



COMHAIRLE CHONTAE CHILL CHAINNIGH
KILKENNY COUNTY COUNCIL
TUARASCÁIL BHAINISTÍOCHTA MÍOSÚIL
MONTHLY MANAGEMENT REPORT
IÚIL - JULY 2020

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

Community Enhancement Scheme

Closing date for receipt of applications is 24th July.

Pride of Place 2020

Applications to be submitted on-line by 27th July, 2020. A virtual 2020 event will take place on the 21st November, 2020.

Tidy Estates Awards

Competition will commence in July with Judging scheduled for early September.

CLAR 2020

Applications must be with the Community Section by 14th August.

Town & Village Accelerated Measures in response to Covid-19

The main scheme closes 28th August.

Outdoor Recreation Infrastructure Scheme

Applications to be prepared and submitted by closing date of September, 2020.

Curator in Residence

The initial group show will commence on Saturday 12th September and the solo show will commence on Saturday 7th November.

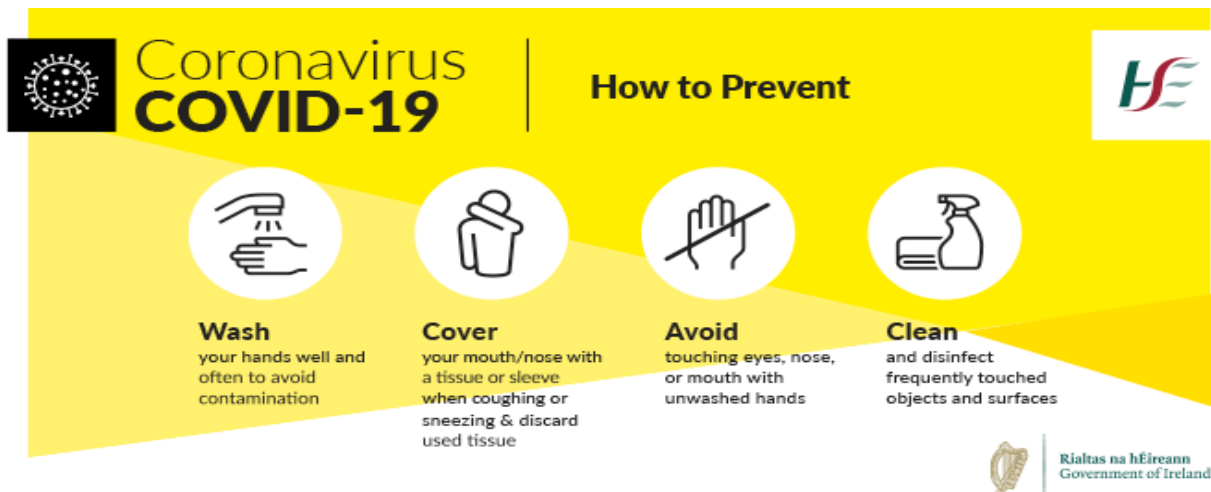
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**HOW TO PROTECT YOURSELF FROM COVID-19 [CORONAVIRUS]
INFLUENZA & OTHER VIRAL ILLNESS**



IF YOU ARE NOT FEELING WELL

Check if you have symptoms of coronavirus. These are a cough, shortness of breath, breathing difficulties, 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](tel:112) or [999](tel: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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CORPORATE

Corporate Plan



A limited number of hard copies of the Council's Corporate Plan 2019 to 2024 are now available. Each Member will receive a copy of the Plan at the July Council Meeting.

Customer Service Desks

As we have moved to Phase 3 of the Government's Reopening of the Country and our Customer Service Desks are now open to the public, the following measures have been put in place to protect our staff and customers:

- Safety screens have been installed at customer service desks.
- All persons entering County Hall are required to check in and check out at the Customer Service Desk in the lobby area.
- On checking in you will be asked to confirm a number of questions in relation to COVID-19.



- In our Motor Taxation Office a clearly marked queuing procedure has been put in place to direct our customers in a safe and orderly manner. A maximum of 7 people is permitted in the public area at any one time.



- Promotion and encouragement of use of our online services.

Annual Meetings

The election of the Cathaoirleach for 2020/2021, Mayor and Chairpersons of the Municipal Districts took place in June.

Details as follows:

APPOINTMENT	ELECTED MEMBER
<i>Cathaoirleach</i>	Cllr Andrew McGuinness
<i>Leas Cathaoirleach</i>	Cllr. Martin Brett
<i>Mayor of Kilkenny Municipal District</i>	Cllr. John Coonan
<i>Deputy Mayor</i>	Cllr. David Fitzgerald
<i>Chairperson Castlecomer M.D.</i>	Cllr. Michael McCarthy
<i>Deputy Chairperson</i>	Cllr. Pat Fitzpatrick
<i>Chairperson Callan/ Thomastown M.D.</i>	Cllr. Peter 'Chap' Cleere
<i>Deputy Chairperson</i>	Cllr. Matt Doran
<i>Chairperson of Piltown M.D.</i>	Cllr. Eamon Aylward
<i>Deputy Chairperson</i>	Cllr. Ger Frisby



Appointment of Deputy Malcolm Noonan, T.D. as Minister of State for Heritage & Electoral Reform

Congratulations to Deputy Malcolm Noonan on his recent appointment where he will serve as Minister of State for Heritage and Electoral Reform. We extend our best wishes to him in his new role and looking forward to working with him in the future.



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Book of Condolences

Cathaoirleach Cllr. Andrew McGuinness opened an online Book of Condolence for the citizens of Kilkenny to extend their sympathies to the family of Detective Garda Colm Horkan who tragically lost his life in the line of duty.

Arrangements are being made to present this online Book of Condolence to the Assistant Garda Commissioner for handover to the family of Detective Garda Horkan.

Re-opening Kilkenny for Business

As we welcome the public and visitors back to our City, a temporary One-Way system is one of a number of measures introduced for Kilkenny City Centre in order to facilitate adherence to public health requirements on social distancing as we move through the phases of re-opening for business.

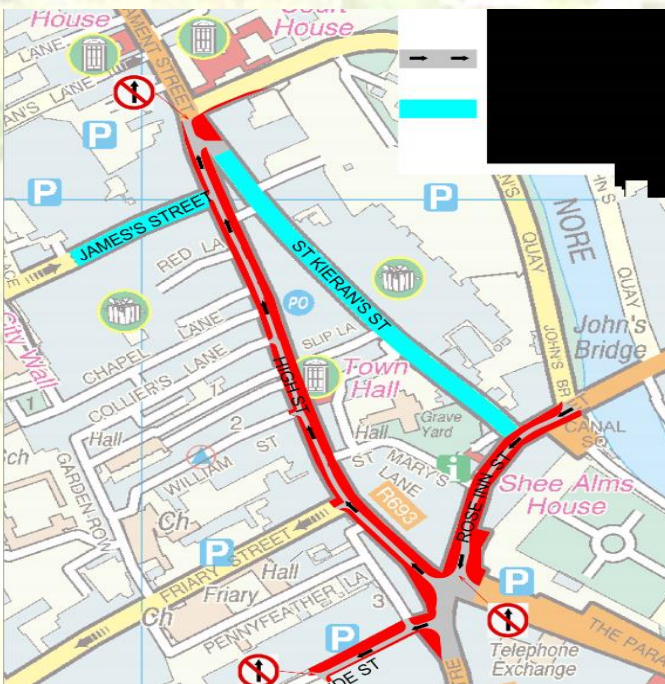
This measure has been introduced with the agreement of the City Centre Task Force to support the recovery of businesses and to ensure that people can safely and easily visit Kilkenny City by providing additional space to pedestrians in line with social distancing regulations.

Other measures currently being implemented to ensure a safe return to the City include:

- Increase in pedestrianisation hours on Kieran Street - now 9.00 a.m. to 9.00 p.m. and introduction of pedestrianisation on James Street from 9.00 a.m. to 9.00 p.m.
- Thursday Farmers Market on the Parade now on Saturdays also from 11th July with a mixture of food, crafts and jewellery.
- Local Artists to be allowed display their paintings on the Mayor's Walk, The Parade Kilkenny from Saturday 18th July to October.
- Outdoor seating areas to facilitate restaurants, cafes etc. for customers to eat outside - Market Yard, The Parade and Parliament Street are currently being progressed.
- Kilkenny Welcome Ambassadors - Brian Cody launched a campaign Friday 10th July, 2020 seeking volunteers as Welcome Ambassadors for the City who will provide assistance / directions to visitors on the local tourist attractions shops etc.

Evans Home - Opening of New Butler Gallery

The €6 million refurbishment of Evans Home Project has been completed and the contractors have handed over the site to the Council. The Butler Gallery is making arrangements to take up residence in its new home over the next few weeks and the Official Opening is scheduled to take place in early August. The Elected Members will be facilitated with a tour of the new Gallery prior to the Official Opening.





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BREWHOUSE (including Horse Barrack Lane & Brewhouse Courtyard)



Mythen Construction Ltd recommenced work on the development of the Brewhouse on 18th May, following the recent COVID 19 shutdown. Whilst it was expected previously that the building would be completed by the end of 2020, the revised programme for the project will see the works completed in Spring 2021. While work to date has focussed on the Brewhouse building (being developed by Kilkenny Abbey Quarter Development Ltd), work on the associated public realm is now commencing (being developed by Kilkenny County Council). Specifically, this involves the development of Horse Barrack Lane and the Brewhouse Courtyard. These public realm projects are grant funded through the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) and the Urban Regeneration & Development Fund (URDF).

RIVERSIDE GARDEN PROJECT



Similarly, Niall Barry & Co. have also recommenced work on the development of the Riverside Garden project. This project was originally due to be completed during the summer, but it is now expected that the project will be completed in October 2020 due to the delays associated with the recent COVID 19 shutdown. This project includes the provision of a skate park - the skate park elements are currently being fabricated off site and it is expected that these will be delivered to the site in August 2020. This project is grant funded through the ERDF, URDF and Failte Ireland.

URBAN STREET & PARK PROJECT



A Planning application will be lodged in July 2020 for the development of a landscaped park centred around St Francis Abbey and an urban street connecting Bateman Quay to St Francis Bridge. The street, which will be a shared space, dominated by pedestrian and cyclists, will incorporate traffic management measures to inhibit the flow of through traffic. As the planning application will be accompanied by an Environmental Impact Assessment Report and a Natura Impact Statement, the planning application will be made to An Bord Pleanála in accordance with the provisions of Part X of the Planning & Development Regulations 2001, as amended. An application has been made to the Urban Regeneration and Development Fund for funding for this project.



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COMMUNICATIONS:

17 Press Releases were circulated in June 2020 with the following subject reference:

- Public Invited to have their say on the Route Corridor Options for the N25 Waterford and Glenmore Road Scheme
- Free Phone Number 1800 272 994 to access poetry by Kilkenny Poets.
- Lifeguard Services are being provided at Swimming Areas across the County.
- Playground Re-Opened
- Funding boost for Trading Online Vouchers in County Kilkenny welcomed by the Local Enterprise Office
- Change in Operation Hours for Community Call Helpline
- National Spring Clean Kicks Off Again
- Kilkenny County Council welcomes UPMC to Kilkenny.
- Election of Cathaoirleach for 2020/21 and Mayor and Chairpersons of Municipal Districts.
- Parking Charges reinstated in Kilkenny City from 16th June 2020
- Kilkenny City Centre to become One-Way to aid social distancing with effect from Monday, 22nd June.
- Carlow/Kilkenny Dog Shelter Reopen
- Summer Stars Reading Adventure Kicks off in Kilkenny - Why not join Kilkenny Library and take part!
- Cathaoirleach of Kilkenny County Council opens Online Book of Condolences in memor of Detective Garda Colm Horkan.
- Survey Results - Let's Get Back to Business Safety.

#YourCouncilDay

Kilkenny County Council is joined with the 30 other local authorities in the #YourCouncilDay campaign on Wednesday 1st July, 2020. We used hashtags #YourCouncilDay and #DoLásaChomhairle on Facebook and Twitter throughout the day to talk about some of the services that the Council provide. We posted content in relation to:

- Support for businesses as they reopen - Local Enterprise Office.
- Abbey Quarter Project.
- Services provided by Environment Section.
- Library services during COVID-19.
- Civil Defence Volunteers support to communities during COVID-19.
- Motor Taxation opening hours during COVID-19.
- Ferrybank Park Project.
- Community Newsletter and Grants Booklet.
- Playgrounds.
- RRDF Project in Thomastown.
- Woodstock Gardens.
- Evans Home.
- Road Works being carried out across the County.
- COVID-19 community projects.
- Newly refurbished footpaths at the Riverwalk Inistioge.
- ReStart Grant - financial support to businesses.
- Lifeguard Service.
- Temporary One Way Traffic System in Kilkenny City Centre to aid social distancing.
- Civic Recognition for Chief Superintendent Dominic Hayes.
- Housing Scheme at Callan.
- Water Sampling and Testing.
- Arts Projects as part of Community Well Being initiatives during COVID-19.

FACEBOOK

There was a total of 44 posts to the Council's Facebook Page as part of the #YourCouncilDay campaign.

The total statistics for the day were:

No. of Posts: 44
Total Reach: 67,234
Total Engagement: 5,771
Total Likes/Reactions: 638
Total Shares: 110
Total Comments: 82



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The top ten performing posts were:

Post	Reach	Engagement	Likes/ Reactions	Shares	Comments
Huge contribution by our Kilkenny Civil Defence team of volunteers supporting communities during Covid-19. Well done to all #yourcouncilday #civildefence #yourcounty #kilkenny	5,439	186	10	12	
Student Enterprise Programme winners Mark & Evan Srouji (Special Merit Award winners for their Bee & Bug houses) and Nathan Ryan 🍯🐝 #yourcouncilday #yourcouncil #studententerpriseprogramme	4,157	353	45	9	3
Local Enterprise Office Kilkenny	4,157	353	45	9	3
Final Snagging underway at new housing scheme in Callan by Kilkenny County Council Housing Capital staff. #YourCouncilDay #DoLásaChomhairle	3,770	995	37	8	9
Skate Park - Spraioi Linn were appointed as the designers and contractors for the Skate Park in June 2019. #YourCouncilDay	3,499	356	43	8	16
Newly refurbished footpaths at the Riverwalk Inistioge. The work is taking place at the moment and new seating and picnic benches will be added once this work is complete.	3,063	192	38	9	2
Abbey Quarter Kilkenny - Brewhouse Building General Progress Photo #yourcouncilday	2,730	406	36	3	14
Kilkenny County Council provides a lifeguard service at five traditional swimming areas across the city and country during the summer months. #YourCouncilDay	2,645	434	48	4	6
Kilkenny City Centre becomes One-Way to aid social distancing with effect from Monday, 22nd June. #YourCouncilDay	2,538	286	23	4	9
As part of €3million investment in #Thomastown through Rural Regeneration and Development Fund #RRDF , works completed at The Quay, Thomastown. #YourCouncilDay #DoLásaChomhairle	2,431	315	9	5	
Check out Kilkenny County Council Library Service and what they have being doing to support our local communities during Covid-19 #yourcouncilday #yourcouncil #kilkenny #libraryservices #TakeACloserLook	2,408	74	4	5	



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TWITTER

There was a total of 25 tweets to the Council's Twitter Account as part of the #YourCouncilDay campaign.

The total statistics for the day were:

No. of Posts:	25
Total Impressions:	19,589
Total Engagement:	1,211
Total Likes:	90
Total Retweets:	23

ROADS

The following serves as an update to Elected Members on some of the Roads Projects that Kilkenny County Council has been working on over the last numbers of months. We are delivering an ambitious Road Works Scheme in 2020 of €29 million. This is made up of €11 million on National and €18 million on Non-National Road Network.

NATIONAL ROADS

KILKENNY MAJOR SCHEMES:

N25 Glenmore to Waterford Scheme

The N25 Glenmore to Waterford Improvement Scheme has gone through a non-statutory public consultation process indicating route options being considered. The preferred route will be published August\September 2020.

N24 Waterford to Cahir Scheme

Kilkenny County Council is the lead authority on the above scheme. It's a significant scheme totaling 60km travelling through both Kilkenny and Tipperary. This will ultimately connect with the Cahir to Limerick Section. Consultant appointment is on target for mid July 2020.

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

The oral hearing in respect of the CPO for the N24 Tower Road Junction improvement scheme was held on 11th March 2020. A decision by An Bord Pleanála is expected shortly.

N77 Ballyragget to Ballynaslee

A combined application to An Bord Pleanála for planning approval preparation under section 177AE and CPO for the N77 Ballyragget to Ballynaslee Improvement Scheme is expected to be submitted by the end August 2020.

N24 Carrick Road

A combined application to An Bord Pleanála for planning approval preparation under section 177AE and CPO for the N24 Carrick Road Improvement Scheme is expected to be submitted by the beginning of Q4 2020.

Pavement Improvements

N76: Ballymack to Castletobin and Brownstown to Ballybur. This €2.5m contract has been awarded to Priority Construction and is due to commence shortly.

N25 Curraghmore: Works have just completed on this scheme. It was a €0.56m combined pavement/safety scheme on the N25 at Curraghmore to create right turning lanes at three junctions.



NON-NATIONAL ROADS

We are continuing with our work on the non-national road network. A large bulk of the work is on restoration improvement and restoration



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maintenance which alone accounts for 158 separate projects. All this work is carried out by our own crews through the Municipal Districts and the Machinery Yard.



*Paving works at
Kilkenny Road Callan*



*Surface Dressing
at Milebush*

ENVIRONMENT

Customer Relations Management System

Since the Covid-19 restrictions were put in place in March, there has been a significant increase in the number of complaints reported with respect to illegal dumping, littering, etc. Between March 15th and end of June this year, the Environment Section received a total of 486 complaints, which represents an increase of 48% compared to the same period last year.

The Environment Section has run numerous media campaigns and given interviews on local and national radio advising the public of the services that remained open during lockdown. The Dunmore Recycling and Waste Disposal Centre has remained open as have the Council's 45 Recycling Bring Banks around the city and county.

Enforcement Action

The Environment Section has deployed an additional 10 CCTV camera's during June at the Bring Banks around the city and county. The Environment Enforcement Team has been very active in patrolling and carrying out investigations.

Since January 2020 in excess of 180 €150 litter fines have been issued under the Litter Pollution Act.

Under the Water Pollution Act, a further 6 Notices have been issued to date in 2020 with 3 warning letters issued.

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. The Environment staff have endeavoured to carry out as many inspections as possible.

A summary of some of the inspections undertaken since March is provided hereunder:

RMCEI Inspections	Planned 2020	March - June 2020
Inspections relating to water pollution incidents	21	13
Nuisance/ Air pollution insps	4	10
Inspections of existing planning permissions (or in advance of grant)	550	207
Ground water quality (Planning inspections)	80	94
Post Planning Inspections	100	19
Bring Bank Surveillance	150	78
WFD investigative monitoring, samples and analysis	52	20
Other SW or GW protection inspections	96	32
Ambient Monitoring (us/ds WWTPs)	192	84
WFD Monitoring, op & surv, samples taken (WFD)	377	108
Bathing Waters (non designated)	20	5
Additional BOD analysis for Water Services	550	254

Dunmore Recycling and Waste Disposal Centre

Dunmore Recycling Centre provides a clean, friendly, cost effective essential service to the functional area of Kilkenny County Council. With the onset of COVID-19 and the restrictions it brought with it, the gates of Dunmore remained open throughout. Staff rotated their working



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week with a split roster to ensure COVID-19 safety guidelines were met and the waste and recycling service continued to be provided. The usual level of helpfulness from staff had to be restricted due to social distancing but a friendly face, direction and advice allowed customers to be at ease when using the facility. Following a return to the acceptance of all household waste and recycling, including the previously restricted non-essential waste streams, in late May the site saw an increase in the volumes of customers and waste streams coming into the site. The month of May saw a 13% increase on customer numbers compared to May 2019 while June saw an increase of 19% on customer numbers compared to June 2019. Social distancing guidelines were adhered to with cars forming orderly queues during peak times.

Recycling Bring Banks

There has been a significant increase in tonnages collected across our 45 Recycling Bring Banks since Covid-19 restrictions were introduced in the middle of March. The tonnages of glass, steel and aluminium collected from the 15th March to the end of June weighed 823 tonnes compared to 490 tonnes for the same 16-week period in 2019.



This represents a 68% increase, which has created quite a challenge with respect to the servicing and maintenance of our sites. Environment Staff remains in daily contact with our Service Provider to ensure a safe and efficient service.

Control of Horses

Kilkenny County Council contracts a private Service Provider to provide an impounding service. Since the middle of March, in line with HSE/Government policy on essential services, our service provider remained on standby to deal

with emergency call-outs, e.g. stray horse on public road. However normal service has resumed since the end of June. The total number of horses seized to date in 2020 is 47.



In line with HSE/ Government policy on essential services from mid-March, the Dog Shelter was closed to the public. However, under the new phase of lifting restrictions the Dog Shelter has reopened to the public from June but by appointment only. Further information is available at www.kilkennycoco.ie

Statistics provided hereunder for the period April to the end of June 2020

Dogs	April	May	June
Strays	6	2	11
Surrenders	3	5	4
Re-claimed	1	0	3
Re-homed	4	9	11
Put to sleep	0	0	0

Again in line with HSE/ Government Policy on essential services since mid-March the Dog Warden service remained available for emergency calls (e.g. stray dogs attacking sheep; dogs considered a public risk etc.) Normal Dog Warden Services resumed in June under HSE and government guidelines around Covid 19.

New Waste Management Leaflets for New Tenants

The Environment Section collaborated with the Housing Section to produce an information leaflet for those moving into new Council homes



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providing advice on waste management. This will be accompanied by the recently launched booklets from "mywaste.ie" providing information on greener cleaning, greener gardening and greener DIY. These packs will be provided to all new future tenants via the Housing Liaison Officer.

Greener Gardening Booklets

Over 1,000 Greener Gardening Booklets were distributed in June to green fingered gardeners with the assistance of two local garden centres; Gardeners World Garden Centre (Kilkenny City) & The Water Garden (Thomastown). Copies were also made available to horticulturists tutors for future classes and the general public.

Supporting the ONE MILLION STARS PROJECT

The Environment Section continues to support the Amber Women's Refuge project by promoting the upcycling of materials to produce stars for their upcoming art installation. Working with the Arts Office, we are promoting the upcycling of different materials to produce stars that would otherwise be put in the bin. We are utilising our Tidy Towns Network locally and nationally to encourage as many groups as possible to become involved in this worthwhile project.

Roadside Litter Campaign

Roadside litter remains an issue locally and regionally. Kilkenny County Council has teamed up with the neighbouring counties of Carlow, Wexford and Waterford to produce a roadside litter campaign. Materials have been produced for social media and a radio collaboration with Carlow County Council will run on KCLR96FM from the 20th - 31st of July. The campaign focuses on peer pressure to call out litter louts. As well as the media campaign, local communities will be asked to get involved to approach their local take-aways to show their support by displaying a campaign poster.

National Spring Clean

The Environment Section is continuing to assist community groups and individuals who wish to take part in the National Spring Clean. Supplies remain available from the Environment Office and Area Offices. Removal of litter can be arranged via the Environment Office on 7794470.

Volunteers are reminded to take extra Covid precautions to stay safe.

Water Safety and Lifeguards

Lifeguards have been on duty at the five locations listed below on Saturdays and Sundays for June. This year in response to the Covid - 19 pandemic Lifeguard protocols are in strict accordance with the Standard Operating Guidance for Open Water Lifeguarding, developed by the Local Government Management Agency.

To ensure staff and public safety during the pandemic, people availing of our manned watercourses are advised to "Swim & Go".

- The Meadows, Kilkenny City
- The Weir, Bleach Road, Kilkenny City
- Thomastown
- Inistioge
- Graiguenamanagh



New Lifeguard Hut 2020 - Purchased by Kilkenny County Council



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PLANNING

Development Management

Planning Summary	Total to June	
	2019	2020
Planning Applications Received	71	80
Planning Applications Granted	61	57
Planning Applications Refused	5	11
Complaints Received	66	47
Warning Letters Issued	72	40
Enforcements Notices Issued	21	8
Cases Closed	67	30

While the months of May & April saw a significant reduction in the total number of applications received, impacted by the Ministerial Order in response to Covid-19, there has been a significant spike for the month of June with applications for 2020 exceeding those for the same month in 2019 (up by c 13%).

During the period from the 29th March to the 23rd May, access to the Planning Office was restricted. The public counter in the Planning Department is now open again by pre-booked appointment. Appointments can be made by telephoning the planning office at 056 7794010 or by email to info@planning.ie.

The knock-on effect of the Ministerial Order was that in the week ending the 18th July there were a total of 153 planning decisions to be processed by the Planning Authority. As of the 13th July the number of files to be processed has been reduced to just 13.

FORWARD PLANNING

City & County Development Plan

The Planning Section continue to prepare the text for the Draft Plan. Members will have time to consider the draft before publication and the next round of public consultation. Consideration of the draft plan by the Members will commence in September before the draft plan is placed on

public display for the next round of public consultation. Updates on the process are provided on the dedicated portal for the draft plan at Ourplan.Kilkenny.ie.

Masterplans

In a parallel process, a number of masterplans are underway for the areas of Loughmacask, St Canice's Campus (*the former St. Canice's Hospital*) and the Fairgreen area of the City. These were also impacted by Covid 19. Work is continuing with the preparation of these masterplans - Loughmacask is the furthest advanced. Issues arising from the public consultations held in February and those arising for internal and statutory consultations are currently being worked through by the Planning team. Members will be briefed on the resolution of these before any draft masterplans are placed on public display.

Graiguenamanagh Local Area Plan

A draft joint Local Area Plan for Graiguenamanagh and Tinnahinch has been prepared and members of the Thomastown Municipal District were briefed at their meeting on June 10th. Carlow County Council is also reviewing the text of the draft plan before publication and their Elected Members will be briefed in early September. Following the input from the Elected Members in both counties, the draft local area plan will be published in late September for its statutory consultation of a minimum of 6 weeks.

CONSERVATION

Conservation Grants

Built Heritage Investment Scheme: There was a total of €98,000 available for County Kilkenny. 14 grant offers were extended to applicants and 12 have so far been accepted.

Historic Structures Fund: A combined grant allocation of €40,000 was approved by the Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht for two projects in County Kilkenny under this scheme.



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The projects approved under both of the above funds will now be progressed under the supervision of the Council's Conservation Officer for completion by October 2020.

Building Control

A total of 156 commencement notices were received in 2020 up to the end of June. This compares with 171 commencement notices for the same period in 2019. Similar to other services the statutory time lines associated with Building Control were affected by the Covid-19 Ministerial Order. However, since the 23rd May the time lines have reverted to normal and site inspections have resumed since the 18th May.

New features are being introduced to the BCMS. These are the processing of Disability Access Certs and Fire Safety Certs online through the system. This will go live shortly but no formal date has been given by the National Building Control Office as regards a date for the system to go live.

Taking in Charge

Works on the following estates are continuing:

- Belfield, Ferrybank
- Banagher Court, Piltown
- The Green, Ballyfoyle
- Newpark Crescent
- Rath Ullard
- Glenvale, Ballyragget

PARKS

Playgrounds

Playgrounds reopened across the county ahead of schedule on the 8th of June to the delight of many children. Newest to the County's list of playgrounds is Johnstown which was developed by the local community with the assistance of the Council and Leader funding. In addition, Tullaroan Playground, which had only opened days before the restrictions is now fully opened. Both playgrounds will be added to the weekly playground inspection and maintenance schedule.

The Parks Department took advantage of the period when playgrounds were closed to undertake some essential repairs. Maintenance and upgrades of playgrounds and equipment will continue throughout the remainder of the year.



Playgrounds at Windgap & Mullinavat

South East Greenway

Works will commence very shortly on the rail lifting contract on the South East Greenway (incorporating the Kilkenny Greenway), which runs from Ferrybank in South Kilkenny to New Ross, terminating at Mount Elliot, Co. Wexford. The rails and sleepers will be returned to CIE to their central yard in Portlaoise. The railway sleepers are considered hazardous waste due to the presence of creosote and will be safely disposed of by CIE following delivery.

The clearance of vegetation which was carried out earlier this year and the lifting of rails and sleepers will clear the way for construction of the Greenway. The route covers a distance of 24km in total, much of this travelling through rural south Kilkenny, terminating at Ferrybank from where in future it will link with the Waterford Greenway.

The Parks Department is currently preparing a number of Part 8 planning applications for Greenway Car Parks to facilitate access to the Greenway at Raheen, New Ross, Ballyverneen, Glenmore and Ferrybank. It is anticipated these will go on public display before the end of the summer.

In tandem with this a team from Wexford and Kilkenny County Council are liaising with landowners along the route to finalise the detailed accommodation works. Upon agreements being reached the tender documents will be finalised. On-going contact is being maintained with the Department of Tourism, Transport and Sport to



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keep them updated on progress. It is anticipated works will commence on site in September 2020 with a completion date of December 2021.



Examining one of the old bridge structures along the route of the South East Greenway at Carrickcloney.



View of the recently opened New Ross By Pass bridge from the old railway line at Carrickcloney.

Woodstock Gardens

Woodstock Gardens and Arboretum in Inistioge remained open through the Covid-19 restrictions to offer local people in particular a place to exercise outdoors while social distancing. A popular amenity with visitors from all over the south east, local people from within a 2km distance enjoyed the usually busy gardens to themselves for some months. Now open to a wider audience the gardens have become busy again and are particularly popular with families bringing children to use the playground and to run free through the woods and gardens.

The newly developed trails from Inistioge to the gardens are also very popular at the moment providing a scenic location with options for a short stroll or a more ambitious hike.

Typically, the tea rooms housed in the conservatory would have opened at Easter but

due to the restrictions it has been decided instead to offer a mobile tea/coffee service from the van. This has been well received by all.

As part of their community wellbeing initiative Kilkenny Arts Office commissioned Audrey Dowling to design a series of posters for erection in places around the county. Some were hung in Woodstock in early July to much positive comment.



Art work by artist Audrey Dowling recently hung at Woodstock by the Arts Office in support of the Council's Community Wellbeing Initiative



Some early morning sunshine in Woodstock



Local 'wildlife' enjoying a quiet moment in the gardens at the coffee van which is now offering refreshments to visitors



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Ferrybank Neighbourhood Park

Work is now almost complete on the construction of the Ferrybank Neighbourhood Park. The site closed for a number of weeks during the Covid 19 restrictions but has now re-opened with contractors working under social distancing guidelines. The path network is now in place along with the terraced area for seating and climbing wall. The tree planting of over 130 semi mature trees is also complete and the playground equipment is installed with final snags underway.

Watering took place during the dry spring/early summer to assist in the establishment of the trees. The majority of grassed areas are also now complete. The aim will be to manage the park as a pollinator friendly space. Grass cutting will therefore be kept to a minimum around the more formal and entrance areas. Elsewhere longer grass will be maintained with an annual cut and lift approach taken. This will encourage a more diverse grass sward with wildflowers in the seed bed coming through. The park is expected to be open for August 2020.

The park is being jointly funded by the Department of Housing, Planning, and Local Government, Kilkenny County Council and Waterford City and County Council.



The terraced seating area in Ferrybank Neighbourhood Park. As the site is on elevated ground, there are great views of Ferrybank and Waterford City from this area.

Amenity Grants

The 166 groups that applied for grant assistance under the Amenity Grant Scheme for 2020 have been informed of their allocation. All were awarded grants ranging from €454 to € 2,270. The works funded cover the spectrum from landscaping, grass and meadow maintenance and development of open spaces through to the provision of street and outdoor furniture and small-scale improvement works. In 2021, there will be a focus placed on supporting pollinator projects and advice to this effect was sent out to all applicants. Community groups will be encouraged to manage amenities in a more sustainable manner.



A lavender bed planted for scent and for pollinators. Located near seating area in new park in Ferrybank

TOURISM

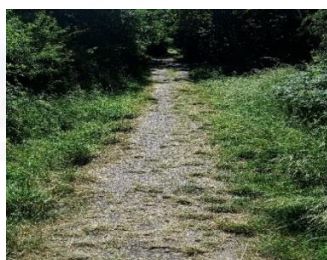
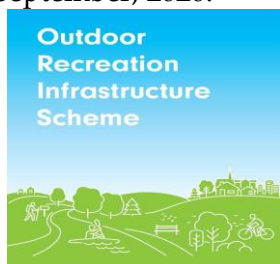
€10 million Outdoor Recreation Infrastructure Scheme

Department of Rural & Community Development announced funding of €10 million under the Outdoor Recreation Infrastructure Scheme (ORIS) for 2020. The ORIS aims to support new and improved facilities for outdoor recreation and tourism activity that can be enjoyed by locals and tourists alike. New walking and cycle trails will be key to helping the tourism industry throughout Ireland starting to recover from the COVID-19 pandemic. This crisis has seen many more people actively engage in outdoor recreation and consumer research shows that this is expected to



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continue and grow further into the future. The ORIS will help to provide more recreational assets across rural Ireland. Kilkenny County Council will identify, prepare and submit applications under the scheme by the closing date of September, 2020.



Kilkenny Tourism Recovery Taskforce

Kilkenny County Council in conjunction with Fáilte Ireland has established a Tourism Destination Recovery Taskforce. The Taskforce is an interagency working group set up to examine what successful recovery of our tourism industry will look like for Kilkenny and will identify the priority actions required to achieve tourism resilience through increased levels of collaboration.



The Recovery Task Force will guide and influence Kilkenny's focus in advance of restarting the tourism economy with the gradual lifting of restrictions.

The key objectives of the Destination Recovery Plan are:

- Define the key priorities and objectives of the recovery period.
- Focus on a balanced and sustainable recovery to develop tourism resilience.
- Identify the supports and stimuli that will help accelerate the recovery of the destination.
- Ensure that all tourism providers in the destination are implementing the relevant re-opening guidelines.
- Encourage local support for local businesses and spending locally.
- Establish a strong local tourism business network that drives cross-promotion and cross-selling.
- Manage social distancing measures in a way that benefits both locals and visitors.
- Prepare local residents for the return of visitors to their destination through an appropriate communications approach.
- Nurture local pride and involvement in local events.
- Participate in relevant certification/ registration schemes (and encourage businesses to do the same through adherence to relevant re-opening guidelines) to ensure communication of a credible message that the destination is clean, safe and welcoming to visitors.
- Consider the transformation of public spaces based on social distancing guidelines.

Fáilte Ireland's 'make a break for it' domestic marketing campaign



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Key Objectives of 'Ireland, make a break for it' Campaign



'Ireland, make a break for it' went live across media at the end of June in what will be a major drive to encourage people to take domestic breaks this summer. Key activities include: major TV and radio campaign; features in the national press; Hashtags and handles to use **#makeabreakforit** **#feelsbigger** **@discoverirl** **@ancienteastIRL**. Kilkenny Tourism marketing and promotions in the coming months will be aligned with Fáilte's national 'make a break for it' campaign.

Kilkenny Tourism CLG Supports

June continued to be a very busy month, and Kilkenny County Council remain very active in relation to the Marketing & PR of Kilkenny as a destination and to supporting Kilkenny Tourism members. The focus is now on re-opening Kilkenny for business for the domestic tourism market. In particular hotels, guesthouses and self-catering accommodation were all busy getting ready to welcome guests from the 29th June as part of the Government's Reopening Plan, with all of the necessary social distancing measures in place.

Kilkenny Tourism launched its new campaign **#MoretoExplore**. This exciting campaign is aimed at bringing back domestic tourists to Kilkenny. The campaign **#MoretoExplore** is a 3 phased campaign in line with Government COVID timeline.

It is a strong message and the digital campaign will promote. *More to Explore, More to Excite, More to Amaze, The Best is Yet to Come.*



LEO/ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

National Success for Entrepreneurial Callan Students



Mark and Evan Srouji, Cllr. Andrew McGuinness, Colette Byrne & Nathan Ryan

Students from Coláiste Éamann Rís in Callan were presented with their national awards from the National Student Enterprise Programme Final as part of #YourCouncil Day on Wednesday 1st July. An Cathaoirleach Cllr Andrew McGuinness together with Chief Executive, Colette Byrne presented the winners Nathan Ryan and twin brothers Mark and Evan Srouji with their specially commissioned national trophies. Nathan Ryan was awarded first place at intermediate level in a new pilot competition "My Entrepreneurial Journey". Nathan impressed the judges with his imaginative account of his future life as a self-made businessman and his grasp of



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the likely ups and downs of running a business having researched the area and interviewed a real-life local entrepreneur. In Nathan's case he interviewed Morgan Ging in Ballykeefe Distillery. Meanwhile, twin brothers Mark and Evan Srouji were presented with the Special Merit Award trophy in the Intermediate Category of the main Student Enterprise Programme competition with their high-quality handmade Bee and Bug Houses.

LEO STATISTICS FOR 2020

€319,190 approved in financial assistance to 16 businesses linked to the creation of 111 jobs over a 3-year period - (€272,415 in *Business Expansion Grants* and €46,775 in *Feasibility Study Grants*);

1,122 business owners and employees attended 57 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;

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

358 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 €684,000;

146 Trading Online Vouchers were approved totalling €336,790 in order to assist businesses to implement e-commerce within their business;

81 participants attended 5 **Start Your Own Business programmes** which explores all the aspects encountered when starting up a new business (*including remotely from March 2020*);

12 **Microfinance loan applications** have been submitted to Microfinance Ireland (*1 pre COVID and 11 COVID related*) of which 8 have been approved to date with total loan value of €245,000;

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

4 businesses have been approved **Technical Assistance Micro Export Assistance Grants** in order to assist them access overseas markets totalling €7,400;

HOUSING

Housing Capital Delivery

Proposed Housing Delivery 2020

Kilkenny County Council has not yet been advised of its target (*set by the Department*) for 2020. The capital schemes proposed for delivery in 2020 are as outlined in the table below. These are estimated figures and are subject to change.

Pipeline Delivery 2020	Proposed
Kilkenny City	
Nuncio Road	28
Ayrfield, Granges Road - Turnkey	8
20 Green Street, Kilkenny (<i>Buy & Renew</i>)	1
25 Green's Bridge (CAS)	2
Sub Total	39
Kilkenny County	
Hoban Park, Bolton, Callan	38
Breaghagh Place, Main Street, Piltown	17
Lime Grove, Belmont, Ferrybank (<i>Turnkey</i>)	4
Group Home, Cloghabrody, Thomastown	4
Willow Grove, Belmont, Ferrybank (<i>PART 5</i>)	3
Main Street, Kilmoganny	1
Old Health Centre, Windgap (<i>B&R</i>)	1
County Sub Total	68
Total	107



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Schemes under Construction at 30th June 2020:

38 units Hoban Park, Bolton Callan,
28 units Nuncio Road, Kilkenny (*Respond Housing*)
17 Units at Breaghagh 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, Kilkenny
4 units (*Group home*) at Cloghabrody,
Thomastown
1 unit at 47 Barrack St, Castlecomer (*Buy & Renew*)
1 unit at Old Health Centre, Windgap (*Buy & Renew*)
1 unit at Main St, Kilmoganny (*Buy & Renew*)
18 units at 'Broguemaker', Castlecomer Road,
Kilkenny



*Glebeside, Donaguile, Castlecomer
33 units under construction*



*Ladywell, Thomastown – 25 units currently
at Planning Stage with An Bord Pleanala*

Schemes due to start in July 2020

16 units at Lower Kilmacow, Mooncoin (*Turnkey*)

Schemes at Tender Stage

5 units at Grennan Villa, Thomastown (*Camphill*)
2 Units at Shanganny, Jenkinstown

Schemes at Detailed Design Stage

6 units at Golf Links Road (*Mulhalls Shop*)
Kilkenny
2 Units at Inchacarron, Mullinavat
2 Units at Old Fire Station, Graignamanagh
Development of 86 units (*houses/apartments*) and
community facility at Crokers Hill, Kennyswell
Road, Kilkenny

Schemes at Planning Stage

18 Wolfe Tone Street, extension and full refurb,
long term void.
Old Fire Station, Thomastown, refurb - 1 bed unit
25 Units at Ladywell, Thomastown (*An Bord
Pleanala*)

Vacant Homes

10 vacant properties have been identified for the
commencement of Compulsory Purchase Order
procedures in the coming weeks. A further 4
projects are being advanced under buy and renew
and site aggregation to deliver residential units at
Johnstown, Castlecomer and Windgap.

Assessment of further vacant sites will continue
around the county to locate viable housing
options.

Turnkey Development Projects

5 projects located at Hebron Road, Kilkenny,
Kilmacow, Freshford, Ferrybank and Piltown are
being brought to construction as turnkey
developments supported by the Housing Capital
delivery team.

These developments consist of 111 additional
housing units.



Breaghagh Place, Piltown – 17 units under construction



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JUNE MONTHLY STATISTICS

Number awaiting social housing support at 30 th June (<i>Gross Need</i>)	1,970
Number of assessment interviews carried out in June:	20
LA/RAS/Leasing allocations in June (<i>offers made</i>):	49
Number of HAP tenancies to 30 th June	886
Number of LA tenancies surrendered in June:	4
Anti-social behaviour cases in June:	75
New Homeless Presentations in June:	12
Maintenance Calls for June 2020	372
Maintenance Calls year to date	2,483
No. Housing Loans Approved to date (<i>Annuity/Construction</i>)	9
Amount of Loans Approved to 30th June, 2020	€1,221,430

Housing Waiting List

The current **gross** Housing demand at 30th June is 1,970 and a comparative analysis with previous years is outlined below:

Year	Number on Housing List
June 2020	1,970
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

Housing Loan Activity

1st January to 30th June, 2020

Loan Type: Annuity/RI Home Loan

Received.....	10
Approved	9
Amount Approved	€1,221,430
Paid.....	9
Amount Paid:	€1,275,230

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 June 2020 is as follows:

Grants Paid 2020		
Scheme	No.	Amount Paid
HGD: Housing Adaptation Grant	36	€404,048.79
MAG: Mobility Aid Grant	22	€70,788.50
HOP: Housing Aid for Older Persons	37	€168,913.79
Total	95	€643,751.08

Grants Approved & Committed 2020		
Scheme	No.	Amount Paid
HGD: Housing Adaptation Grant	85	€934,420.72
MAG: Mobility Aid Grant	26	€98,749.23
HOP: Housing Aid for Older Persons	89	€486,616.94
Total	200	€1,519,786.89

Covid19 Challenges:

- Majority of applicants are elderly or very ill and have been advised to cocoon.
- Builders not able to carry out works, source materials or provide quotations during restrictions.
- Builders had to delay starting works as they were unable to access applicant's home.
- Backlog of works building up since the restrictions were lifted.
- Occupational Therapists were unable to carry out assessments during restrictions. They are now resuming work but they will need to follow restrictions/guidelines from HSE,



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- Housing Department were still progressing applications. Desktop assessments were carried out where possible as site inspections could not take place.

Rent Review 2020

Members are reminded of the rent review that was undertaken in January/February 2020 with a view to having the revised rents in place for 4th April 2020. The implications of COVID has resulted in deferring the implementation of the revised rents. Tenants were advised that where their *employment was impacted* by the ongoing COVID -19 crisis to contact the Housing Department. In total 157 tenants made contact to advise that their income had changed.

Homeless Update

Details of homeless presentations up to 30th June 2020 along with the comparative, monthly presentations for 2017, 2018, 2019 are set out below. There have been 119 Homeless/Potentially Homeless presentations at 30/06/2020.

	2017	2018	2019	2020
January	37	29	37	23
February	30	26	32	27
March	18	26	21	24
April	26	25	18	19
May	34	28	29	14
June	31	24	20	12
Total	176	158	157	119
July	31	34	15	
August	32	27	26	
September	27	24	19	
October	30	27	27	
November	32	29	23	
December	21	19	6	
Total	349	318	273	

Currently, there are 3 households in Hotel emergency accommodation and 5 households in transitional emergency accommodation. There are no children currently in emergency accommodation in Kilkenny.

Incremental Purchase Scheme



Completed Scheme at Hoban Park, Bolton, Callan

The Incremental Tenant Purchase Scheme (IPS) allows for social housing applicants and social housing Tenants to purchase 'designated' newly built local authority houses at a discount.

Kilkenny County Council has six affordable homes (3 bed two storey) newly built at Hoban Park, Bolton, Callan for sale. These houses will be sold at a discount, based on household income provided households meet the eligibility criteria for the scheme.

Application Forms together with additional details are available on www.kilkennycoco.ie, enquiries to Breda Strappe/Margaret Mahony at (056) 7794927/7794903 or by email at housing@kilkennycoco.ie.

COMMUNITY

Pride of Place 2020

Four projects will represent Kilkenny at the 2020 Pride of Place competition. Due to COVID-19 applications must be submitted on-line. Closing date is 27th July, 2020. A virtual 2020 event will take place on the 21st November, 2020.

2020 Groups representing Kilkenny include:

- Castlecomer Discovery Park - *Community Tourism*
- Clogh (*Population 300-1000*)
- Ferrybank Community Garden (*Community Wellbeing*)
- Callan Town (*Population Town*)



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Rural Regeneration - Motte Field

Works commenced on site in the Motte Field on the 2nd June. Works Programme 6 – 8 weeks.

Abbey Meadows (Callan)

An application to the Department to redirect funding was successful for development works in the Abbey Meadows in Callan, these works will complement the works presently being carried out on the Motte Field in Callan.

Tidy Estates Awards

The 2020 Kilkenny County Council Tidy Estates Competition will commence in July with Judging scheduled for early September.

Community Information Newsletter

Issue 19 of the Community Information Newsletter will be released on 23rd of July 2021. This interactive online E newsletter provides relevant community information on grants, activities, advice, community structure/plans, good news stories etc.

Local Community Development Committee

The LCDC met via Microsoft Teams on the 29th June and signed off on a number of items. The Healthy Ireland Programme that runs until June 2021 has prioritised new budgets and ways of working as additional priority areas to be actioned. Many changes to work practice and target groups have been identified as a result of Covid-19 Government restrictions. The revised programme is set to be a more robust programme that targets the most vulnerable in the community.

The committee is awaiting news from the Department of Social Protection, Community and Rural Development and the Islands with regards the review of the Local Economic and Community Plan as well as a framework for the development of a new LECP.

The LCDC also agreed to launch a revised Community Enhancement Scheme to initially support Community Facilities to re-open under Covid -19 restrictions. The closing date is 24th July with a maximum grant of €500.

https://www.kilkennycoco.ie/eng/Services/Community_Culture/Grants/Covid-19-Communities-Facilities-Reopening-Grant-Scheme-Application-Form.html

Kilkenny Integration Strategy

An interim report has been produced as an outcome of desktop exercise and one to one meetings with service providers. Currently there is a survey with 205 responses being received as of 24 June 2020. While the main target group of the survey is people with a migrant background, non-migrants were also encouraged to complete the short survey.

The next stage will be to conduct focus groups with small numbers to tease out some of the issues identified in the survey in September. It was also agreed that both service providers, ethnic minority and cultural groups would develop actions in partnership to improve implementation of the strategy.

Town & Village Accelerated Measures in response to Covid-19

The objective of the Accelerated Measure is to assist the expedited delivery of projects that address the short-term challenges of increasing footfall in rural villages and towns, and assisting local businesses/communities to adapt to public health requirements, particularly social distancing. The total indicative funding available for this Measure is €5 million.

Kilkenny County Council submitted 5 applications on 3rd July as follows: Castlecomer, Inistioge, Callan, Freshford and Piltown. We will be submitting another 5 applications for consideration under Round 2 of this measure. The closing date is 14th August, 2020.



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The main scheme closes on the 28th August. Community Section staff have worked with communities to get Expressions of interest in. Those projects that best meet the criteria of the scheme will be selected to go forward.

Data Analyst

Our Data Analyst continues to gather statistics for the Service Area Monitoring Statistics in light of the COVID-19 Pandemic. This project continues to provide quantitative data intelligence on various service area indicators within Kilkenny County Council to aid and support the Management Team with planning and data-driven decision-making processes in light of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Kilkenny PPN & Partnership Work the Community Section

The PPN has moved premises from 42 Parliament Street. The new office is located at Unit 1, Hebron House, MacDonagh Junction. This will be a shared office space with Kilkenny Older People's Council.

Kilkenny PPN is working in conjunction with Community Radio Kilkenny in respect of a half hour slot dedicated to the PPN every Friday evening from 7.30pm-8pm whereby community and voluntary groups registered with the PPN across the three distinct pillars are interviewed and provide an insight into some of the great work that is being undertaken in their respective communities.

Kilkenny PPN Webinars 2020: Kilkenny PPN has organised a series of practical one-hour webinars to help organisations with Good Governance, the Charities Governance Code, GDPR, Social Media, LA Funding and Social Enterprise. This programme will help participants to increase the effectiveness and impact of their work. These webinars will take place every Wednesday from 10th of June to 15th of July from 11am. Participants need to have access to a computer or laptop and good quality internet access.

CLAR 2020

The Department of Rural and Community Development have opened the CLAR scheme for 2020. The scheme targets designated rural areas that have suffered a population decline, see attached map of Kilkenny.

The scheme has 2 categories for Local Authorities:

- Support for Schools/Community Safety: *Grant value €1,000 to €50,000.*
- Community Recreation Areas: *Grant value €5,000 - €50,000.*

Applications must be with the Community Section by 14th August for submission to the Department.

National Play Day 2020

The Department of Children and Youth Affairs have granted Kilkenny County Council €2,000 towards National Play Day held on 4th July. The funds provided sensory play packs for children with severe intellectual disabilities throughout Kilkenny, 50 children in 46 families. The project was rolled out along with the Kilkenny Children and Young People's Services Committee and HSE Disability Services for children.

Community Helpline:

The helpline hours were reduced in line with national policy to 9.00 a.m. to 5.00 p.m., seven days a week. The number of calls has substantially reduced.

Community Forum

The Forum met fortnightly by conference call. The purpose of the Community Forum is to ensure a co-ordinated approach between the difference voluntary groups and state agencies to deliver services to our elderly and other vulnerable groups in society.

COVID Grant

Kilkenny County Council is still accepting applications for funding for this grant. The grant is to support community and voluntary groups involved in the Community Call.



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ARTS OFFICE

Kilkenny Poetry Broadsheet 2020

Design was completed for our 2020 Poetry Broadsheet and has been printed.

Online Advanced Poetry & Creative Writing Workshops

An 8-week Advanced Poetry workshops with Dr Derek Coyle and Advanced Creative Writing workshops with Adam Wyeth commenced online on 23rd June with 25 participants. The advanced creative writing workshops will focus on all genres with tutor Adam Wyeth, specialising in poetry, fiction and drama.

National Mentoring Programme for Literature

Two applications for the National Mentoring Programme for Literature were submitted from Kilkenny. Words Ireland's mentoring subcommittee, having deliberated over the shortlist, selected fiction writer Nora Brennan as the Kilkenny Arts Office supported mentorship.

Rhyme Rag & Rhyme Rag Ensemble

Our Ensemble members were invited to attend online workshops with All-Ireland slam poetry champion Beau Williams!

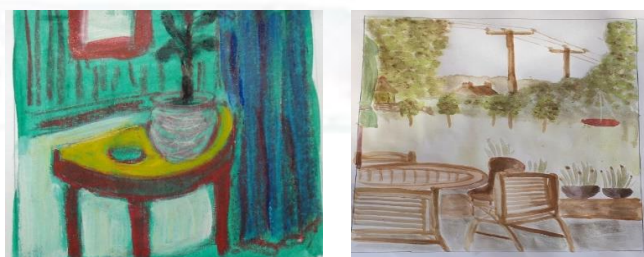
"My Creative Life" is a series of short radio pieces that hears a young person taking us on a joyous dive into their creative world. It explores their passions ranging from art to aerial dance, cooking to coding, history to heritage and is featured on RTEjr Radio and podcast and aired on RTE Radio in June, July and August 2020. Joshua, one of our young Ensemble writers was selected to feature as part of this initiative.

Wednesday Weeklies

Our Wednesday Weeklies Professional Development Programme for arts practitioners started the last week in May and to date 6 of the 12 week online meetings have been rolled out.

Open Circle

The art programme at Open Circle continued through May and June with remote sessions facilitated by visual artist Julie Cusack. Our two groups worked through lockdown drawing and painting their restricted environments.



Knitted Together

We have over 120 volunteers and some groups knitting and crocheting squares for our Knitted Together Project. The final delivery/drop off date for the squares is 27th -31st July and we are currently organising drop off venues in the city and around the county.



Pictures of some of the squares knitted or crocheted by our volunteers

Public Posters & Paintings of Reassurance & Support

A series of large scale posters with illustrated supportive quotes from poems referring to hope, strength and nature have been installed around the city streets and more will be installed in Woodstock, Inistioge and in the Castlecomer Discovery Park in due course.



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Signs of Power also created a beautiful large scale painting on the Abbey Quarter hoarding which had been wonderfully received by the community at large.



Poetry Phone

Our Dial a free-phone number to listen to poetry has been a success with Kilkenny residents and further afield with twelve beautiful poems. It is our intention to record the poems published in the 2020 Poetry Broadsheet and they will replace the existing poems thereby offering new poems to callers.

In the first ten days we had 454 calls to the phone and the initiative as featured on Ryan Tubridy's Morning Ireland radio program.



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LIBRARY



Kilkenny County Council Library
Service



Seirbhís Leabharlainne
Chomhairle Contae Chill Chainnigh

June 2020

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

eBooks

▲ 83% on 2019

1582
borrowed

eAudiobooks

▲ 127% on 2019

1601
borrowed

eMagazines

▲ 49% on 2019

981
borrowed



eOnline
Courses

▲ 234% on 2019

1870
Uses

eNewspapers

▲ 128537% on 2019

10291
Issues read

eLanguages

▼ 284% on 2019

110
sessions



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Contact and Collect Library Service:

2,007 books have been borrowed through our contact and collect branches in June. Members can book a collection time slot in Castlecomer, Graiguenamanagh and City Library between Monday and Friday:

- tell staff the type of book you like,
- and staff will have them ready for collection.

We have also invested in book bins for returning stock, and these are situated outside our buildings.



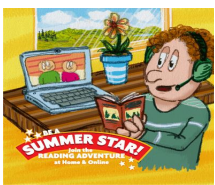
Door to Door Delivery Service

Our door to door delivery service continues each week, and is still as popular as ever amongst older people.

Almost 500 people received over 1,299 books since the initiative began.

Virtual & Radio Bookclubs

Kilkenny County Council Library Service and Carlow Library Service have joined forces with Sue Nunn, KCLR for “The Way It Is Book Club” live on air, Tuesdays at 4.30 p.m. Each week, we discuss popular reads available through eBook and eAudiobook from your local library. We have also started a new virtual bookclub to keep book lovers engaged in discussing books and this currently focusses on titles from the “Way It Is Book Club”. This is part of our Wellbeing Campaign, offering adults at home a platform to chat informally and engage in conversation at a time that suits them best.



Summer Stars

Summer Stars Reading Adventure kicked off on 22nd June for children all over Kilkenny. This national campaign to keep children reading is run annually and is always very popular in Kilkenny. This year, the challenge runs until Friday 28th August.

With children spending more time at home, we have tailored this years’ challenge accordingly, by increasing access to more eBooks and eAudiobooks than ever before, along with eMagazines, and a programme of storytimes, quizzes and much more available on kilkennylibrary.ie and our social media platforms.



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FINANCE

The expenditure by service division to the end of June is set out in table 1. Total Expenditure for the period was €42.3m compared with the annual budget of €83.6m.

Table 1	Actual YTD June 2020	Budget Full Year 2020
	€'000's	€'000's
Housing & Building	10,159	17,623
Road Transport & Safety	9,983	22,688
Water Services	3,324	6,576
Development Management	5,757	10,525
Environmental Services	5,027	11,463
Recreation & Amenity	2,842	6,425
Agriculture, Education, Health, Welfare	296	639
Miscellaneous Services	4,893	7,623
OVERALL TOTAL	42,281	83,562

The bank overdraft facility was utilized six times for the six month period to the end of June 2020. The audit of Annual Financial Statements for 2019 commenced on 13th July. The audited statements will be presented to Council later in the year on completion of the annual audit by the Local Government Auditor.

Commercial Rates Appeals Update

The Valuation Office conducted a revaluation of all commercial properties throughout County Kilkenny to come into effect for 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: -

- 195 Rate Customers appealed their valuation to the Valuation Tribunal.
- Total value of rate demand under appeal is €4.5m, 22.6%
- 149 appeals have been completed to date (22 *withdrawn*)
- 121 of the 149 appeals have resulted in a reduction in rates income, 5 confirmed the decision of the revaluation, 1 resulted in an increase in rates income & 22 were withdrawn.
- Income lost to date = **€699,839**
- 45 appeals outstanding (1 *appeal withdrawn*)

If this trend continues the total loss in annual income will be in excess of €1m.

Local Property Tax - Budget 2021

The Local Property Tax (LPT) public consultation process for Budget 2021 will commence in Mid July for approximately 30 days. A decision on the LPT for 2021 will have to be made by the Elected Members before the end of September 2020.



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Impact of Covid-19 on Council Finances

An up to date report on the impact of Covid-19 will be presented to the Members at the July Council meeting. As advised at the June Council meeting the estimated loss in Income for 2020 is €8.1m, of which €6.2m is commercial rates. The Government has already announced a waiver on commercial rates for businesses impacted by Covid-19 for the three month period to the end of June 2020. A further Government announcement is expected in the coming weeks to clarify the rules regarding which businesses are entitled to this waiver. An announcement from Government is also expected in the coming weeks regarding treatment of commercial rates for the period post June 2020.

Expenditure in a number of areas in the 2020 budget totalling €2.35m has been deferred until further clarity is obtained regarding the income loss for the year.

Re-Start Grant

The Re-Start Grant is a support for micro and small businesses to help with the costs associated with re-opening and re-employing workers. Subject to qualifying criteria any businesses that occupies a commercially rateable premises or where rates are paid on behalf of a business owner and attributable to the business premises occupied can apply. In order for a micro or small business to qualify they must also meet the following criteria:

- A business must have a turnover of less than €5m and have 50 or less employees.
- The business must have suffered a projected 25%+ loss in revenue from 1st April 2020 to 30th June 2020.
- The business must commit to remain open or to reopen if it was closed. The business must also declare the intention to retain employees that are benefitting from the Temporary Wage Subsidy Scheme (TWSS).
- Businesses should retain supporting documentation as spot-checks may be carried out to verify a declaration to this effect.

The grant will be the amount of the rates demand applicable to the rateable premises in respect of calendar year 2019 only, subject to a minimum of €2,000 and a maximum of €10,000. In the event that a rates demand was reduced on appeal, the appeal rate will apply to an amount of the grant if the grant is over €2,000.

For more information and to apply on-line visit www.kilkennycoco.ie/restart. The Re-Start Team can be contacted on restart@kilkennycoco.ie or call 056-7794209. The closing date for receipt of applications is 31st August, 2020.

As of the 14th July, Kilkenny County Council has received 869 Re-Start applications from businesses across County Kilkenny. To date the Re-Start Team has processed 755 applications with 644 eligible for the grant providing payments totalling €2,370,090.

In addition to processing applications the Re-Start Team has dealt with 570 Re-Start phone calls and 704 Re-Start e-mails.