Grant Scheme

20 clubs shared a total of €12,000. Grants were allocated as follows: -

New clubs

1. Gracefield Soccer Club
2. Eagles Soccer Club, Birr
3. Edenderry Weightlifting Club
4. St Mary's Boxing Club, Daingean
5. Killeigh Parish Community Games
6. Culraven Forest Soccer Club, Cloneyhurke

Club development

1. Birr Camogie Club
2. Birr Town Soccer Club
3. Edenderry GAA
4. Lusmagh Camogie Club
5. Tullamore Hockey Club
6. Wolftrap Cycling Club, Birr
7. Ballinamere Special Olympics
8. Boyneside Tug of War, Edenderry
9. Lloyd Park Bowling Club, Tullamore
10. Mucklagh Schoolboys / Schoolgirls Soccer Club
11. Midlands United Powerchair Football Club, a three county club (Laois, Offaly and Westmeath)

Special project

1. Piranha Swimming Club
2. Tullamore Canoe Club

County Development Board Planning

1. Offaly Camogie County Board

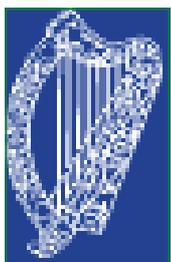
4. Pursuing investment opportunities for the advancement of sport in the county



The Partnership received €160,438 in support from the Irish Sports Council (ISC) in pursuit of its 2010 work plan; €135,438 of this funding was allocated to ISC core, ISC programmes, general programmes and the HSE Women in sport initiative, while €25,000 was allocated in support of the Sports Inclusion Development Officer programme. Funding from Dormant Accounts (€12,463) and from the Community, Enterprise and Economic Development section of Offaly County Council (€12,000) was also secured in support of the Sports Inclusion Development Officer programme.

The Partnership continued to monitor and promote investment opportunities (e.g Texaco Sports Star Bursaries, Kelloggs Field of Dreams, etc) to clubs and community groups for the advancement of sport and physical activity in the county. To this end, the Partnership made two applications for funding assistance; and Offaly's Active Retirement Groups were advised of Go for Life's 2010 National Grant Scheme for Sport and Physical Activity for Older People.

Under the European Year for Combating Poverty and Social Exclusion, the Partnership through one of its partner agencies (i.e. St Mary's Youth and Community Centre, Tullamore) secured funding of €3,000 to support the delivery of the Travellers / Migrants in Sport athletics integration programme, details of which can be found on page 8 of this report.



In November 2010, the Partnership applied to the Office of the Minister for Integration with the support of the Community, Enterprise and Economic Development section of Offaly County Council, for funding to support the integration of legally resident immigrants in Irish society through sport and physical activity. €20,000 was approved by the Minister for this project, and work on the project is due to commence in 2011.

Finally, in December, Minister Mary Hanafin, TD announced the 862 groups who shared €350,000 under the National Grant Scheme for Sport and Physical Activity for Older People. Offaly groups shared a total of €9,820 and are as follows: -

1. Arden View Community & FRC, Tullamore
2. Ballykilmurry Active Retired
3. Barna ARA
4. BLC Active Retirement Club Ballycumber
5. Better Health Club, Tullamore
6. Clara Leading ARA
7. Community Nursing Unit, Edenderry



8. Croghan Hill ARA
9. Edenderry ARA
10. Edenderry ICA
11. Golden Years Club, Rhode
12. High Street Belmont ARA, Ferbane
13. Irish Wheelchair Association, Cloghan
14. Mid Offaly Housing Association Tullamore
15. Mount Bolus Active Age
16. Offaly Sports Partnership
17. Pullough ARA
18. Pullough ICA
19. Seir Kieran ARA
20. The Clodagh ARA
21. Tihilly Residents Association
22. Tullamore ARA
23. Tullamore ICA
24. Young At Heart Group, Edenderry

Summary

In summary, Offaly Sports Partnership maintained its focus on the major role that sports clubs, schools and communities, and especially volunteers in each of these areas have a to play in the future development of sport in the county

It is clear that schools, and to a lesser degree the community and sports sectors benefited from the support of the Partnership in their work. Despite this support, opportunities to secure funding to invest in the continued good work started in 2008 have reduced, and continue to do so. Therefore moving forward into our new strategic period 2011 - 2015, there will be a need for us to re-examine our approach to supporting sports clubs, schools, communities and volunteers within a time of reduced resources available.



3. Coordination and collaboration

The Partnership collaborated closely with other Partnerships in 2010. Examples of such collaborations included the drafting of a Club Development Pack by the Midlands Sports Partnerships (Laois, Longford, Offaly and Westmeath), and the delivery of an inter county Sportshall jamboree in 2010 (Laois, Meath, Offaly and Westmeath).

4. Effective structures

The use of sub structures and ad hoc working groups remains important to advancing the work of the Partnership. The Older Men in Sport (renamed Older People in Sport) working group continued to meet in 2010.

In the absence of further communication pertaining to the Community Services Programme and the "Equality for Women Measure" administered by the Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform, the Travellers in Sport working group remains suspended, while the Women in Sport working group was suspended.

One existing working group (i.e. the Sports Ability Forum) continued to meet while two new working groups were established: -

1. **Strategic Planning working group** - this working group was established to oversee the review of the 2008 - 2010 strategic plan, and begin the development of a new strategic plan for the period 2011 - 2015. The working group consisted of the Executive committee, and additional representatives from the Board including Joe Meegan (3rd level sector), Clodagh Armitage (HSE) and Jude Feehan (sports sector). For more information on the work of this working group, check out the moving forward section of this report (page 21).
2. **Golf for Disadvantaged Young People working group** - this working group was established to run a training programme in golf for disadvantaged teenagers in the county who have no prior background in the game, and to link up golf clubs with youth organisations for delivery of the project.

Moving forward - the Next Five Years

2010 was a year of review, reflection and forward planning for us in the Partnership.

Independent researcher, Martin Kennedy was appointed in May to carry out an independent review. His findings can be viewed and downloaded at www.offalysports.ie/publications, "Offaly Sports Partnership Review 2008 - 2010".



In September, a call for public submissions was made, and a planning workshop with the sports sector was held. This workshop which was opened by An Taoiseach, Brian Cowen T.D. was attended by over 100 people.

Based on national research, national participation priorities, findings from the review, public submissions and deliberations at the planning workshop, a new five year plan has been developed. This plan has set out four priority themes, namely: -

1. Lifelong involvement in sport
2. Sustainable inclusion
3. Dialogue to increase participation in sport
4. Marketing of sport

It became clear from the planning process that the attainment of increased participation in line with national targets will be a mammoth task, particularly among the adult population. Nonetheless it is a task that we are ready to rise to.