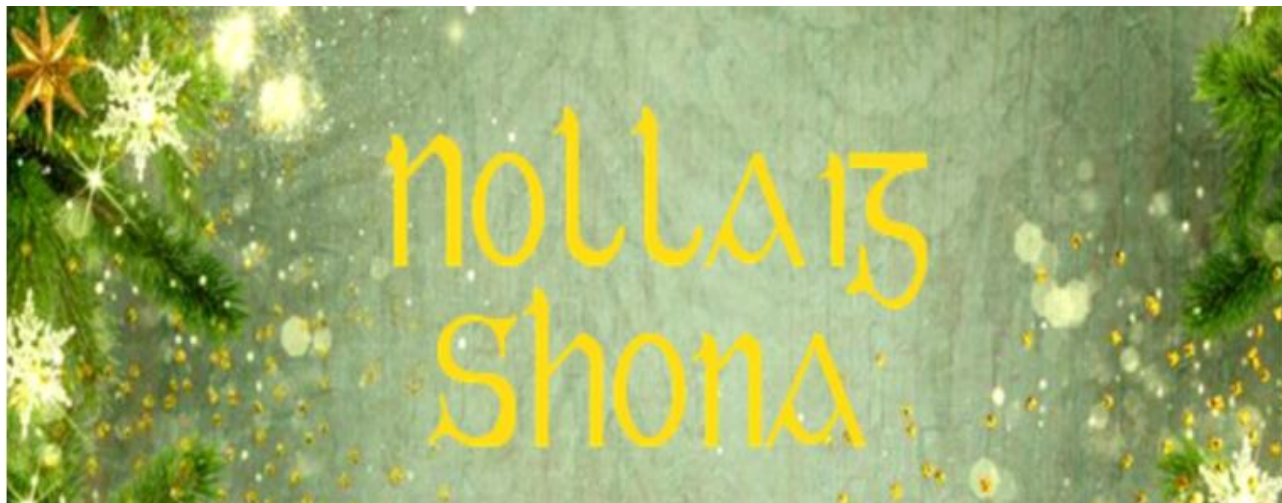




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*Agus athbhlíain faoi
shéan is faoi mhaise dhaoibh*





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EXECUTIVE FUNCTIONS

A list of Orders made in the last month will be available in the Council Chamber for inspection by the Elected Members.

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

Winter Solstice: Spectacular Light Projection at Kilkenny Castle 20th December

The Creative Ireland Programme, in partnership with RTÉ, is calling on Ireland to #ShineYourLight on Sunday, 20th December at 8.30pm on the eve of the Winter Solstice.

Christmas Trees Collections 2021

The collection period will run between the 4th and 18th January, 2021.



REPORT AT A GLANCE

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HOW TO PROTECT YOURSELF FROM COVID-19 [CORONAVIRUS]
INFLUENZA & OTHER VIRAL ILLNESS



IF YOU ARE NOT FEELING WELL

Check if you have symptoms of coronavirus. These are a cough, shortness of breath, breathing difficulties, loss of taste or smell, fever (*high temperature*).

If you do have symptoms of coronavirus, phone your GP or local Emergency Department [ED] without delay.

Do not go to your GP or ED. Phone them first. Tell them about your symptoms. Give them the details about your situation. Avoid contact with other people by self-isolating. If you do not have a GP, phone 112 or 999.

IF YOU ARE FEELING WELL

If you are feeling well, carry on with your normal routine.

Follow the advice on how to protect yourself and others from coronavirus and other infections such as flu.

Avoid spending time with people who are ill with a cough, high temperature, or breathing problems.

If you develop symptoms of coronavirus:

- avoid contact with people by self-isolating
- phone your GP or emergency department
- tell them your symptoms and the details of your situation





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 THE IRISH TIMES	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4	Level 5
 Visitors	10 from 3 households	6 from 2 or 3 households	1 other household	No visitors permitted	No visitors permitted
 Gatherings	50 outside your home or garden	6 indoor 15 outdoor	No social or family gatherings	No indoor gatherings	No Except funerals or weddings
 Weddings	100 people can attend	50 people can attend	25 people can attend	6 people can attend	6 people can attend
 Indoor events	100 Up to 100 can attend indoor gatherings	50 But up to 100 in larger venues	No indoor gatherings	No indoor gatherings	No indoor gatherings
 Sports fixtures	100 indoor 200 outdoor	50 indoor 100 outdoor	No matches or events (except elite sport)	No matches or events (except elite sport)	No matches or events
 Bars, cafes & restaurants	Open with protective measures in place	Open 6 people from up to 3 households	Open. Take away or delivery. Outdoor dining only. Max 15 patrons	Open. Take away or delivery. Outdoor dining only. Max 15 patrons	Open. Take away food or delivery only.
 Wet pubs	Open	Open Groups of six from 3 households	Open Additional restrictions	Open outdoor only limited to a max of 15	Only offer takeaway or delivery service
 Domestic travel	No restrictions	No restrictions	Stay in your county/region apart from work/education/essential purposes	Stay in your county/region apart from work/education/essential purposes	Stay at home except to exercise within 5km from home
 Public transport	Travel off-peak hours or walk/cycle, if possible	Peak hours essential workers/ purposes only; 50% capacity	All hours essential workers/ purposes only; 50% capacity	Avoid public transport; essential workers/ purposes only; 25% capacity	Avoid public transport; essential workers/ purposes only; 25% capacity

Graphic: Paul Scott/IRISH TIMES GRAPHICS



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COMMUNICATIONS

Facebook Reach

Weeks 01 (w/e 5-Jan-20) to 49 (w/e 6-Dec-20)



Weeks 01 - 49 = **1,578,591**

▲ **28%** on PY

Weeks 12 - 49 = **1,322,040**

▲ **45%** on PY

Twitter Engagement Rate

Weeks 01 (w/e 5-Jan-20) to 49 (w/e 6-Dec-20)



Weeks 01 - 49 = **4.90%**

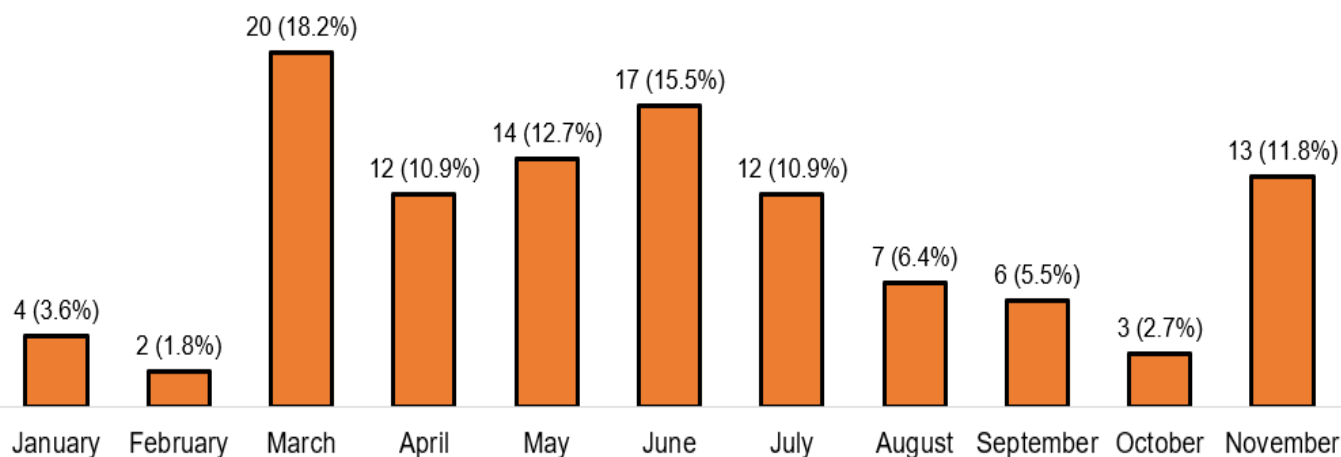
▲ **3.36 perc points** on PY

Weeks 12 - 49 = **5.40%**

▲ **3.77 perc points** on PY

110 Press Releases: January to November 2020

% of overall press releases shown in brackets ()

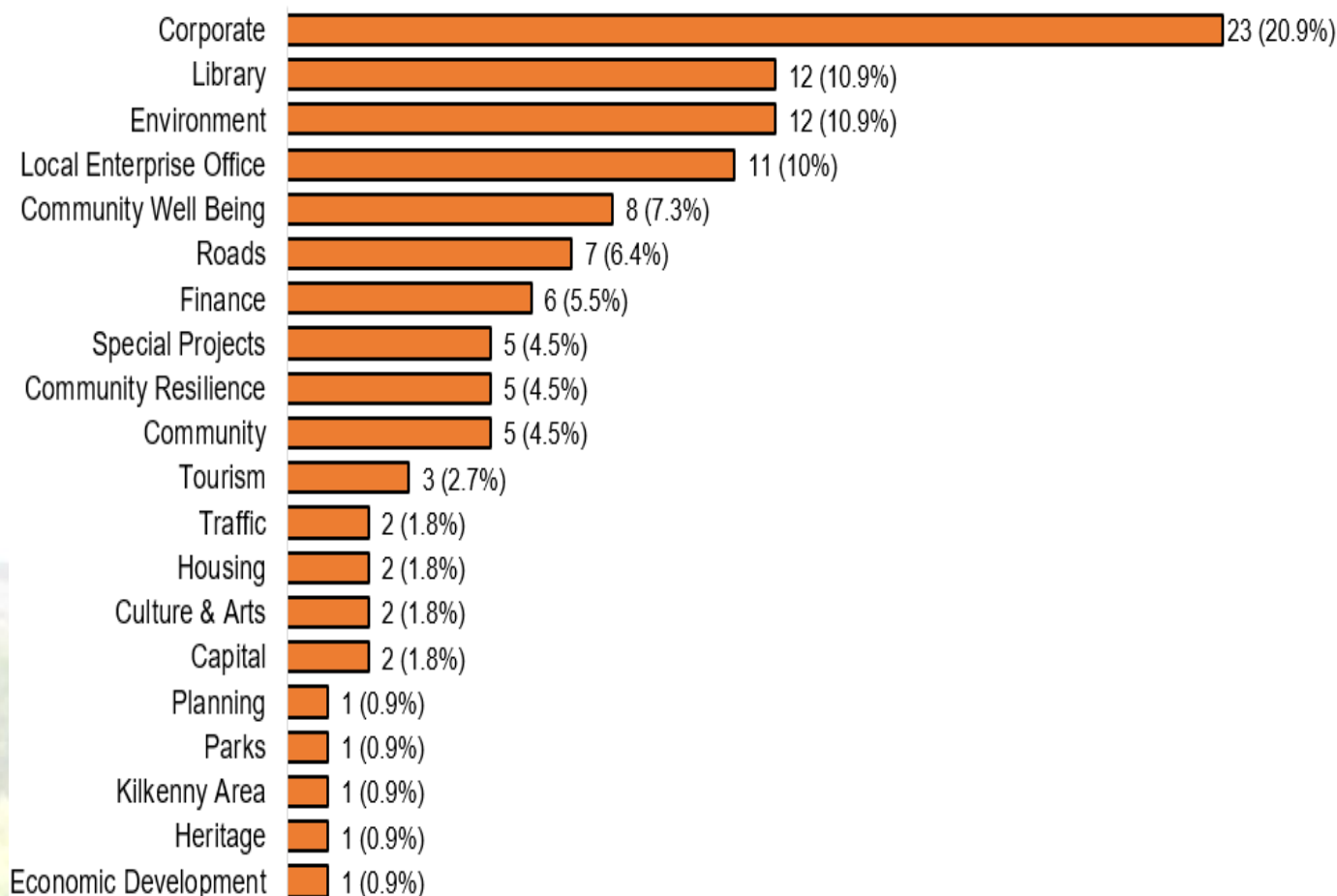




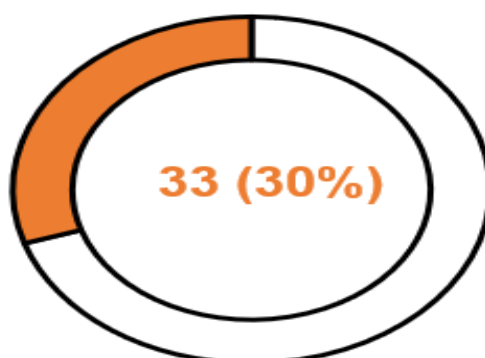
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Press Releases: Cumulative January to September; by Service Area

% of overall press releases shown in brackets (%)



COVID-19 Related Press Releases
January to November 2020





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CORPORATE

YULEFEST KILKENNY

Yulefest Kilkenny was launched by the Cathaoirleach on Saturday 28th November from the Santa Villiage in the Medieval Mile Museum. This was a virtual launch and was live streamed on Yulefest social media channels. The Mayor of Kilkenny followed the event by switching on the lights in Kilkenny City at the Parade which was also live streamed across our social media channels.



The focus this year will be on virtual or online events. Here are some snippets of what will be happening in and around Kilkenny during the festive season:

- Christmas Markets will be taking place on the Parade in compliance with social distancing guidelines.
- A socially distanced Santa's Christmas Village will run in the grounds of the Medieval Mile Museum.
- Listen to messages from Santa online on yulefestkilkenny.ie and on social media.
- Festival in a Van will visit Nursing Homes on the weekend of 19th and 20th December supported by Creative Ireland.
- "Christmas at Butler Gallery" includes a virtual tour of Wolfwalkers Exhibition and online Christmas Children's Art Workshop.

- "Garden of Light" symbolising hope for 2021 and remembering those we have lost in 2020 is located in the grounds of Kilkenny Design and Crafts Centre.



ROADS

ROADWORKS PROGRAMME 2020

The majority of the works are now complete on Non National roads. Approximately €16.7 million has been spent on the upkeep of the network and local improvements around the City and County in 2020.

The works include:

Road Restoration (Blacktop) - €7.85 million expended on 83 projects surfacing 79km of local and regional roads.

Surface Dressing (Tar & Chip) - €2.26 million on 82 projects surface dressing 101km of local and regional roads.

Discretionary Works - €2.65 million discretionary works allow the Municipal District undertake specific maintenance and improvement works. In total 75 projects including footpath repairs, footpath extensions, additional public lighting, improvements in villages etc.

Drainage Works - €652k on 55 projects assisting with the elimination of localised flooding issues.



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Low Cost Accident Schemes - €368k spent on 14 schemes providing road safety works at specific locations throughout the county.

Bridge Rehabilitation - €200k on 11 bridges.

Surfacing Public Lanes (*Community Involvement Scheme*) - €729k surfacing 14 lanes.

Surfacing Private Lanes (*Local Improvement Schemes*) - €291k surfacing 6 lanes.



*Main street Gowran
New pavement and pedestrian crossing*

NATIONAL ROADS

Pavement Schemes

N76 Callan By-Pass to Ballymack & Cuffesgrange Pavement Project

A major pavement project involving improvement to 5.05km including drainage improvements, road markings, etc. has been completed on the N76.

Kilkenny Minor Schemes

A number of minor schemes are progressing through various stages in conjunction with TII on the national road network.

N24 Tower Road

Planning approval for the proposed scheme was secured in 2019. Approval of the Compulsory Purchase Order for the scheme was given by An Bord Pleanála on the 5th August, 2020. We are presently undertaking the administrative procedures necessary to give effect to that decision. It is expected that construction will commence in 2021.

N77 Ballyragget to Ballynaslee

A planning application under 177AE and a Compulsory Purchase Order application has been submitted to An Bord Pleanála in December for the above project.

N24 Carrick Road

The section of N24 proposed to be improved is rural in nature and located immediately North West of the village of Mooncoin in County Kilkenny. We are currently preparing the necessary documentation to make a simultaneous planning application to An Bord Pleanála for approval under 177AE along with a Compulsory Purchase Order for the scheme. It is expected that the application will be made towards the early part of Q1 2021.

Kilkenny Major Schemes

N25 Glenmore to Waterford Scheme

The scheme is within the concluding stage of Phase 2 - Option Selection. A preferred route corridor is expected to be announced in early Q1 2021.

N24 Waterford to Cahir Scheme

Arup and Partners Ireland Ltd are working in the early design and feasibility stages of this project which will take approximately 60 months. Their brief is to bring the scheme through the statutory processes. (*Planning, CPO, etc.*)

Other Projects

Kilkenny Western Environs Phase 1 Infrastructure

Construction of the scheme commenced on 4th March, 2019 and site works remain ongoing. The traffic management measures necessary to construct the new roundabout at the junction of the scheme with the N76 Callan Road were lifted on Friday November 13th, following completion of the works at this location. The Circular Road remains closed to facilitate upgrading of the existing road and the construction of new bridges over the River Breaghagh. These works are



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scheduled to be completed before Christmas 2020, thereby allowing the Circular Road to reopen to traffic in advance of the full scheme completion. The project is expected to be completed in March 2021.

Castlecomer Footbridge

The preparation of construction tender documents is on-going with a view to going to tender in December 2020 or early Q1 2021. The main construction works will take place during the summer 2021 with works to be completed by Q4 2021.

PLANNING

Development Management

Planning Summary	Total to November	
	2019	2020
Planning Applications Received	67	96
Planning Applications Granted	71	69
Planning Applications Refused	3	8
Complaints Received	105	95
Warning Letters Issued	116	79
Enforcements Notices Issued	34	15
Cases Closed	98	61

The Planning Department is open for business subject to Covid-19 recommendations for social distancing and other safety measures for the protection of customers and staff. Visits to the Planning Office are by pre-booked appointment. Appointment can be made by telephoning the planning office at 056 7794010 or by email to planning@kilkennycoco.ie

FORWARD PLANNING

City & County Development Plan:

The Draft Kilkenny City and County Development Plan 2021-2027 and the associated Environmental Reports will be published for public consultation on Consult.Kilkenny.ie and

will be available at all Kilkenny Libraries from the 22nd of December 2020. Submissions are invited from the publication date until 5pm on the 12th March, 2021.

Conservation

Projects for the Built Heritage Investment Scheme, Historic Structures Fund and the July Jobs Stimulus Package have been completed (*see table below*)

Community Monuments Fund: Work is complete on the installation of lights and handrail at the Medieval Mile Museum, Kilkenny. Funding is awarded under Stream 3 of the new Community Monument Fund (*see table below*)

	Funding	Privately Leveraged	Total Cost	No. Projects	No. Days
BHIS	€98,000	€187,315	€285,316	10	555
HSF	€40,000	€26,895	€66,895	2	159
JJSP	€60,230	€16,253	€76,484	2	159
CMF	€7,120	€0.00	€7,120	1	10

Historic Towns Initiative: Repairs works to the railings of Saint Mary's Church in Callan are continuing, 80% of the cost of the works are supported by the Heritage Council's Historic Town Initiative

Conservation advise to the public and agents, while planning referrals and Sections 57 Declaration continue to be responded to.

Building Control

Valid Commencement Notices Received End November	2020	2019
Number of Applications received	309	280

Valid Part M [DAC] Applications	2020	2019
Valid [DAC] Applications received to end of November	79	53



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Taking in Charge

Works are ongoing on the following estates:

- The Green, Ballyfoyle.
- Friary Walk, Callan.
- Roseleigh, Mooncoin
- Banagher Court, Piltown.
- Rath Ullord, Kilkenny City

Vacant Sites

Section 7.1 notices were served on a total of 9 sites in November. These notices alert landowners that their sites are being considered for addition to the Register for 2021. The landowners now have an opportunity to make a submission to the Council, outlining any reason as to why their sites should not be entered on the Register.

There are currently 30 sites on the Vacant Sites Register. A total of 19 of these are now liable for the 7% levy. The Council were in the process of issuing payment demands in March, however that process was halted following the Government's Emergency Order. The process will recommence to ensure compliance with statutory deadlines. Two sites have had their levy discharged to date.

The number of cancelled entries due to site activation or improvement now stands at 13 sites.

PARKS

Parks & Playgrounds

Annual inspections for all 31 playgrounds in the charge of the Parks Department are now underway. This is an independent inspection of all playgrounds by an inspector registered with the RPII (Register of Play Inspectors International). Each playground must pass the inspection to be considered fit for play and use for the coming year. Any maintenance or repair issues identified during this process will form part of the schedule of works to playgrounds in the coming year. All works to playgrounds for

2020 are now complete maintaining playgrounds to a high standard,

Works will commence on Piltown playground in January. The site, located to the rear of the old Garda Station, Main Street Piltown is an attractive riverside location with mature vegetation. The playground will be developed by the local community with assistance from the Parks Department and funding from the Community and Cultural Capital Facilities Scheme.

Tree planting is taking place currently in the Fairgreen, Callan to complement other recent works to the area.

IMAGES FROM PLAYGROUNDS AROUND THE COUNTY



Ferrybank Playground



Fair Green Callan



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Castlecomer Playground



New adventure playground Woodstock Gardens

South East Greenway

The project received a welcome boost in mid-November with the announcement that €15.5 million, the current estimated cost of the project, will be provided towards the construction costs under the national Greenway Fund in 2021 and 2022. The increase in the grant aid recognises the challenges faced by Local Authorities nationally during the Covid crisis in finding the matched funding for significant capital projects. The increased funding will allow the project to be delivered and open for use in 2022.

Works are now completed on the rail lifting contract on the South East Greenway which runs from Ferrybank in South Kilkenny to New Ross, terminating at Mount Elliot. Rails and sleepers have now been lifted and the contractor will be pulling off site shortly having completed the final clean up.

In the urban section of the Greenway in the Ferrybank area, screen fencing is currently being

erected to address concerns over security and privacy due to the proximity of the old railway line to back gardens, in particular in the Ard Glas area.

The clearance of the track and lifting of rails will clear the way for construction of the Greenway which is anticipated to commence in 2021. The urban sections of the route in Ferrybank and Rosbercon have now been tendered as it is planned that the 24km route will be delivered in a number of sections.

Two Part 8 planning applications for Greenway Car Parks to facilitate access to the Greenway at Raheen, New Ross, Ballyverneen, Glenmore and Ferrybank have now been approved by the Council. A public consultation process is underway to inform local residents from the Ferrybank area of the Council's intention to develop a car park in the Ferrybank area to serve the Greenway. As part of this process there will be an online meeting with those residents who wish to be involved. As part of this process the Council is also keen to highlight the need to develop links from surrounding residential areas to increase permeability and accessibility to the greenway for local users.



View of the Rose Fitzgerald Kennedy Bridge from the railway line at Carrickcloney

2020 Call for new applications under the Outdoor Recreation Infrastructure Scheme

The scheme is open to all Local Authorities and a number of other State Agencies, and funding is allocated via a competitive process based on the quality



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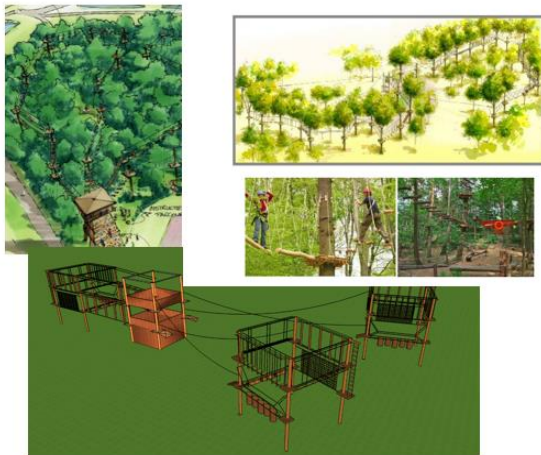
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of the applications put forward. To this end, we endeavor to ensure highest quality applications are put forward.

As advised in the November's Chief Executive Report, 7 applications were submitted under Measure 1 at the end of September 2020.

The deadline for the submission of Measure 2 & 3 applications was the 30th November and the following projects were put forward in order of priority:



Woodstock Gardens

The installation of some festive themed props is underway in the gardens to celebrate Yulefest which this year will be a more socially distanced affair. An elf themed trail and some festive deer



can be found in the gardens. The conservatory mural by Gillian Campden is now practically complete and a Christmas tree has been erected to bring some extra festive cheer.

Christmas Stars for Woodstock Gardens



As part of the Community Resilience campaign 'Keep Well' the Arts Office has organised for an installation of 3D Christmas Stars to be displayed in Woodstock Gardens as part of Yulefest 2020. The Stars are being painted by local primary school children at St. Colmcille's National School, Inistioge and St. Marys National School, Thomastown.

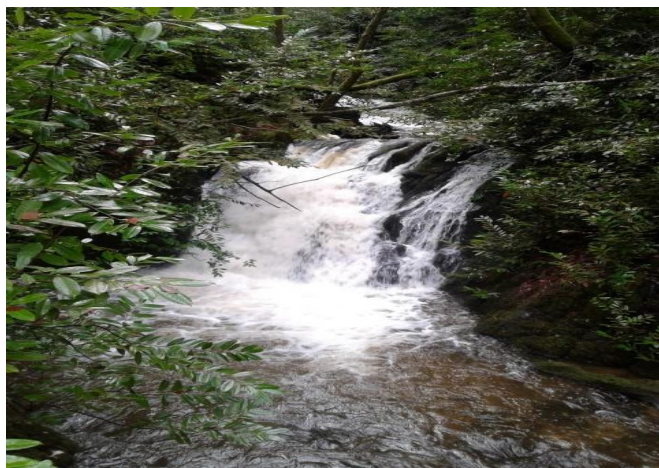
The school children are delighted to take part in the decorating of the Stars and very excited to see them on display at Woodstock with their families. There will be a total of 15 Stars arriving at the gardens on 21st December.

The gardens will be open right through the Christmas period with the exception of Christmas day. The coffee van will be available offering hot refreshments subject to weather.

An ORIS application has been made to the Department of Rural and Community Development to continue the Woodstock estate walks further downstream towards the Brownsford Stream and Waterfall, returning to Woodstock via the 'American Road' which was once the way emigrants leaving Ireland for the last time travelled for the boats to the US. The waterfall is a stunning feature in Woodstock which is little known as it is tucked deep into the woods.



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*Waterfall at the Brownsford Stream
in the Woodstock Estate*



Festive deer 'grazing' in the arboretum in Woodstock

Amenity Grants

166 groups were awarded a grant based on a number of criteria for example size of estate, small or large village or town with grants ranging from €454 to € 2,270 in 2020. The Parks Department administers the scheme, which is available to voluntary community organisations from all over the County. The main objective of the scheme is to encourage and aid small-scale works to improve the local environment and encourage community involvement in the upkeep and maintenance of public amenities. In 2021, there will be an increased focus on supporting pollinators through projects which are funded. Community groups will be encouraged to manage amenities in a more sustainable manner

in line with the pollinator plan which the Council has adopted. Grants are now being drawn down by the community groups with over 95% of the grants paid out to date.

ENVIRONMENT

Kilkenny Biodiversity & Recreational Countryside Park



This is an extremely exciting project for Kilkenny, to repurpose the closed 17-acre old landfill site at Dunmore into a high-quality amenity. The overall ambition is to develop a parkland that will create a regional destination for health and wellbeing, attracting fitness and outdoor enthusiasts of all abilities, nature lovers and educational providers. Another key objective of the proposal is to create connectivity back into the City along the River Nore Linear Park leading onto the Nore Valley walking trail, creating a key element in the Kilkenny City and Environs Green Infrastructure offering.

In November, significant project milestones were reached to bring this proposal closer to a reality. A funding application under Measure 3 of the Outdoor Recreational Infrastructure Scheme was submitted to the Department of Rural and Community Development. The maximum grant available under Measure 3 is €500,000, and the maximum amount was applied for under the application.

Planning for the project is being sought under Part 8 and the documentation for same was finalised and a planning application submitted to the Planning Section. Under this process the proposal will go out to public consultation from the 11th December 2020 until the 22nd January 2021 and submissions/ observations relating to same can



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be submitted up to the 5th February 2021. Thereafter, it is intended that a Planning Report will be prepared and presented to the Elected Members for the February Council Meeting.



Environmental Complaints

The number of complaints logged and investigated by the Environment staff this year to date has seen a 34% increase on the same period last year with 1,250 complaints investigated compared with 1,024 for last year. There has also been a 34% increase on the number of complaints since Covid 19 restrictions were introduced in March.

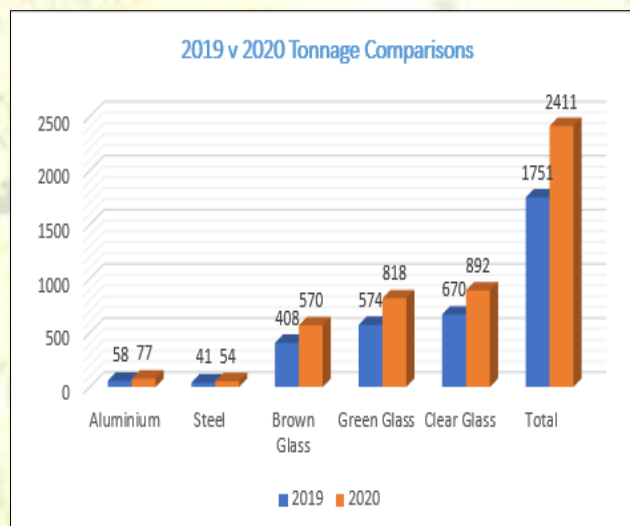
The nature of these complaints range from littering, illegal dumping, water quality, noise, abandoned cars and odours from controlled and illegal burning and farm activity. However, the majority continue to be related to littering and illegal dumping.

Environment staff are continuing to work very closely with our Service Providers to ensure the level of service is in keeping with the demand with a particular focus on the upcoming Christmas period when demand is likely to increase even further. This is however particularly challenging as the main service provider is also contracted to a number of other Local Authorities who are also experiencing a similar trend.

Despite the restrictions imposed due to Covid 19, the Enforcement Team remains very active with 223 litter fines issued this year to date.

Bring Banks

The 46 Bring Banks managed by the Council across the city and county have seen a massive increase in usage when compared to previous years. From the tonnage collection data, it is clear to see that usage increased in line with the introduction of the Covid-19 restrictions back in Mid-March and have remained at an increased level in the intervening period. 2,411 tonnes were collected from the 1st January to the 7th December in 2020 compared to 1,751 tonnes for the same period last year. This equates to a 38% increase for the 11 months amounting to 660 tonnes of extra material for recycling. The bring bank at the Newpark Shopping Centre recorded the highest usage with 148 tonnes collected whilst Ballyouskill had the lowest usage with 6.2 tonnes. Other bring bank collection rates across the county include, Urlingford 55 tonnes, Gowran 41 tonnes, Lidi Loughboy 143 tonnes, Mooncoin 99 tonnes, Mullinavat 56 tonnes Graiguenamanagh 114 tonnes Thomastown Lidi 110 tonnes, Callan 83 tonnes, Ferrybank Aldi 88 tonnes, Slieverue 36 tonnes, The Rower 16 tonnes, Goresbridge 28 tonnes and Ballyragget 38 tonnes.





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Recommended Minimum Criteria Environmental Inspection (RMCEI) Plan -2020

The restrictions put in place to combat the spread of Covid 19 has impacted on planned inspections that required site visits and/or meetings with landowners. However, notwithstanding this the only target not to be met this year involved inspections with other state agencies which could not take place due to Covid. Thanks to the efforts of our Enforcement Team, all our targets under the National Priorities have been reached.

There has been significant changes made to the RMCEI plan for 2021 and also for the 2020 Return. For each National Priority a detailed description must be provided on whether the targets were reached or not. A summary of some of the inspections undertaken is provided hereunder:

RMCEI Inspections	Planned 2020	Completed to end of November	RMCEI Inspections	Planned 2020	Completed to end of November
Inspections relating to water pollution incidents	21	35	Routine Litter Patrols (South County)	175	105
Nuisance/ Air pollution inspections	4	21	Routine Litter Patrols (North County)	175	138
Inspections of existing planning permissions (or in advance of grant)	550	522	Ambient Monitoring (us/ds WWTPs)	192	234
Ground water quality (Planning inspections)	80	701	WFD Monitoring, op & surv, samples taken (WFD)	377	339
Post Planning Inspections	100	245	Bathing Waters (non designated)	20	20
Nutrient Management Plan Assessment (NMPs)	22	20	Additional BOD analysis for Water Services	550	522

Carlow/Kilkenny Dog Shelter

The Environment Section recently launched an ad campaign in relation to responsible dog purchasing before Christmas. Many people decide to get a puppy for Christmas but there are a number of factors to consider before you decide to get or give a puppy and it is not a decision that should be taken without careful consideration. **THINK BEFORE YOU GET A PUPPY THIS CHRISTMAS**





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Christmas Arrangements

Normal opening hours as above up to and including Wednesday 23rd December.

Closed from 3.00pm on Wednesday 23rd to 10.00am Tuesday 29th December.

Normal opening hours Tuesday 29th December to Thursday 31st December.

Closed Friday 1st January.

If over the Christmas holiday period you lose your dog, please phone 059 9726785 and leave a message or message us on Carlow/Kilkenny Dog Shelter Facebook page. Visit us on Facebook; Carlow/Kilkenny Dog Shelter

Dunmore Civic Amenity Site

Dunmore Recycling and Waste Disposal Centre provides a clean, friendly and cost effective essential service to the functional area of Kilkenny. The gates of Dunmore have remained open throughout the Covid 19 restrictions.

The following will be the opening times for the Dunmore Recycling and Waste Disposal Centre over the Christmas period:

Christmas Opening Hours 2020

- Wednesday 23rd: 8.00 a.m. – 2.00 p.m.
- Thursday 24th: Closed
- Friday 25th: Closed
- Saturday 26th: Closed
- Sunday 27th: Closed
- Monday 28th: Closed
- Tuesday 29th: 8.00 a.m. – 4.30 p.m.
(open through lunch)
- Wednesday 30th: 8.00 a.m. – 4.30 p.m.
(open through lunch)
- Thursday 31st: 8.00 a.m. – 4.30 p.m.
(open through lunch)
- Friday 1st: Closed
- Saturday 2nd: Closed
- Sunday 3rd: Closed
- Monday 4th: 8.00 a.m. – 4.30 p.m.
(Normal hours resume)

Waste Week 23rd-27th of November

Kilkenny's virtual waste week took place between the 23rd-27th of November and promoted information all about waste management across Kilkenny County Council's social media platforms. It included the debut airing of a promotional video for Dunmore Recycling Centre. Siobhan Donohoe was our local waste ambassador and assisted promoting the week and she interviewed Frank Stafford, A/Senior Engineer who provided an overview of his responsibilities in the Environment Section which was published in the Kilkenny People. Interviews were also broadcasted on KCLR Live throughout the week.



Paint Smarter Campaign Launch

The "Paint Smarter" campaign, a project collaboration between Waterford, Kilkenny and Carlow Local Authorities devised 10 top tips on how to avoid wasting your money on paint. The simple tips cover purchasing, using, storing paint and disposal.

The campaign launch took place during waste week and will continue into 2021. The launch was marked by a media promotion on BEAT FM and a furniture up-cycler Marianne "The Revamp Tramp" was a campaign ambassador and promoted the ten tips on her social media platforms. The campaign consists of an information leaflet, stickers for paint tins, a film and social media posts which are currently being advertised in the Kilkenny Credit Unions. In 2021, it is hoped that in store promotions will



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occur and should regional DIY shows recommence, the campaign will be promoted at these types of events. The "Paint Smarter" campaign is a Local Authority Prevention Programme initiative funded by the National Waste Prevention Programme, an EPA led Government of Ireland Initiative.

Litter Management Plan 2021-2023

The current Litter Management Plan is under review as the plan period runs until the end of 2020. A new plan is currently being drafted and will be put out to public consultation in spring next year. Before the public consultation phase commences, the draft plan will be circulated to Elected Members and presented at each Municipal District as Elected Members suggestions and ideas on how Kilkenny can combat litter will be gratefully appreciated. The draft plan will go on public consultation and the Environment Section will seek input from different groups like the tidy towns forum, the PPN and other voluntary bodies and it will be presented at SPC4 before the final version goes for adoption at a Council meeting. Your input into this policy document would be appreciated as it sets out priorities, targets for litter management over the next three years.

Christmas Trees Collections 2021

Plans are currently being prepared to accommodate Christmas tree drop off locations for householders early in the New Year. This allows trees to be chipped and composted after the festive season. The collection period will run between the 4th and 18th January at the following locations.

- Fair Green Car Park, Graiguenamanagh
- Adjacent to the Bottle Banks in Bennettsbridge
- Quay Car Park, Thomastown
- Supervalu Car Park, Callan
- Piltown Pound Car Park, Piltown (During Normal Opening Hours Only)
- Entrance to Assumption Place, Urlingford
- The Square, Freshford
- Fair Green, Ballyragget
- Castlecomer Council Yard, Donaguile

Civic Amenity Sites

- Dunmore Waste Disposal and Recycling Centre (*During Normal Opening Hours Only*)
- Granny Recycling Centre, Grannagh (*During Normal Opening Hours Only*)

Air Quality Advertisement

The Environment Section recently published a picture advertisement in the Kilkenny People. The publishing of the advertisement was on behalf of the Department of Environment, Climate and Communications. The advertisement is designed to encourage the use of low smoke and smokeless fuels to heat for home heating. The message is very timely with the recent reports of declining air quality across the country, particularly on the last weekend of November 2020 where air quality was the poorest it has been in 30 years in some towns and cities. The main particulate exceedances was PM2.5, which is mainly from solid fuel burning.



To build on above, early in the new year the Environment Section will run an air quality and solid fuel awareness campaign. Information on how to heat your home in a more environmentally friendly and sustainable manner, which in turn will improve air quality, will be distributed through print and across the various social media platforms.

Climate Action - Woodland Creation Scheme

Under the 2020 Programme for Government, the Climate Action Regional Offices have been tasked to work with public bodies to review land availability for planting, feedback on the potential in this area, is required to be submitted by the end of 2020. This initiative is being progressed in



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partnership with the CARO's, the Department of Agriculture, Food & the Marine (DAFM) and those Local Authorities who have expressed an interest in advancing same.

Kilkenny County Council is very keen to be involved in this initiative and the Environment Section identified 17 potential sites through a desk top survey for consideration under the Woodland Creation Scheme. A Working Group comprising of various members across the organisation was formed to review the suitability of the lands identified. In total 10 sites identified were deemed unsuitable for further consideration for a variety of reasons, such as:

- Potential future use for housing development;
- Existing community use, such as sporting amenity;
- Potential future use for wastewater or water services expansion;
- Proximity of neighbours and requirements for set back from existing houses.

The Environment Section has arranged for the remaining 7 sites to be inspected by Teagasc in December 2020. Following guidance from Teagasc, consideration will be given to their use under Woodland Creation Scheme.

Climate Alliance - taking local action on global climate change

Kilkenny County Council has recently joined the European Climate Alliance. Kilkenny, Carlow and Wexford local authorities are the first in Ireland to join. The Climate Alliance is a pioneer in global and local climate protection, with long-established traditions of collaboration with indigenous peoples as well as specific CO₂ reduction goals, to which each member municipality commits itself. Since their foundation 30 years ago their network has grown to over 1,700 members in 26 European countries.

Being a Climate Alliance member means being part of a city network dedicated to climate action,

teaming with like-minded local authorities. Opportunities to inspire and be inspired abound.

Energy Management - ISO50001

Kilkenny County Council is currently pursuing ISO 50001 Energy Management certification to continue with the energy efficiency improvement trends. This certification will put in place a robust energy management system to manage energy consumption and the performance of significant energy users and realise energy saving and carbon reduction targets up to 2030 and beyond. Stage 1 of the certification process has taken place late November with stage 2 scheduled for mid-January.

COMMUNITY

Pride of Place 2020

Castlecomer Discovery Park, Clogh Village, the Callan Town Team and Kilkenny County Council were honoured at the all-Ireland Pride of Place Community Awards on the 21st November, 2020. The Castlecomer Discovery Park took top spot in the Community Tourism category with Judges praising them for delivering a "tourism enterprise par excellence". Callan Town Team were runners up in the Areas with a population between 2,000 and 5,000 and Clogh Community Group in the population between 300 and 1000 category.

Kilkenny County Council was awarded the Council Community Engagement Award for their ongoing work on community engagement.

Rural Regeneration Funding Application 2020 (DRCD)

An application for funding under the Rural Regeneration Fund was submitted to develop a new Library and Community Facility (€2.7m) in Thomastown.

"Keep Well" Campaign

Kilkenny County Council submitted its plan under the Community Resilience Fund. The plan covers actions under the "Your County",



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"Switching off and Being Creative", and the "Staying Connected Themes". All actions have to take place between now and the end of March 2021.

Town & Village Accelerated Scheme - Christmas Lights

€11,000 has been spent in each of the district towns of Castlecomer, Callan, Thomastown and Graiguenmanagh to purchase, install and afterwards take down Christmas lights under the 2020 Town & Village Scheme. These lights are now up in each of the towns.

Comhairle na nÓg

Kilkenny have received a grant of €3,000 for ICT equipment to support Comhairle na nÓg members to take part virtually while complying with COVID guidelines.

CYPSC

Kilkenny CYPSC has been allocated €18,500 under the Keep Well National Resilience Strategy. The funds will be used for Youth friendly mental health initiatives throughout the county.

HERITAGE

Creativity & Culture in Yulefest

Funding from Creative Ireland, under the Kilkenny Culture & Creativity Strategy, was secured to promote a strong heritage and creativity element in this year's Yulefest programme, including Festival in a Van; Guess the traditional shopfront; My Heritage selfie competition etc. This year's focus is on shopping local, exploring Kilkenny's wonderful outdoor sites, and being creative.

Talbots Tower Park to Re-open to the Public

The conservation and repair works to the roof at Talbots Tower are completed and the park at Talbots Tower will re-open again to the public shortly. The works to the medieval tower were co-funded by the Irish Walled Towns Network and Kilkenny County Council.



View from the newly repaired roof at Talbot's Tower

Winter Solstice: Spectacular Light Projection at Kilkenny Castle 20th December

The Creative Ireland Programme, in partnership with RTÉ, is calling on Ireland to #ShineYourLight on Sunday, 20th December at 8.30pm on the eve of the winter solstice. As part of the programme there will be a spectacular light projection at Kilkenny Castle, with words in Irish and English by author and broadcaster Manchán Magan.

LEO/ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

BREXIT SUPPORTS FOR BUSINESSES



The Local Enterprise Office continues to prepare business for Brexit with a range of supports in the run up to 1st January 2021, if the UK leaves with a trade agreement, or if it leaves without one, ensuring companies are best prepared for both scenarios. We are providing a range of training/mentoring, free of charge, as follows:

- Prepare for Brexit Webinar - 14th December
- Brexit Advisory Clinic - 16th December
- Brexit Advisory Clinic - 7th January 2021
- Brexit Advisory Clinic - 14th January 2021



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In the past few months many people as a result of the pandemic are now remote workers based in the South East.

The South East Local Authorities and their Local Enterprise Offices (www.localenterprise.ie) in association with SEBIC / Ireland South East Office are undertaking research to assess the current demand for remote working in the South East as well as the range of services and assistance required to support remote working in hubs across the region. The survey takes just a couple of minutes and one of five prizes of €100 can be won for a restaurant in either Carlow, Wexford, Waterford, Tipperary & Kilkenny.

Initiative Launched to Encourage “Shop Kilkenny – Keep It Local – Shop Safely”

A new initiative has been launched by Kilkenny County Council to highlight the importance of small business right across the County and encourage people to support them in the run up to Christmas. The Campaign “Shop Kilkenny-Keep it Local – Shop Safely” is designed to raise awareness of the many small business across our County towns and village and remind shoppers that where we direct our spending shapes the future of where we live.



LEO CLIENT STIMULUS FUND SCHEME

Under the July stimulus, a €10m. fund was ringfenced for Local Enterprise Office clients. This fund is available to enable these businesses to move into a recovery phase.

The purpose of the Local Enterprise Office Client Stimulus Scheme is to sustain eligible businesses through the provision of a cash stimulus to support operational costs and enhanced engagement with their Local Enterprise Office. The funding will be through an immediate cash contribution to support liquidity and could be used to cover ongoing operational costs, for example, utilities, insurance, refurbishment or for measures to ensure employee and customer safety.

The funding is conditional upon eligible businesses agreeing to complete a project focused on driving key themes such as Competitiveness both Operationally and Green, Capability across Leadership, Innovation, Strategic Finance and New Market Development which will support the mitigation of the effects of the Covid and Brexit crises. These projects will be funded through the Local Enterprise Office 2021 budget.

The intention is that the funding and associated projects will provide businesses with a platform from which they can sustain and grow thereby contributing to the recovery of the Irish economy.

KEY STATISTICS FOR 2020

€468,381 approved in financial assistance to 20 businesses linked to the creation of 141 jobs over a 3-year period - (€334,533 in Business Expansion



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Grants, €89,560 in Priming Grants and €44,201 in Feasibility Study Grants);

1,530 business owners and employees attended 107 core **training programmes** including seminars from Financial Training to Management Development Programmes;

747 students from 14 schools participated in the **Student Enterprise Programme** which fosters a spirit of entrepreneurship from an early age;

1,067 entrepreneurs have received **one-to-one mentoring** to assist them in relation to particular issues within their business ranging from business continuity to ICT;

462 entrepreneurs attended **Business Advisory Sessions** with LEO staff to discuss starting or growing an existing business (including remotely from March 2020);

311 Covid-19 **Business Continuity Voucher** applications were approved totalling €698,218.

282 **Trading Online Vouchers** were approved totalling €655,659.88 in order to assist businesses to implement e-commerce within their business;

136 participants attended 10 **Start Your Own Business programmes** which explores all the aspects encountered when starting up a new business (including remotely from March 2020);

20 **Microfinance loan applications** have been submitted to Microfinance Ireland of which 15 have been approved to date with total loan value of **€344,300** to date.

8 businesses have participated on **Lean for Micro** in order to assist them to look at their competitiveness and innovation specifically in relation to Brexit;

6 businesses have been approved **Technical Assistance Micro Export Assistance Grants** in order to assist them access overseas markets totalling €12,996

HOUSING

Housing Capital Delivery 2020

Rebuilding Ireland Targets

Kilkenny Revised Targets 2018-2021

Build, Acquisition & Leasing	600
Build.....	402
Acquisition.....	78
Leasing.....	120

Expected Housing Delivery 2020

The capital schemes for delivery in 2020 is as outlined in the table below.

Pipeline Delivery 2020	No of Units
Kilkenny City	
Nuncio Road (<i>Respond Housing</i>)	28
20 Green St, Kilkenny	1
24 Green Street, (CAS)	1
<i>City Total</i>	30
Kilkenny County	
Hoban Park, Bolton, Callan (KCC <i>Direct Build</i>)	38
Breaghagh Place, Main Street, Piltown (KCC <i>Direct Build</i>)	17
Lime Grove, Belmont, Ferrybank (<i>Turnkey</i>)	4
Group Home, Cloghabrody, Thomastown (KCC <i>Direct Build</i>)	4
Group Home, Coolaghmore, Windgap (CAS)	3
Old Health Centre, Windgap	1
Willow Grove, Belmont, Ferrybank (<i>PART 5</i>)	3
No 47 Barrack Street, Castlecomer (<i>Buy & Renew</i>)	1
Main St Kilmoganny (<i>Buy & Renew</i>)	1
Cois Na Bearu (<i>Cooperative Housing</i>)	14
<i>County Total</i>	86
City & County Total	116



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Delivered to date in 2020 [67 units]

- 38 units Hoban Park, Bolton Callan,
- 1 unit at Main St, Kilmoganny (*Buy & Renew*)
- 1 unit at 20 Green St. Kilkenny, full refurb, long term void
- 4 units (*Group home*) at Cloghabrody, Thomastown (*KCC Direct Build*)
- 4 units at Lime Grove, Belmont, Ferrybank (*Turnkey*)
- 17 Units at Breaghagh Place, Main Street, Piltown (*KCC Direct Build*)
- 1 unit at 47 Barrack St, Castlecomer (*Buy and Renew*) (*KCC Direct Build*)
- 1 unit at Old Health Centre, Windgap (*Buy and Renew*) (*KCC Direct Build*)



Handover at Breaghagh Place, Piltown



Breaghagh Place, Piltown



Mix of 1,2,3,4 bed units – including specially adapted units.



Former Health Centre Windgap – refurbished to 1 bed home. Completed 2020 by KCC

Under Construction at 30th November [236 units]

- 28 units Nuncio Road, Kilkenny (*Respond Housing*)
- 33 units at Glebeside, Donaguile, Castlecomer (*KCC Direct Build*)
- 6 Units at New Road and Chapel Street, Mooncoin (*Turnkey*)
- 22 units at Station Avenue, Ballyraggett (*KCC Direct Build*)
- 40 units Margaretsfield, Callan Road, Kilkenny City
- 18 units at Pairc Nua [*Broguemaker*], Castlecomer Road, Kilkenny City (*Direct Build*)
- 16 units at Blackwater Grove, Lower Kilmacow (*Turnkey*)
- 58 units at Pennefeather Green, Hebron Road, Kilkenny (*Turnkey*)
- 5 units at Grennan Villa, Thomastown (*Camphill*)
- 8 units at Pennefeather Court, Hebron Road, Kilkenny (*Turnkey*)
- 2 Units at Shanganny, Jenkinstown

Tender Stage [88 units]

- 88 units (*houses/apartments*) and community facility at Crokers Hill, Kennyswell Road, Kilkenny



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Housing at Crokers Hill – currently in tender process

Detailed Design / Pre -Tender Stage [36 units]

- 25 Units at Ladywell, Thomastown (An Bord Pleanála)
- 6 units at Golf Links Road, (Mulhalls Shop) Kilkenny
- 2 Units at Inchacarron, Mullinavat
- 2 Units at Old Fire Station, Graignamanagh
- Old Fire Station, Thomastown, refurb to 1 bed unit

Planning Stage [4 units]:

- 1 Accessible bungalow, Circular Road, Kilkenny
- 1 Accessible bungalow, Haggardsgreen, Callan (Buy & Renew)
- Reconfiguration of 1 apt to 2 units- Ayrfield, Granges Road, Kilkenny

Vacant Homes:

- Compulsory Purchase Order procedures have been advertised for 10 properties in the City and County.

November Monthly Statistics

Number awaiting social housing support at 30 th November (<i>Gross Need</i>)	1,904
Number of assessment interviews carried out in November:	27
LA/RAS/Leasing allocations up to end of November (<i>offers made</i>):	30

Number of HAP tenancies to 30 th November:	871
Number of LA tenancies surrendered in November:	5
Anti-social behaviour cases in November:	46
New Homeless Presentations in November:	23
Maintenance Calls for 30 th November 2020	486
Maintenance Calls year to date	4900
No. Housing Loans Approved to date (<i>Annuity/Construction</i>)	12
Amount of Loans Approved to November 2020	€2,426,230

Housing Waiting List

The current **gross** Housing demand at 30th November and a comparative analysis with previous years is outlined below:

Year	Number on Housing List
30 th November 2020	1,904
December 2019	1,988
December 2018	2,067
December 2017	2,180
December 2016	2,059
	(Statutory Assessment 2016)
December 2015	2,744

Housing Loan Activity: 1st January to 30th November, 2020

Loan Type: Annuity/RI Home Loan

Received	44
Approved	12
Amount Approved	€1,611,430
Paid	17
Amount Paid:	€2,426,230



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Private Grants

Kilkenny County Council approved a budget of €1.5m for all three private grants (HOP/MAG/HGD). The Council recoups 80% of all eligible expenditure from the Department. Projects already committed and approved for 2020 are in excess of the allocated budget. Only emergency cases can be processed for the remainder of 2020. The estimated position at 30th November 2020 is as follows;

Grants Paid 2020		
Scheme	No.	Amount Paid
HGD - Housing Adaptation Grant	77	€822,892
MAG - Mobility Aid Grant	31	€117,569
HOP - Housing Aid for Older Persons	82	€429,191
Total	190	€1,369,652

Grants Approved & Committed 2020		
Scheme	No.	Amount Paid
HGD - Housing Adaptation Grant	117	€1,272,063
MAG - Mobility Aid Grant	42	€164,715
HOP - Housing Aid for Older Persons	145	€841,246
Total	304	€2,278,024

Homeless Update

Details of homeless presentations up to 30th November, 2020 along with the comparative, monthly presentations for 2017, 2018, 2019 are set out below. There have been 235 Homeless/Potentially Homeless presentations at 31/11/2020

	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
January	37	29	37	27	23
February	30	26	32	14	27
March	18	26	21	16	24
April	26	25	18	20	19
May	34	28	29	20	14
June	31	24	20	16	12

Total	176	158	157	113	119
July	31	34	15	31	19
August	32	27	26	28	22
September	27	24	19	26	26
October	30	27	27	25	26
November	32	29	23	16	23
December	21	19	6	17	
Total	349	318	273	353	

Currently, there are 6 households including 1 child in Hotel emergency accommodation and 6 households in transitional emergency accommodation.

TOURISM

County by County Filming in Kilkenny

Kilkenny County Council & Kilkenny Tourism have joined up with peninsula TV to make a 30 minute programme on all that is great about Kilkenny to air on US TV Stations throughout 2021. Filming took place in Kilkenny 16/17/18th of November and went exceptionally well. The production crew commented on the wonderful collaborative atmosphere they witnessed in Kilkenny and reported that the footage they filmed county wide should make a great TV show for their American Audience.

The first series of 13 programmes, *Ireland -County by County* will be transmitted on Create TV next January - March 2021 cumulating in a St Patrick's Weekend competition & repeats of all programmes in the series. We believe the series will assist in the attraction of Kilkenny to the international visitor next year when people think about travel again.

Create TV is:

- Carried by 239 public tv stations across the USA
- Viewed in 86+% of US TV households
- 40+ million annual TV viewers
- [CreateTV.com](https://www.createTV.com) has 4.4 million annual page views
-



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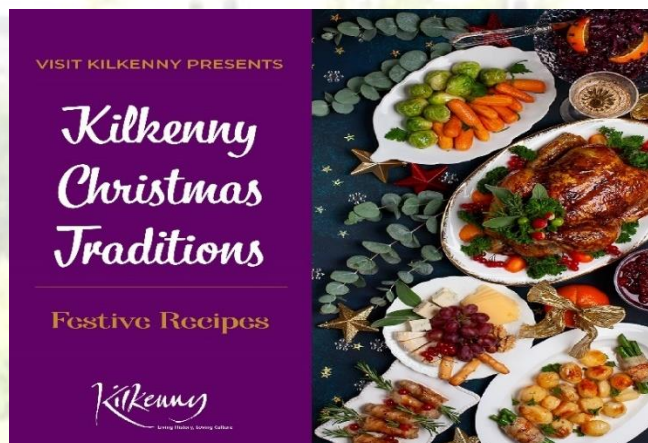
Visit Kilkenny.ie & Kilkenny Tourism

Kilkenny Launches it's second festive cookbook.

Kilkenny Tourism worked with Kilkenny's best food producers and top restaurants to launch a second 'festive' cookbook. Entitled 'Kilkenny Christmas Traditions', the book celebrates the very best of Christmas culinary fare and traditions in the county.

With more people staying at home over the festive season, the 52 page book is set to test the culinary skills of its readers and is full of inspirational recipes to impress family and friends this Christmas.

'Kilkenny Christmas Traditions' is available online at <https://visitkilkenny.ie/christmas-cookbook/>.



Kilkennys 'County-Wide' On-line Christmas Market Goes Live

Kilkenny Tourism worked with members throughout the lockdown to join forces and open Kilkenny's first ever On-line Christmas Market. The market, which is co-ordinated by Kilkenny Tourism is set to be a 'one-stop-shop' for all seasonal gifts this Christmas.

The virtual market is championing the many retailers, craft makers, restaurants, hotels and food and drink producers in Kilkenny this Christmas by bringing customers favourite shops and gifts straight to their doors this season.

<https://visitkilkenny.ie/kilkenny-online-christmas-market/>

also offers a variety of gifts from Kilkenny's best loved and renowned craft makers from across the county. From stunning, bespoke cut glass pieces from **Jerpoint** and **Duiske Glass**; hand-crafted pottery to upgrade any home with the **Nicholas Mosse** gift range to the ultimate selection of crafts from jewellery, knitwear and china under one 'virtual' roof, browse **Kilkenny Design Centres** on-line store.



Failte Irelands COVID Adaptation Fund Update
Fáilte Ireland's COVID-19 Adaptation Fund closing date has now passed however, the fund has been re-opened to new applications from pubs. This is being done primarily to accommodate those pubs that were not able to open due to Government restrictions, but all pubs will be eligible to apply if they have not done so already.

There is a new deadline of **December 18th at 5pm** and is open to **first time applications**



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ORIS Measure 2 & Measure 3 Applications

2020 Applications – Progress subject to approval (10% match funding from Kilkenny Co. Council)

Location	Description	Cost	Status
Dunmore, Kilkenny M3	Develop a 17 acre closed landfill site into a high-quality parkland, creating a destination for health and wellbeing, attracting fitness and outdoor enthusiasts of all abilities, nature lovers and educational providers	€550,000	Prelim Plan complete. Planning & funding applications lodged Nov 2020.
Woodstock Estate, Inistioge. M2	Continuation of Woodstock Loop Trail improvements within Estate down to Waterfall and replacement of pedestrian bridge	€220,000	Funding application lodged Nov 2020
Castlecomer	Upgrade of tree top walk within Castlecomer Discovery Park	€220,000	Funding application lodged Nov 2020
West Court, Callan	Construction of walk on lands adjoining the Kings River. The new walk will form part of the Moat Field and Abbey Meadows Loop Walk	€220,000	Funding application lodged Nov 2020 -subject to lease agreement
Goresbridge M1	Cois Bearbha riverside looped walk upgrade	€22,000	Application submitted
Brandon Hill, Graiguenamanagh	Walking trail signage upgrade	€22,000	Application submitted
Nore Valley Walk M1	Signage and furniture upgrade along trail	€22,000	Application submitted
Freshford Loop Walk M1	Trail enhancement works and marketing	€22,000	Application submitted
Castlecomer M1	Upgrade & extension of Castlecomer Discovery Park Elf Trail	€24,000	Application submitted
Tory Hill, Mullinavat M1	Installation of summit cairn map interpreting surrounding landscape	€22,000	Application submitted
Woodstock Estate, Inistioge	Social media marketing campaign to promote Gardens and Trails within the estate	€15,000	Application submitted

Festivals Kit & Festivals Funding from LEADER

An application for €40K was submitted on behalf of Kilkenny festivals to Kilkenny Leader Partnership and €20K has been approved. This funding will be used for the marketing and PR of Kilkenny as the festivals capital in 2021. Match funding is required from Festivals and a sub-committee of the Tourism Recovery Taskforce has been set up to progress this. 2021 will be another challenging year for festivals and events so a focus for 2021 will be to provide additional supports where possible to keep our vibrant festival communities alive.

The Festivals identified have or have potential to impact on Kilkenny's tourism industry and Kilkenny County Council work with these festivals at a strategic level to assist the festivals in development and programming, and in light of the Council's Climate Change commitments festivals will be encouraged to "Green" their festivals and become local champions of "Green" policies. The Festival Grants are advertised annually and will be advertised shortly.

Savour 2020 Goes Virtual

Savour Kilkenny, one of Ireland's and definitely Kilkenny's favourite food festival has moved online for 2020. While we really miss the smells, the tastes, the comradery and the craic of live events, Savour is delighted to go 'online' and bring you some great demos, talks and workshops albeit virtually!



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For now, we must, from the comfort of our homes, create our own festival atmosphere, log-on and enjoy warming recipes, wine talks, wellness advice and insights into where our food is produced.

Please visit www.savourkilkenny.com for a full listing of programmes and events that will run for the next 6 weeks online. Check out their facebook and insta pages for free, live online events.

Savour online is fully funded this year by Kilkenny County Council Festival grant scheme and Local Enterprise Office.

South East Remote Working Survey Launched to Help Map Future Needs of Remote Workers in the South East



ARTS

Winter Poetry Online

We commenced our 6-week online poetry course, with lecturer, poet and author Dr Derek Coyle, on Thursday 12th November and it will finish on 17th December. All participants had to submit a poem a week to the course tutor and aim to build up and enhance their poetry portfolio with the ambition of submitting work to competitions, magazines and online journals with the long-term ambition of completing a collection. Participants explored poetic forms, learned about prose poetry, satire, the dramatic monologue, metaphor, simile and symbol. Feedback from our participants so far has been excellent.

Rhyme Rag Ensemble

On Saturday 14th November the Rhyme Rag Ensemble attended a workshop with Beau

Williams. Beau Williams is an American poet, workshop facilitator, and spoken word artist based in Dublin. He engaged the young poets with free-writing, what makes good imagery in a poem: incorporating the 5 senses, using metaphor and simile. Overall Beau found them to be a very strong group of writers - eager to learn.

FIRE SERVICE

Capital Projects

The delivery of a new fire engine for Callan took place during the end of November.

Fire Safety Certificates

109 applications for fire safety certificates were received up to 30th November 2020. This was a 19% increase in 2019 applications for the same period last year. These applications are administered by staff working from home and from our Headquarter station due to Covid-19.

Fire Services Acts 1981 & 2003

To date Fire Prevention staff have made 41 inspections of premises both to provide advice and to enforce legislation. As of 30th November 2020, 87 Licence Applications were processed under Section 24 of the Fire Services Acts 1981 & 2003.

Community Fire Safety

Home fire safety visits have recommenced after Level 5 Lockdown. The aim of the home fire safety visits is to reduce the risk of fire by raising awareness to the dangers of fire, providing the appropriate advice and where necessary, fitting smoke alarms. As we head towards Christmas we have Smokey the Elf tweeting fire safety advice. Radio Interviews on fire safety were also given and an advert on fire safety Tips for Christmas have been placed on the local paper.

Fire Brigade Operations

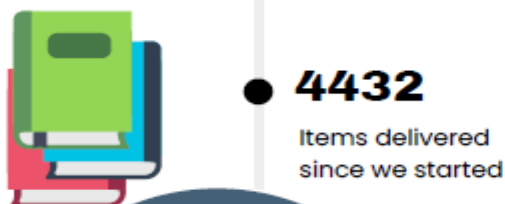
Fire Brigades responded to 726 turnouts up to the 18th November 2020. The same period last year we responded to 686 turnouts.



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LIBRARY

Door to Door Library Service



As part of our door to door service books continue to be delivered directly to the homes of our over 70's members across the County by our Mobile library driver, Tom. This service began in April, and we have seen an increase in those requiring the service over the past month. As part of Kilkenny Science Festival, we included bulbs in the delivery packs, so people could learn the science behind planting and have some colourful blossoms to look forward to in Spring.



* New online memberships & their use of online services is not reflected in these figures

Online Services use:



1,351
eBooks borrowed
▲ 106% on 2019

889

eMagazines borrowed
▲ 22% on 2019



5,504
eNewspapers borrowed
▲ 45766% on 2019

1572

Songs accessed
▲ 13033% on 2019



1,705
eAudiobooks borrowed
▲ 83% on 2019

1139

Online Course sessions
▲ 91% on 2019



123

Language sessions
▲ 108% on 2019



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We were delighted to be involved in National Science Week again, as part of Kilkenny Science Festival, in collaboration with Calmast, WIT. We transformed our science week activities to new digital, virtual and outreach events - 8 schools enjoyed Slime workshops, 15 ASD units enjoyed bubbles workshops, 100 Volcano experiments were delivered to Newpark Family Resource Centre and 3 Childcare facilities, and 100 packs of bulbs were delivered to cocooners across the county.

Mobile Library Back on the Road

Our mobile library has commenced service to over 20 primary schools across the county.

So far, over 3,000 books have been delivered to schools. Significant investment has been made in reading resources and literacy stock suitable for all ages.



School Resources: Class Book Sets

We invested €8,000 recently in 750 new books to update our Class reader collection. 30 sets of 25 new books were purchased. These are suitable for a range of ages and reading abilities, and are now available for borrowing for 3 month periods by schools all over Kilkenny.





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FINANCE

The expenditure by service division to the end of November is set out in table 1. Total Expenditure for the eleven months to the end of November was €95.8m compared with the annual budget of €83.6m. The expenditure under development management includes a sum of €11.3m relating to the restart grants. This expenditure was not included in the budget but is fully funded by the Department of Business, Enterprise and innovation.

Table 1	Actual YTD November 2020	Budget Full Year 2020
	€'000's	€'000's
Housing & Building	19,089	17,623
Road Transport & Safety	25,532	22,688
Water Services	6,646	6,576
Development Management	20,651	10,525
Environmental Services	9,653	11,463
Recreation & Amenity	6,018	6,425
Agriculture, Education, Health, Welfare	545	639
Miscellaneous Services	7,623	7,623
OVERALL TOTAL	95,757	83,562

The bank overdraft facility was utilised six times during the eleven month period to the end of November 2020. The earlier payment by Government Departments of grant monies including the Local Property Tax allocation has assisted cashflow since the beginning of the Covid-19 crisis.

The audit of the 2019 Annual Financial Statements has been completed. The audited statements will be presented to Council at the December Council meeting.

Rates Revaluation

The Valuation Office conducted a revaluation of all commercial properties throughout County Kilkenny to come into effect in the year 2018 as part of its ongoing programme to revalue all such properties within the State.

The following is an update on appeal outcomes and outstanding appeals:

- 197 Rate Customers appealed their valuation to the Valuation Tribunal.
- Total value of rate demand under appeal is €4.5m, 22.6%.
- 168 appeals have been completed to date (29 withdrawn).
- 134 of the 165 appeals have resulted in a reduction in rates income, 4 confirmed the decision of the revaluation, 1 resulted in an increase in rates income & 29 were withdrawn.
- Income lost to date = €778,112.
- 29 appeals outstanding.

If this trend continues the total loss will be in the region of €1m.



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Impact of covid-19 on Council Finances.

As previously advised to Council, Covid-19 is presenting serious financial challenges as all income streams have been impacted.

An application for compensation for loss of income on Goods & Services and additional costs incurred due to Covid was submitted on Friday December 11th. Compensation for funding in excess of €2m has been sought.

Re-Start/Restart Plus Grants

The Restart Grant Plus Grant Scheme closed as of 31st October, 2020. A total amount of €11.4m has been paid out to businesses in Kilkenny on behalf of the Department of Enterprise Trade and Employment.

Rates Waiver

As part of the support measures for businesses announced by Government during the year a waiver on commercial rates for the nine months to the end of December has been provided for eligible businesses. The waiver will take the form of a credit in lieu of rates. This Credit has been applied to eligible accounts and customers have been notified of same.

Budget 2021

The budget for 2021 was approved by Council on 27th November.

The compensation arising for Kilkenny is €8.6m. This leaves a balance of approximately €3m to be collected on commercial rates.

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Shona
Buit