



**KILKENNY COUNTY COUNCIL**  
COMHAIRLE CHONTAE CHILL CHAINNIGH  
**MONTHLY MANAGEMENT REPORT**  
**JANUARY 2020**  
TUARASCÁIL BHAINISTÍOCHTA MÍOSÚIL

**To: Each Member of Kilkenny County Council**

Monthly Management Report to Members of Kilkenny County Council for consideration at the January Monthly Meeting.

### 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

### 20<sup>th</sup> January, 2020

City & County Development Plan:  
Public Consultation Meeting for Loughmacask

### 22<sup>nd</sup> January, 2020

Closing date for applications for Arts Office Grants.

### 22<sup>nd</sup> January, 2020

Closing date for applications for ArtLinks Bursaries.

### 30<sup>th</sup> January, 2020

Oral Hearing for Castlecomer Pedestrian Bridge

### 30<sup>th</sup> January, 2020

Announcement of winners of Tidy Estates Awards.

### 31<sup>st</sup> January, 2020

Closing dates for grant schemes under Historic Structures Fund and Built Heritage.

### February

Kilkenny Library Sign up month: February

### 21<sup>st</sup> February

Closing date for Consultation Process for Ireland's Waste Action Plan for a Circular Economy

### 29<sup>th</sup> February

National Library Open Day

## REPORT AT A GLANCE

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TUARASCÁIL BHAINISTÍOCHTA MÍOSÚIL

### CORPORATE

#### FREEDOM OF INFORMATION REQUESTS

The Council received 147 Freedom of Information Requests in 2019. The requests received can be broken down as follows:

	Journa list	Bus./ Int. Group	Oireachtas/ Public Reps	Staff	Client	Oth er
J	2	1	1	0	1	0
F	4	9	2	0	2	3
M	2	0	1	0	0	3
A	2	0	0	0	0	2
M	1	0	0	0	0	2
J	4	0	0	0	0	6
J	2	0	0	0	0	0
A	3	0	0	0	0	13
S	1	1	0	0	1	26
O	8	0	0	0	1	4
N	14	2	1	0	1	8
D	1	1	0	1	0	10
T	44	14	5	1	6	77

The following details the number of requests received per Requestor:

Number of Requestors	Number of Requests Submitted
1	68
5	2
3	3
4	4
2	5
1	6
1	10
1	14
1	15
1	20

A total of 136 decisions were made by the Freedom of Information Officer in 2019 broken down as follows:

### FOI DECISIONS MADE 2019

	REQUESTS			
	Granted	Part-Granted	Refused	Withdrawn
Jan.	1	0	1	1
Feb	2	0	1	6
Mar	7	3	4	0
Apr	5	0	0	1
May	2	1	1	0
Jun	3	2	5	1
Jul	2	0	0	0
Aug	3	0	3	2
Sept	6	3	3	15
Oct	7	2	4	2
Nov	8	4	3	3
Dec	9	4	6	0
<b>Tot</b>	<b>55</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>31</b>

In addition, 4 applications for Internal Reviews were received following the decisions of the FOI Officer and 1 application for Appeal to the Office of the Information Commissioner was made. In the case of the appeal to the OIC, the Information Commissioner affirmed the Council's decision in this case.

#### Communications

The Council was very active in 2019 in increasing public awareness of the role and contribution of the Council as a provider of services and a community leader.

#### Media:

The following table sets out the details of the interaction between the Council's Communications Officer and the local media in 2019:

Section	Number of Press Releases Issued
Arts	1
Community & Heritage	14
Corporate	12
Economic Development	1
Environment	17



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Fire Services	1
Housing	8
Library	6
Water Services	1
Planning	1
Roads	6
Special Projects	8
Tourism	1

In addition to the above, the Communications Officer would receive media queries on an ongoing basis which are responded to promptly and efficiently.

#### Social Media:

##### WEBSITES

	2018	2019
<a href="http://kilkenny.ie">kilkenny.ie</a>	183,222	179,039
age friendly	4,384	6,224
<a href="http://kilkennycity.ie">kilkennycity.ie</a>	14,423	5,485
<a href="http://kilkennycoco.ie">kilkennycoco.ie</a>	1,484,003	1,439,540
Kilkennylibrary	224,550	138,593 38.28% decrease
visitkilkenny	826,894	456,596 44.78% decrease
ourplan	5,594	3,650
kilkennyheritage	11,397	11,218
consult.kilkenny		37,489
kmhp	1,149	1,088
invest	9,221	921 90% decrease
rhymerag	2,309	4,437
	<b>2,767,146</b>	<b>2,284,280</b>

17.45% overall decrease

##### FACEBOOK FOLLOWERS

	2018	2019
Tourism	30,599	36,101
coco	5,586	6,554
Heritage	2,592	2,655
Env Awareness	706	834
Invest Kilkenny	398	571

Dunmore	331	425
	40,212	47,140

17.2% increase / 6,928 new followers

##### Main Facebook Page Post Reach

	2018	2019
Q1	505,218	381,517
Q2	241,558	370,006
Q3	368,074	285,838
Q4	522,671	288,511
	<b>1,637,521</b>	<b>1,325,872</b>

19.03% Decrease

##### TWITTER FOLLOWERS

	2018	2019
Kilkenny	7,906	7,952
Visit Kilkenny	5,965	6,433
Kilkenny Notices	4,394	4,697
Kilkenny Arts Office	2,506	2,602
Invest Kilkenny	1,947	2,059
kilkenny library	1,900	2,122
	<b>24,618</b>	<b>25,865</b>

5.06% Increase / 1,247 New Followers

##### ROADS

###### National Roads

TII announced in December 2019 an allocation of € 11,426,503 for the 2020 programme of works in County Kilkenny. The funding includes for the **advancement of a number of strategic road projects such as the**

- N24 Waterford to Cahir scheme
- N25 Waterford to Glenmore scheme

Funding to advance the following minor and safety schemes:

- N24 Tower Road Safety Scheme
- N24 Carrick Road Scheme
- N77 from Ballyragget Village to the Ballynaslee Improvement Scheme.



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The N76 Callan Road will see further improvements with approximately €5.1 million allocated for pavement improvements on sections from Brownstown to Callan and an allocation has been received of €700k towards pavement improvements on the N77 Oldtown to Ballyragget.

#### Other Projects:

#### Kilkenny Western Environs Phase 1 Infrastructure

Construction of the scheme commenced in March 2019. Works are progressing well and are on programme to finish by the planned completion date of September 2020. The Circular Road is currently closed to facilitate construction of a new bridge over the River Breaghagh. These works are expected to be completed in March 2020, allowing the Circular Road to reopen.

#### Castlecomer Pedestrian Bridge

Kilkenny County Council applied for planning permission to An Bord Pleanála for the Castlecomer Pedestrian Bridge on the 9<sup>th</sup> August 2019. An oral hearing date is set for the 30<sup>th</sup> January 2020.

## PLANNING

#### Development Management to December 2019

Planning Summary	Total to December		% Change
	2018	2019	
Applications Received	868	976	+ 12%
Applications Granted	666	752	+ 13%
Applications Refused	61	72	+ 18%
Complaints Received	101	116	+ 15%
Warning Letters Issued	70	119	+ 70%

#### Forward Planning

##### Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy

The Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy for the Southern Region (RSES) was approved by the Regional Assembly on 29<sup>th</sup> November, 2019. The RSES will become operable from the 31<sup>st</sup> January 2020.

#### City & County Development Plan:

The formal process of progressing the City and County Development Plan will recommence in early 2020. Work on various plans and strategies required for the new plan continues. Masterplans have commenced for Loughmacask & Fairgreen and lands at St. Canice's. The public consultation meeting for Loughmacask is scheduled for January 20<sup>th</sup> 2020 and others will follow in early to mid-February.

Work on the Retail Strategy, Housing Needs Demands Assessment, Renewable Energy Strategy, Strategic Environmental Assessment, Appropriate Assessment and other constituents of the new City and County Development Plan continues in the background.

#### Graiguenamanagh Local Area Plan

The joint Local Area Plan for Graiguenamanagh and Tinnahinch continues. The preparation of a report on the pre-draft consultation is nearing completion and it is anticipated that a draft plan will be published in early February 2020. At that stage the statutory public consultation will commence for a minimum period of 6 weeks

#### Forward Planning Highlights for 2019.

- Preparation and adoption of the Callan Local Area Plan
- Preparation and adoption of the Thomastown Local Area Plan

Commencement of:

- Graiguenamanagh Local Area Plan
- County Retail Strategy
- Loughmacask Masterplan
- Fair Green Masterplan
- St. Canice's Masterplan

#### Vacant Sites

A total of 87 sites were assessed for inclusion on the Register in late 2019, and a total of 17 sites were added to the Register for 2020. Notices were issued to the relevant landowners in late December, giving notice that their sites are being included on the Register. The owners have 28 days to appeal to An Bord Pleanála.



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There are currently 44 sites on the Vacant Sites Register. A total of 27 of these are now liable for the 7% levy. Payment demands will issue for these 27 sites over the coming weeks. Two sites have had their levy discharged to date.

An Bord Pleanála recently made their first decision in relation to the payment demands issued in January 2019, and upheld our payment demand.

The number of cancelled entries due to site activation or improvement now stands at a total of 11 sites.

#### Conservation

Conservation Grants applications for 2020 are currently being received.

#### Built Heritage Investment Scheme 2020

Nationwide funding of €2,500,000 has been made available as part of the Built Heritage Investment Scheme 2020 by the Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht. The Scheme provides funding to owners to carry out conservation works of protected structures, proposed protected structures and structures in Architectural Conservation Areas, or within the Amenity of a National Monument. The Scheme provides funding ranging from €2,500 to €15,000, with grant allocations not exceeding 50% of the overall cost of each conservation project.

#### Historic Structures Fund 2020

As part of the *Investing in our Culture, Language and Heritage 2018 – 2027*, the Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht announced the Historic Structures Fund for 2020 with a total (countrywide) fund available of €1,824,000. This Historic Structures Fund aims to support the conservation and enhancement of historic structures and buildings for the benefit of communities and the public. The Historic Structures Fund has two Streams:

**Stream 1** offers grants from €15,000 up to €50,000 and is aimed at essential repairs and smaller

capital works for the refurbishment and conservation of heritage structures.

**Stream 2** offers a small number of grants from €50,000 up to €200,000 for larger enhancement, refurbishment or reuse projects involving heritage structures, where a clear community or public benefit has been demonstrated.

Closing date for both of the above Grant Schemes is Thursday 31<sup>st</sup> January, 2020.

## ENVIRONMENT

### Dog Licence Inspection Unit yields very positive results

The roll out of the Dog Licence Inspection Unit in mid October 2019 has seen a significant increase in the number of dog licences purchased in the final quarter of 2019. In total 1,527 licences were purchased during the period from the 15<sup>th</sup> October to the 31<sup>st</sup> December 2019 compared to just 451 for the same period in 2018. This brings the total number of dog licences purchased in Kilkenny during 2019 to 5,472 compared to 4,630 in 2018. It is anticipated that compliance with this legal requirement will increase during 2020 as our Inspectors continue with door to door inspections.

Dog licences are available for purchase at local Post Offices or on line at [licences.ie](http://licences.ie) for a fee of €20 per dog or a lifetime dog licence is also available for €140. Failure to produce a valid licence for your dog could result in an on the spot fine of €100 and/or prosecution with fines up to €1,270.



2019 was a very busy year in the Carlow Kilkenny Dog Shelter in Paulstown. In total 517 dogs were surrendered or picked up as strays by the Dog Wardens. We are pleased to confirm of these 517 dogs 322 animals were rehomed and 192 animals reclaimed. Regrettably 3 animals had to be put to sleep during the year following advice from the



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vet due to health issues or aggressive nature of the dog.

Works also commenced in 2019 to enhance staff accommodation facilities at the shelter and also to provide a small visitors area. It is anticipated that when works are completed the facility will provide for a better visitor experience for members of the public considering offering a dog at the shelter a new home.



### Continued growth in usage of Recycling Bring Centres

During 2019, three new Bring Centres were provided at the following locations: Urlingford, The Rower and Belmont, Ferrybank, bringing the total number of sites up to 46 across the City and County. Signage upgrades were carried-out to 8 sites. Under the Anti-Dumping Initiative Programme, a number of new mobile CCTV cameras were procured for use at Bring Centres.

Recycling activity at the Council's Bring Centres was high throughout 2019 with 1,881 tonnes collected, consisting of 1,775 tonnes of glass and 106 tonnes of aluminium and steel. This represents an increase in the tonnage collected for recycling of 131 tonnes (or 7.5%) on 2018 and 228 tonnes (or 14%) on 2017. Loughboy Shopping Centre in Kilkenny City remains the busiest facility with 130 tonnes collected for recycling during 2019.

### Official open of the Harristown Pocket Park in Graiguenamanagh.

In Graiguenamanagh, on Thursday the 19<sup>th</sup> of December, local people gathered for the official opening of the town's newest public space 'The

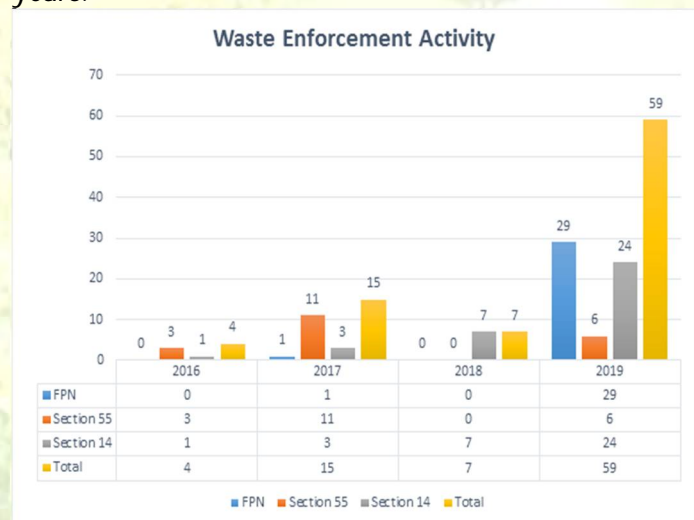
Harristown Pocket Park' by the Cathaoirleach of Kilkenny County Council, Cllr Peter 'Chap' Cleere.

The new Pocket Park which adjoins Fairview Housing Estate and the Borris Road was delivered under the Department of Communication, Climate Action and Environment 2019 Anti-Dumping Initiative Programme.

The works consisted of both hard and soft landscaping which incorporated age friendly seating. The focus of the planting is pollinator friendly and a wildflower area will be planted in Spring to compliment the works already completed to-date.

### Enforcement Activity 2019

There was a significant increase in waste enforcement activity across a broad spectrum of waste activities from the unauthorised disposal of household waste, C&D and other material waste, unauthorised end of life vehicle (ELV) facilities, non-compliant Waste Collection Permits etc. The Environment Enforcement Team accompanied by An Garda Síochána on a number of major Operations throughout the year. Due to the success of same we will continue to do so throughout 2020. The Bar Chart below illustrates the increase in the number of FPN's (Fixed Penalty Notices) issued under Sections 14 and 55 of the Waste Management Act over the last 4 years.





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Furthermore, under the Litter Pollution Act, 118 FPNs were issued for various offences including discarding cigarette butts from car windows and littering in a public place. The number of fines issued in 2019 represents a significant increase on the fines issued in 2018 (+22%) and 2017 (+145%) and reflects the Council's zero tolerance when it comes to illegal waste disposal and fly tipping.

#### Historic Landfill Remediation Projects 2019

Under the 2019 Historic Landfill Remediation Programme the site in Gowran was remediated and the Ballyragget site was almost completed and it is anticipated to be finished in Q 1 2020. In December 2019 the Council drew down funding of €1.55 million from the Department of Communication, Climate Action and Environment to fund these projects.



Gowran August 2019



Ballyragget December 2019

#### Kilkenny's Green Schools Programme & School Supports



Kilkenny County Council continues to support An Taisce's Green School Programme. There is one school being assessed for their first award this month and there will be approximately 25 schools due for a renewal assessment before the end of March. These will be conducted by the

Council's Environmental Awareness Officer (EAO).

The EAO continues to assist schools and conducted one school visit (*St Johns Senior School, Kilkenny City*) in December to explain the importance of proper waste segregation. Two similar talks are scheduled for January (*Callan CBS & Windgap NS*). These activities are linked with the objectives of the Regional Waste Management Plan (*Policy Action B.2.3*).

#### Climate Change Education Series & Kilkenny County Council Supports Eco-Unesco Young Environmentalist Awards

Under the Community Environment Action Fund, 9 primary schools will receive a series of workshops to assist their understanding of climate change. Kilkenny County Council is supporting Eco-Unesco this year to promote their Young Environmentalist Awards programme locally to encourage more youth groups and schools to undertake environmental projects that positively contribute to their local environment. These activities are linked with the Council's Climate Change Adaptation Strategy (*Action NBS 3.1*).

#### Ireland's Waste Action Plan for a Circular Economy Public Consultation

The Minister for Communications, Climate Action and Environment Richard Bruton T.D. announced the opening of a public consultation process on the development of Ireland's Waste Action Plan for a Circular Economy. The consultation process closes at 5pm on Friday 21st February next and can be accessed via <https://www.dccae.gov.ie/en-ie/environment/consultations/Pages/Public-Consultation-Waste-Action-Plan-for-a-Circular-Economy.aspx>.

#### County Kilkenny Green Charter for Community Festivals and Events

The Environment Section has developed a Green Charter for festivals and community events to encourage event organisers to minimise their environmental impact. This is considered the first step to encourage local communities to green their



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events. This initiative is supported by the Local Authority Prevention Network which is coordinated by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and is Action RM 10.1 of the Council's Climate Change Adaptation Strategy.

**RMCEI Plan** (*Recommended Minimum Criteria Environmental Inspection Plan*)

RMCEI	No. of Inspections Planned 2019	Actual Number of Inspections Completed 2019	Target Achieved
WFD Monitoring, op & surveys, samples taken	421	421	Yes
Additional BOD sampling for Water Services	550	621	Exceeded (+13%)
Ambient Monitoring	192	208	Exceeded (+8%)
Other SW/GW protection inspections	96	96	Yes
Inspections of existing planning permissions	550	625	Exceeded (+14%)
Ground water quality (Planning inspections)	80	166	Exceeded (+107%)
Bring bank surveillance	150	172	Exceeded (+15%)
Bring bank inspections	84	148	Exceeded (+76%)
Inspections under solid fuel Regs	10	10	Yes
WCP AR Validation	33	31	No
Inspections under the tyre Regs – Retailers	22	22	Yes
Routine Litter Patrols – City	200	200	Yes
Routine Litter Patrols – County	175	229	Exceeded (+31%)

## PARKS

### Woodstock Gardens

The recent stormy weather has resulted in losses of some trees of significance from Woodstock Gardens. The age profile of the Victorian planting means the tree collection is more susceptible to winds and storms into the future. With this in mind Parks staff are embarking on a tree planting programme of specimen trees to ensure there will always be a stock of young trees developing for future generations to enjoy.



All funding has now been successfully drawn down on the Woodstock Loop Walks funded under the Outdoor Recreation Infrastructure Scheme (ORIS). Another application for funding was made to the Department of Rural and Community Development to continue the trail development into a second phase further along the South Leinster Way, which would see the development of the walks as far as the Brownsford Stream Waterfall at the Red House. Funding of €17,634 has been awarded under the 2019 ORIS grant scheme to prepare a communications and marketing strategy for Woodstock Gardens in 2020. Funding of €14,000 was received from the Sports Capital Grant through the Department of Tourism, Transport and Sport for the development of a trim trail adjacent to the natural playground in Woodstock





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Enhancement works are currently taking place in the conservatory which houses the tea room while the facility is closed over the Winter months. The works involve lifting the stone floor which has always been problematic to keep clean in a food venue and also being hard to heat. This will be replaced instead with a tiled floor in the Victorian style. The stone floor will be re-used outside to create a terraced seating area overlooking the Terraced Flower Garden. The conservatory will also be painted and heating added to provide some comfort to customers helping to lengthen the period in which the tea rooms can remain open to the Winter months.



**Ferrybank Neighbourhood Park**

Work is well underway on the construction of the Ferrybank Neighbourhood Park. The path network is now in place along with the terraced area for the seating area and climbing wall being constructed currently. The playground equipment will be the last element to be added in the Spring with the aim to have the facility open for Easter 2020.

The construction of the park will create a much needed central amenity facility for Ferrybank, incorporating a children's playground, walking route, teenager meeting point, and playing pitch.

**Tree Planting**

The Parks Section has commenced a programme of tree planting in the City and County, which commenced last December to commemorate a number of special anniversaries. The planting programme is the beginning of our commitment to increase tree planting county wide to assist in addressing Climate Change. The trees will all be

native and/or pollinator friendly and will be semi mature at planting.

The anniversaries to be marked are as follows:

- 40 years of the Rotary Club. Forty trees now planted in Loughboy Neighbourhood Park.
- 30 years of the Kilkenny Civic Trust. 30 Trees now planted in Loughboy Neighbourhood Park.
- 20 years of Woodstock Gardens Restoration Project. 20 specimen trees being planted in the arboretum to replace storm losses from recent stormy periods.
- 25 Years of the Kilkenny Cat Laughs. 25 trees now planted in Lintown Hall to recreate the avenue of Lime trees which were previously vandalised.
- 120 years of Local Government with sites at Ballyragget, Castlecomer, Piltown, Callan and Kilkenny City.



*New Tree Planting of an Oak grove Loughboy Park*



*New Tree Planting Loughboy Park creating an avenue on the central axis path across the green*



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*Planting of Lime Trees in Lintown Hall which connects to the playground and park in Garringreen with O Loughlin Gael's pitches in the background.*

### Kilkenny Greenway

Works have commenced on the initial stages of the Kilkenny Greenway which runs from Ferrybank in Waterford to New Ross, terminating at Mount Elliot just after the tunnel is exited. The route covers a distance of c24km. To enable the detail design to be completed for the project the track has been cleared of scrub vegetation allowing access for the first time in years. Site surveys are now being carried out along with bore hole investigations at sites where accommodation works may be required for certain farming operations.

In tandem with this process a team from Wexford and Kilkenny County Council are meeting with landowners along the entire route to discuss accommodation works. Upon completion of this phase of works, the detailed design can be completed and the tender documents finalised. Contract documents must then be sent to the Department of Tourism Transport and Sport for approval following which the project will go to Public Tender for the construction phase. It is anticipated works will commence on site in mid 2020 with a completion date being set at December 2021.

### Amenity Grants

Over 163 groups received grant assistance under the Amenity Grant Scheme in 2019 amounting to a total of €127k in funding. All applicants who

submitted their claims in 2019 have been paid their grant. The Parks Department administers the amenity grants 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. The range of works funded includes landscaping, grass and meadow maintenance and development of open spaces, the provision of street and outdoor furniture and small-scale improvement works. These works will help to continue to contribute to the overall amenity of County Kilkenny, and help enhance the County's reputation as a quality place to live. An increase in the total budget of €13k will bring the total fund up to €140k for 2020. This increase in funding will further assist community groups in towns and villages maintain and upkeep their local neighbourhoods.

### TOURISM

#### **Kilkenny City Allocated Significant Funding by Fáilte Ireland To Develop Tourism Potential**

Kilkenny County Council has been allocated €500,000 as part of a €15.5million 'Destination Towns' initiative launched earlier this year by the National Tourism Development Authority, to be allocated in two rounds by Fáilte Ireland to boost the attractiveness and tourism appeal of towns nationwide.

The process of identifying the towns that receive funding commenced in mid-2019 and Kilkenny County Council has been successful in securing the allocation of significant funding which will be committed to improving the visitor journey in Kilkenny City.

A significant range of projects currently underway or moving to implementation include the **Abbey Quarter, The Tholsel and Alms-houses (adjacent to the Medieval Mile Museum), the Butler Gallery at Evan's Home- which includes a sculpture park and café, a new Tourist**



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**Information Office at High Street, Lighting the Medieval Mile.** Kilkenny city's new public bus service is now a reality, and again the tourist needs have been included in the route selection and planning.

These projects will transform the visitor experience, deepen the engagement, and crucially – extend the centre of gravity from Kilkenny Castle to the Tholsel/ Medieval Mile Museum/Alms-houses-which will require improving the existing visitor flow by implementing an intuitive visitor focused orientation and way finding plan and improving the public realm, including:

- reviewing pedestrian crossing points, especially at the Parade/ Rose Inn Street/ High Street/ Patrick Street Junction.
- reviewing and rationalising existing orientation and directional signage.
- revising and rationalising existing mapping.

#### **Outdoor Recreation Infrastructure Scheme 2019 – Measure 1 Awards for Kilkenny**

The Department of Community and Rural Development recently announced over €1.8 million in national funding for 109 projects under Measure 1 of the 2019 Outdoor Recreation Infrastructure Scheme.

The scheme is part of the Government's Project Ireland 2040 Rural Regeneration and Development programme, and provides funding for the development and maintenance of outdoor amenities such as trails, walkways, cycle ways and blueways. Kilkenny County Council secured €82,400 for five projects:

#### **Kilkenny Outdoor Activity Trail Marketing Material**

- Design of Flyers and Brochures
- Outdoor Activity Trail Marketing
- **Grant:**..... €18,400
- **Total Cost:**..... €23,000

#### **Freshford Loop Walk Surface Upgrade**

- Improvement of Existing Walking Trail
- Freshford Village

- **Grant:**..... €12,000
- **Total Cost:**..... €15,000

#### **Lingaun Valley Website & Marketing Material**

- Website design and development of brochures and pull-ups.
- **Grant:**..... €18,400
- **Total Cost:**..... €23,000

#### **Tory Hill Loop Walk Surface Upgrade [Mullinavat]**

- Improvement of existing walking trail
- Mullinavat
- **Grant:**..... €16,000
- **Total Cost:**..... €20,000

#### **Woodstock Promotion & Communications Plan**

- Project works to include countryside amenities and brochures.
- **Grant:**..... €17,600
- **Total Cost:**..... €22,000

Measure 2 and Measure 3 Allocations are awaited, and members will be informed as soon as grants are announced.

#### **How's your Italian?**

Following on from the Tourism event in Rimini, Italy, in November - in an effort to promote Kilkenny as a destination to the Italian market, Abbey Travel commissioned the following article which appeared in **Ladifesa Magazine in Italy**. This particular magazine has a readership of 15K around Padova.

This issue was distributed and available during Christmas. The magazine is also available online <https://www.difesapopolo.it/>

**Kilkenny named Europe's Top travel destination for 2020 by "Napsu"- an influential Scandinavian Travel Site.**





# KILKENNY COUNTY COUNCIL

COMHAIRLE CHONTAE CHILL CHAINNIGH

## MONTHLY MANAGEMENT REPORT JANUARY 2020

TUARASCÁIL BHAINISTÍOCHTA MÍOSÚIL

The Marble City beat competition from Piran in Slovenia and the Friesian Island's in Denmark to come top of the list of Napsu's "Where to travel to 2020 – Top 20 European destinations". Napsu is a Finnish travel site which specialises in online bookings and last-minute deals.

### Foodie News



Kilkenny Tourism produced a Christmas Cookbook for 2019, featuring local produce and producers, to support the local industry. For January 2020, Kilkenny Tourism will support a Kilkenny Restaurant week, promoting the local offer, and enticing the locals to come out and support restaurants, bars and hotels.

### LEO/ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

#### #CAREERSKILKENNY

22 companies – 636 jobs – 981 prospective employees



Nine hundred and eighty-one prospective employees, home in Kilkenny for Christmas and those living locally, turned up to check out the jobs on offer at Kilkenny County Council's #careerskilkenny event. Such was the demand for jobs in the county that there was a queue to get in the door.

People from far and wide converged on the Medieval Mile Museum to attend #careerskilkenny, an event organised to highlight

636 high quality jobs on offer in 22 Kilkenny based companies.

Twenty-two of Kilkenny's biggest employers took part in the event which aimed to provide people home for Christmas with the opportunity to speak to Kilkenny employers who are seeking to fill a wide range of positions across a variety of sectors in 2020.

Companies taking part included State Street, The Taxback Group, Cartoon Saloon & Lighthouse Studios, VHI, Bank of Ireland, CF Pharma, Prochem Engineering, Irish Water, FRS Recruitment, Optimise Recruitment, Noel Lawler Consulting Engineers, Carne Group and the Asgard Group. They were joined by rapidly growing local companies such as the Modubuild, Beotronics, Loanitt, AB Agri, Entegro, Security Risk Advisors, CR Payroll and New Work Junction.

The companies were recruiting professionals and roles in customer care and sales, engineering, technical, financial, administration, network planners, technicians, HR, accounting, facilities and production.

Feedback to date has been hugely positive from both employers and prospective employees and a formal survey will follow up with both groups on the outcomes of same in February 2020.

#### GradStart funding now available to Local Enterprise Office clients

The objective of GradStart is to assist Irish companies to scale and grow their businesses through the introduction of good graduate talent to deliver clearly defined projects. This offer will specifically target the graduate community and help companies attract additional graduate resources.

GradStart supports companies with ambitious growth plans to employ a **graduate** on a rolling basis for a **2-year contract duration** for each graduate. The offer is available to all Local Enterprise Office Kilkenny client companies who meet the programme criteria\*.



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### LEO END OF YEAR STATISTICS 2019

**€644,960** approved to 26 businesses linked to the creation of 103 jobs over a 3-year period at an average cost per job of €6,262 - (€377,273 in Business Expansion Grants, €239,164 in Priming Grants and €28,523 in Feasibility Study Grants)

**937** business owners and employees attended 54 core training programmes including seminars from Financial Training to Management Development Programmes;

**810** students from 11 schools participated in the Student Enterprise Programme which fosters a spirit of entrepreneurship from an early age;

**375** entrepreneurs have received one-to-one mentoring (including 28 Brexit related mentoring assignments) to assist them in relation to issues within their business;

**246** entrepreneurs attended Business Advisory Sessions with LEO staff to discuss starting a business or growing an existing business;

**151** participants attended 9 Start Your Own Business programmes which explores all the aspects encountered when starting up a new business;

**30** entrepreneurs under the age of 35 participated in Ireland's Best Young Entrepreneurs Competition with John Duggan, Loanitt winning the County and Regional finals and representing Kilkenny at national level;

**28** businesses are currently participating in the Growth Mentor programme.

**26** Trading Online Vouchers were approved totalling €36,035 in order to assist businesses to implement e-commerce within their business;

**12** businesses were approved Technical Assistance Micro Export Assistance Grants in order to assist them access overseas markets totalling €20,496;

**9** businesses were assisted to make applications for the St. Canice's Credit Union Smart Options Loan Scheme and Microfinance Ireland Fund;

**5** businesses participated on Lean for Micro in order to assist them to look at their

competitiveness and innovation specifically in relation to Brexit;

**5** businesses have been transferred to Enterprise Ireland in order to avail of relevant supports;

### HOUSING

#### Housing Capital Delivery

This is the second year into the Rebuilding Ireland housing delivery programme. The Minister for Housing notified Kilkenny County Council of its revised delivery targets i.e. 599 units for the period 2018 to 2021 and a specific target of 190 units for 2019.

	Targets 2018-2021	2019 Targets
Build		114
Acquisition		46
Leasing		30
Sub-Total	599	190
HAP/RAS		184
All Streams		374

#### Schemes Completed in 2019 to-date

- 16 Units at Friary Walk, Callan (*Cluid AHB*)
- 4 Apartments Love Lane, Castlecomer (*Co-operative Housing*)
- 54 units Ballybough Street (*Respond Housing*)
- 1 house at St Mary's Group Housing Scheme, Hebron, Kilkenny
- 4 units at Blackstaff, Callan
- 27 units at Walkin Street (*Oaklee Housing*)
- 6 units at Bridge Street, Callan



27 Units at completion stage at Walkin Street, Kilkenny



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**Schemes under Construction at 30<sup>th</sup> December 2019:**

- 38 units Hoban Park, Bolton Callan,
- 15 units Nuncio Road, KK (*Respond Housing*)
- 17 Units at Breagh Place, Main Street, Piltown
- 33 units at Glebeside, Donaguile, Castlecomer
- 6 Units at New Road and Chapel Street, Mooncoin
- 22 units at Station Avenue, Ballyraggett
- 40 units Margaretsfield, Callan Road, KK
- 4 units (Group home) at Cloghabrody, Thomastown



17 units under construction at Breagh Place, on Main Street, Piltown

**Schemes at Tender Stage**

- 18 units at 'Broguemaker', Castlecomer Road, Kilkenny
- 5 units at Grennan Villa, Thomastown (*Camphill*)

**Schemes at Detailed Design Stage**

- 6 units at Golf Links Road, (*Mulhalls Shop*)
- 2 Units at Shanganny, Jenkinstown
- 2 Units at Inchacarron, Mullinavat
- 2 Units at Old Fire Station, Graignamanagh

**Schemes at Planning Stage:**

- Development of 86 units (houses/apartments) and community facility at Crokers Hill, Kennyswell Road, Kilkenny – closing date for submissions was Friday 27<sup>th</sup> September 2019 to An Bord Pleanála.
- 25 Units at Ladywell, Thomastown

**December 2019 Monthly Stats**

Number awaiting social housing support at 31 <sup>st</sup> December, 2019 ( <i>Gross Need</i> )	1,988
Number of assessment interviews carried out in December:	21
LA/RAS/Leasing allocations in December (offers made):	14
Number of HAP tenancies to 31 <sup>st</sup> December:	867
Number of LA tenancies surrendered in December:	6
Anti-social behaviour cases in December:	62
New Homeless Presentations in December:	17
Maintenance Calls for December 2019	536
Maintenance Calls year to date	5, 519
No. Housing Loans Approved to date ( <i>Annuity/Construction</i> )	23
Amount of Loans Approved to 31 <sup>st</sup> December, 2019	€2,430,720

**Housing List**

The current **gross** Housing demand at 31<sup>st</sup> December is 1,988 and a comparative analysis with previous years is outlined below:

Year	Number on Housing List
December 2019	1,988
December 2018	2,067
December 2017	2,180
December 2016	2,059 ( <i>Statutory Assessment 2016</i> )
December 2015	2,744

**Private Grants**

Minister for Housing notified Kilkenny County Council that it's allocations for the three grants was €1,922,638 in 2019. Kilkenny County Council is required to fund €384,528 i.e. 20%.

The Council had advertised the '*Housing Aid for Older Persons Grant Scheme*' for a restricted period in previous years but no restriction applies for 2020. The Council approved 393 private grants



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amounting to a €2.8m and paid out €2m. The position on all three grant schemes at end December is as follows;

Grants Approved 31 <sup>st</sup> December, 2019		
Scheme	No.	Amount Approved
HGD: Housing Adaptation Grant	129	€1,462,479
MAG: Mobility Aid Grant	33	€140,198
HOP: Housing Aid for Older Persons	231	€1,171,158
<b>Total</b>	<b>393</b>	<b>€2,773,835</b>
Grants Paid out to 31 <sup>st</sup> December, 2019		
Scheme	No.	Amount Paid
HGD: Housing Adaptation Grant	83	€902,744.39
MAG: Mobility Aid Grant	19	€92,568.65
HOP: Housing Aid for Older Persons	203	€1,003,153.32
<b>Total</b>	<b>305</b>	<b>€1,998,466.36</b>

### New Grant Application Form

A review of all 3 private grants schemes (HOP/MAG/HGD) was carried out by the Department during 2019 and has introduced a new streamlined single application form.

The revised application form is now available on the Council's housing website:

[www.kilkennycoco.ie/housing.ie](http://www.kilkennycoco.ie/housing.ie)

The objective of these changes is to make the grant application process more user friendly and accessible and to standardise the individual local authority approach to the processing and administration of the schemes.

### Housing Loan Activity

	Annuity/ RI Home Loan	Reconstruction Loan	Caravan Loan
Received	43	2	1
Approved	23	2	1
Amount Approved	€3,430,720	€22,000	€6,160
No. Paid	21	2	1
Amt. Paid	€2,979,495	€22,000	€6,160

### Homeless Update

Details of homeless presentations for the months of 2019 along with the comparative, monthly presentations for 2016, 2017 and 2018 are set out below. There were 256 Homeless/Potentially Homeless presentations at 31/12/2019.

	2016	2017	2018	2019
January	37	29	37	27
February	30	26	32	14
March	18	26	21	16
April	26	25	18	20
May	34	28	29	20
June	31	24	20	16
July	31	34	15	31
August	32	27	26	28
September	27	24	19	26
October	30	27	27	25
November	32	29	23	16
December	21	19	6	17
<b>Total</b>	<b>349</b>	<b>318</b>	<b>273</b>	<b>256</b>

The number of households in emergency accommodation (hotel/B&B) at year end was 6 of which 2 were children. The exit strategies for these households is HAP with Placefinder supports.

This reduction in homeless presentations from 2018 (6%) is as a result of the preventative measures and work done by the Homeless Team and the Placefinder role.

### New Rent Scheme and Rent Review 2020

Members are reminded of the pending rent review to be carried out in early 2020 for all our tenants. It is hoped to have the new rents in place by April 2020.

Kilkenny County Council has harmonised both Rent schemes for 2020 to remove the current anomalies and inequity for current tenants in receipt of the same social welfare payments.

The main changes are:

- Minimum Rents Set at €28.00
- Single OAP in receipt of state pension calculated at minimum rent



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- Two OAP's in household each in receipt of state pension calculated at minimum rent subject to max rent of €45 (*harmonisation clause*)
- Non Return of rent forms: increase current weekly rent by €100 instead of 25% penalty

#### Private Rented Inspections

The Department has set a schedule of increasing targets up to 2021 so that there are on average 25% private properties inspected annually after 2021. The position to date is as follows:

Year	Department Target	Delivered KCC	%
2018	465 (10%)	514	111%
2019	698 (15%)	709	101%
2020	930 (20%)	0	
2021	1,163 (25%)	0	

#### Estate Management

- 50 Estate Management Grants were allocated in 2019 to Community Groups and Resident Associations.
- Issue 13,14,15 and 16 of the Kilkenny County Council Community interactive e newsletter were published in 2019.
- Tidy Estates competition - Judging of the Kilkenny County Council 2019 Tidy Estates awards took place in August/early September. Announcements of the winners will be on the 30<sup>th</sup> of January 2020.

#### Refugee Resettlement Strategy

The Department of Justice and Equality notified Kilkenny County Council of its allocation to re-settle 140 refugees into County Kilkenny in late 2017. The first Syrian families arrived in January 2018. The last family was resettled on 21<sup>st</sup> November 2019. In summary, there are 25 Syrian families resettled in eight (8) towns around Kilkenny, total of 141 individuals.

The current resettlement programme is now complete and this will remain in place until the end of March 2020. A **Resettlement Worker** and an **Intercultural Worker** supports the new families upon their arrival in Kilkenny.

## COMMUNITY

#### CLAR 2019

The 2019 CLAR programme funded carpark surfacing for Tullagher Rosbercon GAA club, these works are now complete and the car park is operational.

#### Town & Village 2019

Funding agreements are now in place for the projects approved under the 2019 scheme, the projects will progress in early 2020.

#### Rural Regeneration Fund (Call 2)

In December, a second call (Call 2) for the Rural Regeneration Fund was announced and an application is presently being prepared for submission for the Friary building in Callan. Category 2 of the Rural Regeneration and Development Fund supports the early development of projects to enable them to reach a stage where the concept is developed to a high standard and the project is in a position to commence works

## ARTS

#### Open Circle on the Move

Open Circle Arts have moved from their house in Johns Green to a bright new space in the art building on the SOS campus. A lease has been signed and the two new groups totalling 30 women will start their 18 month programme with Open Circle in the new space next week



Open Circle



SOS Campus





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### Artists Supports 2020

A call out for our Arts Office grants (Arts Act Grants, Tyrone Guthrie Residency Bursary and The Moth Residency Bursary 2020) went out in December through Facebook, local newspapers and by email to our databases. Closing date for applications is 4pm Monday 20<sup>th</sup> January 2020.

### ArtLinks Bursaries 2020

Requests for applications for our ArtLinks Bursaries (*Emerging Artist, Professional and Collaboration Award*) were issued. Closing date for applications is Wednesday, 22<sup>nd</sup> January and Monday, 30<sup>th</sup> March respectively.

### Call out for Emerging Curator in Residence Programme 2020

Kilkenny County Council Arts Office initiated the Emerging Curator in Residence programme 2019. Its purpose is to develop and enhance the careers of emerging curators.

This programme will continue in 2020 and the Arts Office have sent a call out for applications. The programme will enable curators to gain direct experience in the field of curating exhibitions for the Arts Office Gallery. This wonderful opportunity will also support the successful candidate in many ways beyond the financial value of the project. Closing date for applications is Monday, 20<sup>th</sup> January 2020.



*The Secret to My Success Exhibition*

### Adult Intermediate Creative Writing Workshops with John MacKenna

Due to the popularity of John MacKenna's 8 week Writing Workshop in 2019 a second round of workshops have been scheduled to begin on the 21<sup>st</sup> January. Taking place in Butler House all 12

places are fully booked with a waiting list now being taken.

### LIBRARY SERVICES



### Yulefest Kilkenny

Kilkenny Library partnered with Yulefest Kilkenny again this year, hosting Recycled Craft workshops with three local artists from ReCreate Ireland in our libraries in December. Over 100 children enjoyed these workshops. Yulefest Kilkenny and Kilkenny Leader Partnership gifted a Magic table to Kilkenny County Council Library Service as part of their inclusive community drive. This is hosted in Loughboy Library. The Magic Table is an award-winning innovation from the Netherlands, designed to help those with dementia journey to enjoy interactive experiences. It consists of a series of interactive games that are projected on a table, encouraging people to reach out and interact, causing the light to respond to their movements, allowing being sensory in nature, it also offers a gentle, interactive experience for those with any type of sensory issue.

### Family Time at Your Library: Right to Read

Family Time at Your Library is part of the National Right to Read National Literacy Campaign, developed to promote the importance of a family focussed approach to reading and literacy for all.

It ran throughout the month of December in all branches, with a range of family events held from



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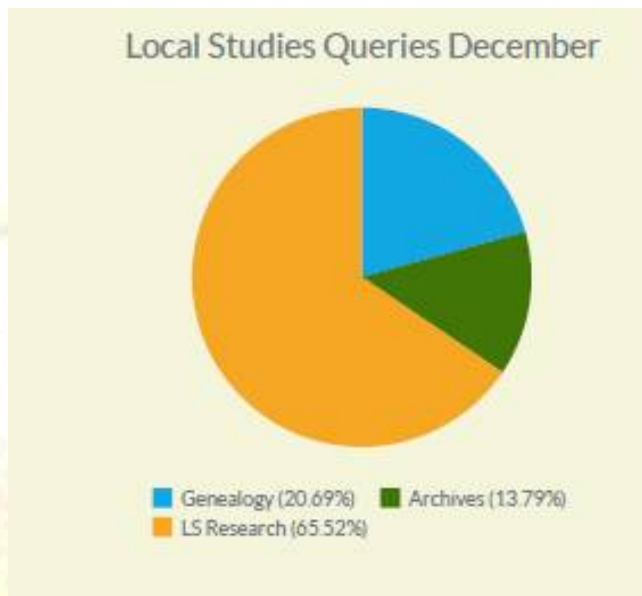
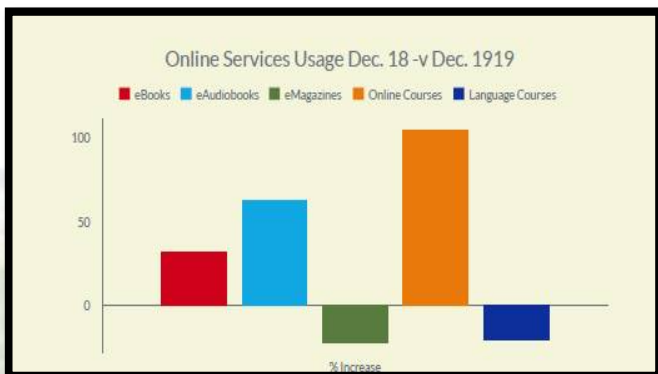
storytimes and craft sessions to movie mornings and visits from Mrs. Claus herself! Over 1,000 children visited with their parents or teachers



#### My Open Library Use



Borrowing (60.9%) Computer & internet (29.41%)  
Wifi (9.69%)



#### Followers

Facebook: 3378  
Twitter: 2164  
Instagram: 1292



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### FINANCE REPORT – JANUARY 2020

The expenditure by service division to the end of December is set out in table 1. Total Expenditure for the period was €86.9m compared with the annual budget of €79.7m.

Table 1	Actual YTD December 2019	Budget Full Year 2019
	€'000's	€'000's
Housing & Building	20,031	16,468
Road Transport & Safety	25,309	22,328
Water Services	6,979	6,674
Development Management	9,349	9,718
Environmental Services	11,673	11,169
Recreation & Amenity	6,868	6,251
Agriculture, Education, Health, Welfare	536	640
Miscellaneous Services	6,139	6,452
<b>OVERALL TOTAL</b>	<b>86,884</b>	<b>79,700</b>

Please note the actual figures for 2019 are draft only and are subject to change. The Annual Financial Statement for 2019 is currently being prepared and a draft will be presented at the March meeting.

The bank overdraft facility was utilized for ninety-six days in the twelve months to the end of December 2019. The maximum overdrawn balance was €5.7m. The closing cash balance on hand at the end of December 2019 was €9.5m.

The total non-mortgage loan balance outstanding as at December 2019 was €11.7m. The new loan finance of €10m approved by the Council; €5m in 2018 and €5m in 2019 will be drawn down during Quarter 1 2020 to fund the ongoing capital programme.

The final out turn on cash collections for 2019 is not available yet. It is expected that the results will be in line with previous years.