



COMHAIRLE CHONTAE CHILL CHAINNIGH
KILKENNY COUNTY COUNCIL
TUARASCÁIL BHAINISTÍOCHTA MÍOSÚIL
MONTHLY MANAGEMENT REPORT
MEÁN FÓMHAIR - SEPTEMBER 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

September

There will be an incentivised bulky furniture disposal event at both the Dunmore and Granny Civic Amenity Sites.

30th September

Closing date for submission of standard Town & Village Renewal applications to the Department

30th September

The closing date for receipt of applications for Re-Start Grants.

8th October

Brexit Business Advisory Clinic hosted by Local Enterprise Office.

1st November

Register of Elector RFA 1 forms to be completed and returned to Corporate Affairs.

November

An online awards ceremony for Pride of Place will take place in November 2020 where the winning projects will be announced.

REPORT AT A GLANCE

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



IF YOU ARE NOT FEELING WELL

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

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

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

IF YOU ARE FEELING WELL

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

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

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

If you develop symptoms of coronavirus:

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





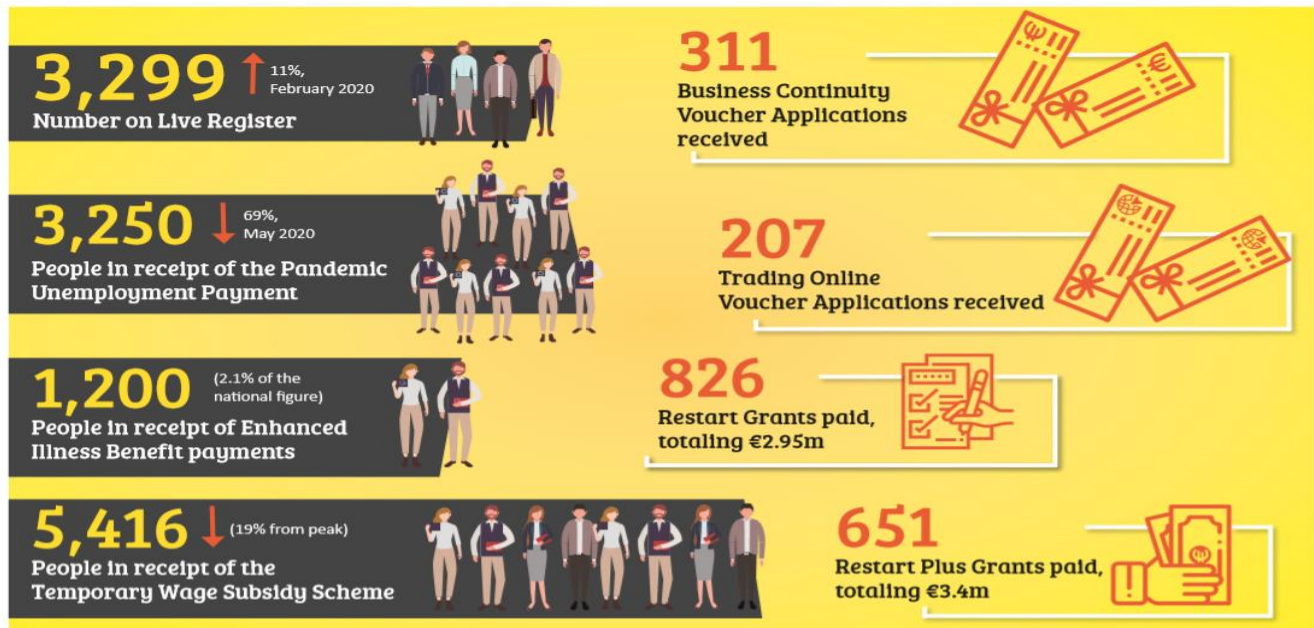
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Kilkenny County Council
Comhairle Chontae Chill Chainnigh

COVID-19 ECONOMIC ANALYSIS

10th September 2020



Kilkenny County Council
Comhairle Chontae Chill Chainnigh

SERVICE AREA ANALYSIS

From week ending 23rd March 2020





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KILKENNY COUNTY COUNCIL

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CORPORATE

Register of Electors 2021/2022

The Draft Register of Electors for 2021/2022 is currently being compiled.

Please ensure that RFA 1 forms are completed for each individual voter and returned to Corporate Affairs before the 1st November, 2020. These forms are available from checktheregister.ie and in all Council Offices.

Opening Up Kilkenny City For Business

NEW SEATING AREA



Market Square Public Seating Area



Parliament Street Pocket Park / Public Seating

MARKETS



Kilkenny Farmers Market on The Parade

ONE WAY SYSTEM



Rose Inn Street - One Way



High Street - One Way

Official Opening Butler Gallery at newly repurposed Evans Home.

This newly refurbished Evans Home and now the new home for the Butler Gallery was officially opened on Thursday, 6th August, 2020, by Minister for State for Heritage and Electoral Reform, Deputy Malcolm Noonan T.D.

The Butler Gallery represents an investment of over €6 million, by Kilkenny County Council in partnership with Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht and Fáilte Ireland, providing a major new cultural centre in the heart of Kilkenny.





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SUMMARY OF FUNDING REQUESTED BY KILKENNY COUNTY COUNCIL FROM GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENTS:

APPLICATIONS SUBMITTED FOR GRANT FUNDING IN 2020	Quarter 1	Quarter 2	Quarter 3	Quarter 4	FUNDING APPROVED
Active Travel Measures	-	-	1,505,000		1,227,000
Agenda 21	-	-	-		10,925
Anti Dumping Initiative	-	146,000	-		120,000
Anti Litter & Anti Graffiti	8,735	-	-		8,735
Bike Week	-	-	12,420		12,420
Built Heritage Investment Scheme	-	-	-		98,000
Capital Play & Recreation Grant	-	5,957	-		5,957
Children & Young People Services	-	28,000	-		28,000
CLAR	-	-	306,650		Awaiting Decision
Climate Change Adaptation	-	-	1,213,000		373,000
Community Monuments Fund	-	-	130,000		Awaiting Decision
Creative Ireland Programme	-	-	10,400		3,000
Decade of Centenaries	-	10,000	-		10,000
Heritage Council Grants	23,000	-	-		23,000
Historic Landfill Sites	-	428,723	-		428,723
Historic Structures Fund	-	-	-		40,000
Historic Towns Initiative -HTI	-	-	100,000		80,000
Irish Walled Towns	-	38,000	-		2,500
National Biodiversity	-	16,000	-		16,000
Outdoor Recreation -ORIS	-	-	180,000		Awaiting Decision
Rural Regeneration	287,518	-	-		Unsuccessful
Town & Village Renewal	-	-	126,000		81,000
Town & Village Renewal Round 2	-	-	166,000		166,000
Town & Village Renewal Round 3	-	-	212,500		Awaiting Decision
Urban Regeneration URDF	-	18,101,000	-		Awaiting Decision
				Total	€ 2,734,260.00
COVID RELATED GRANTS					
Business Continuity Grants	-	-	-		698,218
Covid Community Grants	-	-	-		69,797
Creative Ireland Jobs Stimulus	-	-	-		50,000
Heritage Council Covid Stimulus	-	-	40,000		Awaiting Decision
Restart Grants & Restart Plus	-	-	-		6,800,000
Trading Online Voucher Grants	-	-	-		456,951
				Total	€ 8,074,966.00



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ROADS

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 design of this proposed scheme is within the concluding stage of Phase 2 – Option Selection. The scheme links the Glenmore and Luffany roundabouts and is intended to provide route consistency between the recently completed New Ross By-Pass and the Waterford By-Pass.

N24 Waterford to Cahir Scheme

In July 2020, Kilkenny County Council as the lead authority announced the appointment of Ove Arup and Partners Ireland Ltd. to bring the N24 Waterford to Cahir Road Scheme through planning and design. The appointment is a major boost for Counties Kilkenny & Tipperary directly as the project passes through both these local authority areas, with the wider south east region seeing the positive benefits that the scheme will provide.

Kilkenny Minor Schemes:

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

N24 Tower Road:

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

N77 Ballyragget to Ballynaslee:

The proposed road will be a single carriageway road extending 2.44km from a point 250m south of the main Glanbia entrance until it joins the recently completed Ballynaslee Road Improvement Scheme (2014). A planning application under 177AE and a Compulsory Purchase Order application will be submitted to An Bord Pleanála in the coming weeks.

N24 Carrick Road:

The section of N24 proposed to be improved is rural in nature and located immediately North West of the village of Mooncoin in County Kilkenny. The overall length of the scheme is 1.9km. We are currently preparing the necessary documentation to make an application to An Bord Pleanála for approval under 177AE and also Compulsory Purchase Order approval for the scheme. It is expected that the application will be made before year end.

PAVEMENT IMPROVEMENTS

N76 Pavement Improvement Scheme (Cuffesgrange and Tullamaine Section.)

Road Resurfacing Works on the N76 from Cuffesgrange to Callan are being undertaken by Priority Construction Ltd on behalf of Kilkenny County Council. The works involved strengthening and resurfacing of 1.3km at Cuffesgrange and 3.5km from Ballymack to Callan and also includes road edge improvements on drainage and kerbing of junctions. The works on site commenced on 20th July and will be completed by the end of Sept 2020.



Pavement works on the N76 near Tullamaine



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NON-NATIONAL ROADS

We are continuing with our work on the non-national road network. The bulk of the work is on restoration improvement and restoration maintenance which is over 90% complete. All this work is carried out by our own crews through the Municipal Districts and the Machinery Yard.



Restoration Improvement Works at Portnascully/Ballybrazil LS7436



Surface Dressing works at Dangan Cross to Lacey's Cross

ENVIRONMENT

Trends Since Covid-19

Since restrictions were introduced in mid-March to combat the spread of Covid-19 the Environment Section has seen a significant increase in activity across a number of key headings listed hereunder: -

Environmental Complaints

The number of complaints logged and investigated by the Environment staff since mid-March up to the end of August has increased by 30% when compared to the same period for 2019, with 599 complaints received. The nature of the

complaints range from littering and illegal dumping through to issues relating to water quality and noise to abandoned cars and illegal burning. However, the majority of complaints (at 56%) relate to littering and illegal dumping. All complaints are logged on our CRM System (Customer Relations Management System) given a unique ID No. and assigned to the appropriate staff member for investigation. To combat the increasing incidence of littering and illegal dumping and to raise awareness of the issue, the Environment Section has run numerous media campaigns. Our Enforcement Officers have also been very active on the ground with over 185 fines issued and 26 actions taken under the Litter Pollution Act and Waste Management legislation this year to-date.

There will be an incentivised bulky furniture disposal event at both the Dunmore and Granny civic amenity sites in September. These events are being funded through the Anti-dumping Initiative Programme and it is hoped same will reduce illegal dumping of such items across the county.

Bring Banks

The Council provides and manages 46 Bring Banks across the city and county. Since mid-March activity at these facilities has increased by 51% with a total of 1,338 tons of glass, tin and aluminium collected representing an additional 451 tonnes when compared with the same period last year. Environment staff are continuing to work very closely with our Service Providers to ensure the level of service is in keeping with the demand.

Dunmore Civic Amenity Site

Activity at the Dunmore Civic Amenity Site has also increased with customer numbers up 13% since mid-March when compared to 2019 figures, with over 50,000 customers availing of the facility this year to-date. The tonnage of waste and recycling material collected at the facility has also increased by 12% since mid-March, with over 3,150 tonnes collected.



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Kilkenny Recreational and Biodiversity Park

Following a competitive tendering process, design consultants, Mitchell + Associates, were recently appointed to advance the development of the repurposing of the closed 17acre former landfill site at Dunmore. This is an exciting project for Kilkenny and our consultants are developing an inventive proposal that will attract regional and national attention, while putting forward a wide range of offerings to the public. An emphasis is being placed on recreational uses such as walking, running, cycling, dog friendly spaces, orienteering, along with educational offerings in terms of flora/ fauna identification and biodiversity enhancement and management. When complete it will be attractive to schools, wildlife and gardening groups.

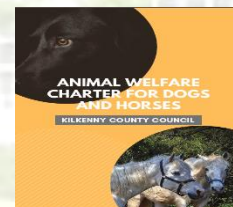
The parks potential to act as a climate “sink”, thus contributing to the Council’s commitment to address climate adaptation, as well as contributing to the green infrastructure and ecological corridors in the county will also be explored in the proposal.

Essentially, the overall ambition of the Council is to create a parkland that will create a regional destination for health and wellbeing, attracting fitness and outdoor enthusiasts of all abilities, nature lovers and educational providers. A key objective will be to create connectivity back into the city along the River Nore Linear Park onwards onto the Nore Valley walking trail.

It is intended that this project will progress through the planning process under Part 8 later this year and that a funding application under the Outdoor Recreational Infrastructure Scheme (ORIS) will be submitted at the end of November to the Department of Rural and Community Development.

Animal Welfare Charter Committee

The newly established Animal Welfare Charter Committee will have its first meeting in September. This new committee comprises of Elected Members, representatives from a number of animal welfare organisations and Council officials. The role of the Committee will be to monitor and provide oversight in the operation of the Council’s Animal Welfare Charter for Dogs and Horses.



RMCEI (Recommended Minimum Criteria Environmental Inspection) Plan 2020

The EPA recently published their evaluation report on the 2020 RMCEI Plans submitted by each Local Authority. We are delighted that Kilkenny Co. Council received a score of High for 2020, retaining the score achieved in 2019.

RMCEI Enforcement Plan Evaluation 2020 Kilkenny County Council

This 2020 RMCEI Enforcement Plan evaluation assesses the key areas of: National Environmental Enforcement Priorities, Environmental Outcomes and Enforcement Resourcing & Plan Review. A summary evaluation is provided below with details of evaluation criteria overleaf. This evaluation is used in the Local Authority Environmental Performance Indicators, which is being reviewed in 2020.

[Note: Inspection numbers and targets are not considered as part of this evaluation – and therefore will not be impacted by COVID-19 restrictions on inspections]

Summary of Evaluation:

1. National Environmental Enforcement Priorities	High
2. Environmental Outcomes	Medium
3. Enforcement Resourcing & Plan Review	High
Overall Plan Rating	High



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Inspections under the 2020 RMCEI Plan have continued since mid-March. However, the restrictions put in place to combat the spread of Covid-19 has impacted on planned inspections that require site visits and meetings. However, notwithstanding same, good progress has been made and protocols have been put in place to protect members of the public and staff.

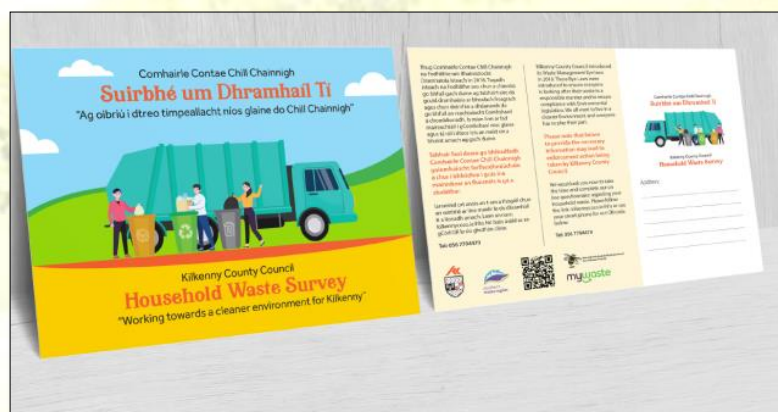
Inspections undertaken to date

RMCEI Inspections	Planned 2020	Completed to end of August	RMCEI Inspections	Planned 2020	Completed to end of August
Inspections relating to water pollution incidents	21	29	Routine Litter Patrols (South County)	175	55
Nuisance/Air pollution inspections	4	17	Routine Litter Patrols (City)	175	105
Inspections of existing planning permissions (or in advance of grant)	550	403	Ambient Monitoring (us/ds WWTPs)	192	146
Ground water quality (Planning inspections)	80	184	WFD Monitoring, op & <u>surv</u> , samples taken (WFD)	377	225
Post Planning Inspections	100	38	Bathing Waters (<u>non designated</u>)	20	15
Nutrient Management Plan Assessment (NMPs)	22	20	Additional BOD analysis for Water Services	550	351

Household Waste Survey Postcard

The Environment Section came up with a novel way of ensuring that we make households aware of their obligation to separate food waste and partake in a 3-bin service – by issuing relevant households with a postcard.

The postcard will be sent to households within Agglomerations of over 500 people. Households receiving the postcard will be asked to log on to the Council's website and complete the survey.



A record of households receiving the postcard is being kept and a follow up notification will be issued if necessary to ensure that all households complete the survey.



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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 weave stars for the One Million Stars to End Violence Project. Working with the Arts Office, the section is promoting the upcycling of different materials to produce stars that would otherwise be put in the recycling bin. The project has just launched a transition year programme which is being advertised locally and nationally through the Local Authority Prevention Network (LAPN).



The Community Environment Action Fund Scheme 2019/2020

Due to Covid restrictions, many projects that received funding last November were unable to meet the project deadline of August 2020. The Department of Communications, Climate Action & Environment has extended the deadline into the Autumn to allow projects to be completed. The Environment Section is currently contacting grant recipients notifying them of this project extension. As last year's scheme has been extended, the Department has indicated that there is a likelihood that the 2020 scheme for CEAF will not take place this year.

Roadside Litter Campaign

Roadside litter remains an issue locally and regionally. Kilkenny County Council teamed up with the neighbouring counties of Carlow, Wexford and Waterford to produce a roadside litter campaign which calls out litter louts. Materials have been produced for social media and a radio collaboration with Carlow County Council ran on KCLR96FM in July. The campaign focuses on peer pressure to call out litter louts. As well as the social media campaign, communities are getting involved by promoting the campaign locally and secondary schools are now being offered the campaign materials to encourage them to run their own school litter campaigns.



Waste Prevention Grant 2020

Eight communities received notification in August that they were successful in their application under the Waste Prevention Grant scheme. The grant promotes reuse and waste prevention at a local level. All projects can be completed within current covid restrictions and will be highlighted throughout October Reuse Month and in November during the Southern Regions Waste Roadshow.



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Successful grant recipients were; Ossory Youth, SOS Kilkenny, Aisleri Aislinn (Ballyragget), Windgap Tidy Towns, Kells Tidy Towns, Deenvew Inclusive Garden (Castlecomer), Johnstown Community Group and Kilkenny Lions Club.

Water Safety 2020 Season

Eighteen (18) lifeguards worked on a rota-basis for the months of June, July and August during a very busy summer at the following locations:

The Meadows, Kilkenny City

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



A summary of the assistance/interventions provided by our lifeguards can be seen hereunder and same demonstrates the critical role this service provides in terms of protecting public safety at our five non-designated bathing areas.

Lifeguard Statistics Summer Season 2020			
<i>Rescue</i>	<i>First Aid</i>	<i>Advice Given</i>	<i>Accident Prevented</i>
5	100	650	150

ENERGY OFFICE

Kilkenny County Council - ISO 50001

The Energy Team in Kilkenny County Council is currently working towards ISO 50001 certification. ISO 50001 is the International Standard that enables organisations to establish the systems and processes necessary to improve energy performance, including energy efficiency, energy use, and consumption. The implementation of this standard is intended to lead to reductions in greenhouse gas emissions, energy cost, and other related environmental impacts, through systematic management of energy.

During the recent restrictions, the Energy Team has continued with the training, completing 10 days training and mentoring support via webinars and conference calls in conjunction with SEAI. The team is currently working on the final stages of the Performance Evaluation and auditing sections with the aim of gaining certification before the end of the year.



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National Energy & Climate Plan 2021 – 2030

The National Energy & Climate Plan 2021 – 2030 was launched recently. Under the Programme for Government, Our Shared Future, Ireland is committed to achieving a 7% annual average reduction in greenhouse gas emissions between 2021 and 2030. The Government recognises that Local Authorities play a key role in meeting Ireland's energy targets, particularly for climate change and energy efficiency.



National Energy & Climate Plan

2021-2030



Some of the targets and objectives outlined for the local authorities and the public sector:

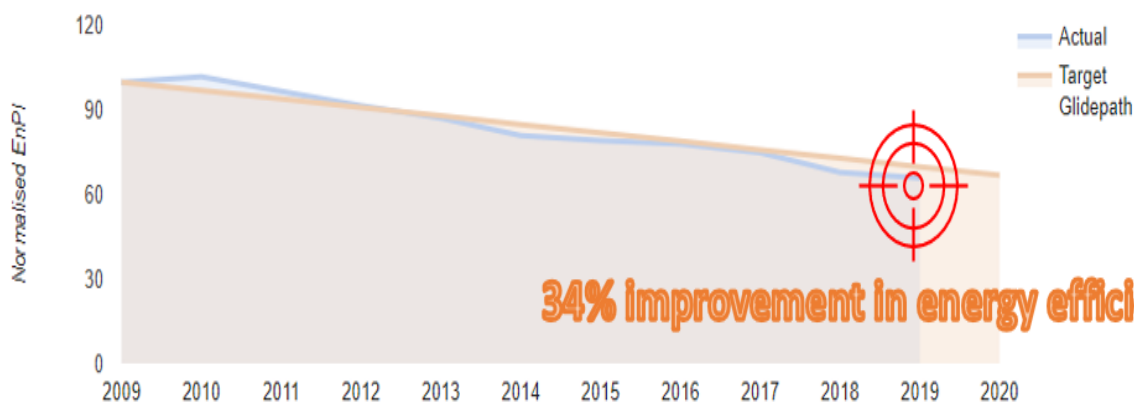
- Target of 30% reduction in CO₂eq emissions by 2030 and a 50% improvement in public sector energy efficiency
- Public sector buildings to have a **B** Building Energy Rating (BER) by 2030.

Phase 2 of the social housing retrofit programme to bring dwellings more than 40 years old (30% of the social housing stock) to a B2 equivalent BER

Kilkenny County Council – Energy Management

The Energy Office and 3CEA are currently working on completing the following energy management actions for 2020:

SEAI Monitoring & Reporting of the Council's energy usage for 2019. The initial indications suggest that the Council will exceed the 2020 target (i.e. to achieve 33% energy reduction) and are currently at 34% improvement in energy efficiency.





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PLANNING

Development Management - August 2020

Planning Summary	Total to August	
	2019	2020
Planning Applications Received	621	573
Planning Applications Granted	504	442
Planning Applications Refused	50	44
Complaints Received	83	69
Warning Letters Issued	97	64
Enforcements Notices Issued	25	9
Cases Closed	76	42

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

FORWARD PLANNING

City & County Development Plan

The Planning Section continue to prepare the text for the Draft Plan, which is nearing completion. The forward planning team will brief all the Municipal District Meetings before the September Council meeting and dates for two workshops will be agreed with the Council. Following the workshops, which should take place in early October, the members will consider the draft plan for approval at the October Council meeting. It will be 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 for the areas of Loughmacask, St Canice's Campus (the former St. Canice's Hospital) and the Fairgreen area of the City are under preparation. These

were also impacted by Covid 19. Work is continuing with the first of these Loughmacask being 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 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 have now also reviewed the plan and it is proposed to put the draft out on display in early to mid October for its statutory consultation of a minimum of 6 weeks.

Conservation Grants

Built Heritage Investment Scheme: Progress continues on projects approved under this scheme. Example of works include rethatching, slate repairs, external render and shopfront repairs. A total of €98,000 has been secured for projects across the County.

Historic Structures Fund: The Bridewell, Thomastown and Windgap Creamery are the two projects approved funding by the Department and are currently in progress. The total funding for these two projects combined is €40,000.

In the July Jobs Stimulus Package, 2 further projects have been submitted to the Department for consideration of funding as follows:

- Bridewell, Thoamstown for an extra €25,000 is applied for.
- Mid Terrace house, Mullinavat - €35,230 is applied for.

Historic Towns Initiative (HTI) Phase II: Kilkenny County Council has successfully secured funding



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of €80,000 from the Heritage Council under the HTI Phase II for St. Mary's Church.

The funding will support repair works to the railings of the Church on Green Street; to the piers of the footbridge over the Kings River in Callan; and select areas of archaeological excavation. Works must be completed by the end November this year.

Community Monument Fund 2020: The National Monuments Service have launched a further grant scheme and Kilkenny County Council intend submitting applications under each stream as follows:

Stream 1 - An application will be submitted for remedial works on the City Wall located on the Abbey Quarter site;

Stream 2 - An application will be submitted for the compilation of a Conservation Management Plan for Kenny's Well.

Building Control

A total of 222 commencement notices were received in 2020 up to the end of August. This compares with 204 commencement notices for the same period in 2019.

Disability Access Certs and Fire Safety Certs online are now available on the BCMS.

Taking in Charge

Works continue to be carried out on the following estates:

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

Vacant Sites

Seventeen sites were added to the Register for 2020. The valuations are now complete, and the next step is to notify the owners, who will then

have an opportunity of appeal to the Valuations Tribunal.

There are currently 34 sites on the Vacant Sites Register. A total of 19 of these are now liable for the 7% levy. The Council were in the process of issuing payment demands in March, however that process was halted following the Government's Emergency Order. The process will recommence to ensure compliance with statutory deadlines. Two sites have had their levy discharged to date.

The legislation is having an impact as the number of cancelled entries due to site activation or improvement now stands at 12 sites.

PARKS

Playgrounds

Playgrounds across the county were very busy during the summer months following the lifting of Government restrictions. Callan Playground works are now completed utilising funding under the Rural Regeneration Development Fund (RRDF). Work at Blackthorn Hills in Ferrybank, which needs major repairs to the safety surfacing, is also underway.



Playground at Callan

South East Greenway

Works have commenced on the rail lifting contract on the South East Greenway which runs from Ferrybank in South Kilkenny to New Ross, terminating at Mount Elliot. The rails and sleepers are being lifted for collection at Rosbercon at the old railway station and from there will be returned to CIE to their central yard



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in Portlaoise. The railway sleepers are considered hazardous waste due to the presence of creosote and will be safely disposed of by CIE after collection.

Two Part 8 planning applications for Greenway Car Parks to facilitate access to the Greenway at Raheen, New Ross, Ballyverneen, Glenmore and Ferrybank have been lodged and submissions are invited from the public. These applications are available for inspection in the Ferrybank Area Office, County Hall Planning Office and in New Ross Municipal District Offices based at the Tholsel in New Ross.



Clearance of rails and sleepers along the line of the old railway track at Rathpatrick, Slieverue

Woodstock Gardens

Woodstock Gardens in Inistioge had an exceptionally busy summer due to many more staycations than in normal years. Initially it offered local people a place to exercise outdoors. However, since early summer, with the easing of restrictions, the gardens were extremely 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 have also proved very popular. Plans are being finalised to seek further funding to extend the trails to the Red House Quay area and Waterfall. An application will be made under the Outdoor Recreation Infrastructure Scheme (ORIS) later this year.

Typically, the tea rooms housed in the conservatory would have opened at Easter but due to the restrictions we have instead offered the

service of a mobile coffee truck for refreshments outdoors. We used the temporary closure of the conservatory to facilitate the upgrade of the building, including painting, tiling and cleaning. Thomastown Artist Gill Campden is currently working on a mural for the interior wall of the building.



The newly painted Tea Room, it's new tiled floor and adjoining stone circular courtyard.



A new seating area, sited near the Walled Garden, is also nearing completion. This space is framed by a timber pergola, constructed using timber salvaged from a Cedar tree that was knocked



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during Storm Ophelia. This area when completed will provide for a relaxing seating area set in the heart of the gardens.

Ferrybank Neighbourhood Park

Work is now practically complete on the construction of the Ferrybank Neighbourhood Park. Some delays due to Covid and wet weather were encountered along the way but we are certain the Ferrybank community will be delighted with the result. The final snagging is underway along with the independent playground inspection to satisfy the public liability insurers. There will be something for all in this park with both active and passive areas for play and exercise. The park is part of a wider network of green spaces in the Ferrybank area with plans in the future to create linkages to the Greenway when it is developed.

The park is being jointly funded by the Department of Housing, Planning, and Local Government (50%) under the Local Housing Infrastructure Activation Fund (LIHAF) and by Kilkenny County Council (25%) and Waterford City and County Council (25%).



A lavender bed near the seating area in the new park in Ferrybank

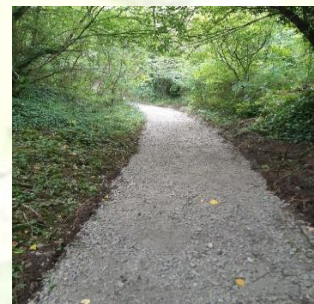


Amenity Grants

The majority of grants have now been paid out for 2020 with all expected to be drawn down by the end of October.

Outdoor Recreation Infrastructure Scheme (ORIS)

Funds from the ORIS enabled the further upgrade of the loop walk at Brownswood, Freshford. This is a continuation of works carried out last year and will allow easier access to a popular outdoor trail for all. Works will commence immediately on a similar but more uphill trail at Tory Hill, Mullinavat. Erosion of the informal trails on Tory Hill has been caused by volumes of people using the trails but also by blocked drainage. The proposed works will remedy this situation across the most popular places on the hillside trail. All works are being carried out with Coillte's permission as the trails are located on their lands. Funding from the same scheme has been granted for a communications plan for Woodstock Gardens. This has enabled the employment of social media experts to help boost the profile of the gardens and keep the public informed of news and events. It will also be used to print and design promotional material including a reprint of our very popular book on the history of the gardens which contains some amazing historical pictures of Woodstock in its heyday during the Victorian period circa 1840 to 1890.



Browns Wood - Before and After Works to Trails

Funding was also secured to undertake enhancement works to the existing boardwalk in Silaire Wood along the River Barrow in Graiguenamanagh. Following a competitive



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tendering process the contract was awarded and works have commenced. The use of recycled material for this project demonstrates the Council's commitment to sustainability and the reuse/repurposing of materials and still provide an attractive, maintenance free, rot proof and vandal resistant piece of leisure infrastructure for many years. The works will also include improvements to the loop walk within the woods and the project is expected to be completed by the end of November.

Hillcrest/Banagher Court Piltown

Works took place in July/ August to upgrade the green and connect two residential areas at Banagher Court and Hillcrest, Piltown. Serious anti-social behaviour incidents in the past were taking place in this area and dumping and littering was also a problem. As part of the planning decision for the Banagher Court estate, a pedestrian link was to be maintained between the two areas of open space in each estate. A new path has now been provided.



The new path across the space connecting two estates and providing pedestrian linkages to town.

Pollinator Planting Thomastown

The Parks Department assisted the Thomastown Area Office in a landscaping project along the Quay in Thomastown. Two large new perennial plant beds were planted with pollinator friendly planting which will provide an abundance of colour and bloom in front of the recently completed Quayside Carpark. The Thomastown Tidy Towns committee will be assisting in the maintenance of the beds going forward.



TOURISM

Medieval Kilkenny Tour - Audio Guide

The tourism team helped researched and co-write the content to record and produce an audio guide - 'Medieval Kilkenny Tour'. This guide tells the story of all the attractions along Ireland's Medieval Mile. The audio guide can be accessed at kilkenny.ie. It is also available on all major podcast platforms, so it is easily and instantly accessible.

Kilkenny Welcome Team

Kilkenny Welcome Team is a positive initiative aimed at supporting Kilkenny's Tourist Sector. It was established by Kilkenny County Council and developed in association with Kilkenny Tourism and the newly established Kilkenny Recovery Task Force and was launched by Brian Cody in early July. 20 volunteers have signed up and have completed training. They welcome people to Kilkenny and help with their information needs. We are very grateful and proud of our volunteers who are providing an invaluable service to visitors and locals alike. Our tourism partners have really embraced this initiative and provided huge support to the volunteers.

More to Explore

This digital campaign was launched to help attract more Irish people to have a staycation in



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Kilkenny, including those that have already been here and encouraging them to return to Explore Kilkenny Walking Trails, Explore Culture, Explore the Food etc. and most of all Explore Safely as there is so much more to see and do in Kilkenny. #More to Explore, More to Excite, More to Amaze, The Best is yet to Come

Launch of New Quick Response (QR) Code Sticker

In response to COVID and the fact that leaflets were no longer to be distributed, the Tourism team came up with the idea of getting our message out to visitors in a new innovative way. Discovering the best places to visit in Kilkenny is now quicker and more accessible than ever with the launch of a new **Quick Response (QR) code sticker** by Kilkenny Tourism. Coffee shops throughout Kilkenny are distributing the stickers on their cups, where customers simply scan the code with their phone and they are brought to the websites 'More to explore' flipbooks <https://visitkilkenny.ie/more-to-explore/> where they will find the best places to visit; attractions to see and activities to discover. The stickers are part of the #More to Explore campaign which was launched by Kilkenny Tourism. The campaign is kick-starting tourism in the county with a number of initiatives and promotions aimed at attracting visitors.

Launch of History Campaign

The Living History, Loving Kilkenny campaign was launched on 8th September. As part of this campaign, there are new events and attractions for visitors to explore include Butler Gallery, CONNECTED Sculpture Trail, Medieval Kilkenny Tour.

ORIS funding was also secured to help develop a new brand and website: www.outdoorkilkenny.ie

Training

Tourism members took part in a number of Webinars and On-Line Training aimed at helping the tourism sector during COVID with specific focus on driving bookings in September and

beyond. Training was provided by Failte Ireland and LEO.

HOUSING

Housing Capital Delivery

Proposed Housing Delivery 2020

The capital schemes proposed for delivery in 2020 is as outlined in the table below. These are estimated figures and are subject to change.

Pipeline Delivery 2020	Proposed
Kilkenny City	
Nuncio Road	28
20 Green Street, Kilkenny KK	1
24 Green Street (CAS)	1
City Total	30
Kilkenny County	
Hoban Park, Bolton, Callan	38
Breaghagh Place, Main Street, Piltown	17
Lime Grove, Belmont, Ferrybank (Turnkey)	4
Group Home, Cloghabrody, Thomastown	4
Willow Grove, Belmont, Ferrybank (PART 5)	3
No 47 Barrack Street, Castlecomer (Buy & Renew)	1
Main St Kilmoganny (Buy & Renew)	1
County Total	68
City & County Total	98



Completed estate at Hoban Park, Callan



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Cottage at Main St Kilmoganny, upgraded from a BER G rating to a A3 Rating

Delivered to date in 2020 [39 units]

38 units Hoban Park, Bolton Callan,
1 unit at Main St, Kilmoganny (Buy and Renew)

Under Construction at 31st August [244 units]:

28 units Nuncio Road, Kilkenny (*Respond Housing*)
17 Units at Breaghagh Place, Main Street, Piltown (*KCC Direct Build*)
33 units at Glebeside, Donaguile, Castlecomer (*KCC Direct Build*)
6 Units at New Road and Chapel Street, Mooncoin (*Turnkey*)
22 units at Station Avenue, Ballyraggett (*KCC Direct Build*)
40 units Margaret'sfield, Callan Road, Kilkenny (*Respond Housing*)
4 units (*Group home*) at Cloghabrody, Thomastown (*KCC Direct Build*)
1 unit at 47 Barrack St, Castlecomer (*Buy and Renew*) (*KCC Direct Build*)
1 unit at Old Health Centre, Windgap (*Buy and Renew*) (*KCC Direct Build*)
18 units at Pairc Nua [Broguemaker], Castlecomer Road, Kilkenny City (*Direct Build*)
16 units at Greenville Mews, Lower Kilmacow (*Turnkey*)
58 units at Pennefeather Green, Hebron Road, Kilkenny (*Turnkey*)
Due to start September/October 2020 [15 units]
5 units at Grennan Villa, Thomastown (Camphill)
2 Units at Shanganny, Jenkinstown
8 units at Pennefeather Court, Hebron Road, Kilkenny (*Turnkey*)

Tender Stage [51 units]

51 units (*houses/apartments*) and community facility at Crokers Hill, Kennyswell Road, Kilkenny [*Phase1*].

Detailed Design / Pre Tender Stage [10 units]

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



14 houses at Margaret Field, Callan Road, Kilkenny - 40 units under construction

Planning Stage [27 units]:

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

Vacant Homes:

10 vacant properties have been identified for the commencement of Compulsory Purchase Order procedures in the coming weeks. Assessment of further vacant sites will continue around the county to locate viable housing options.

August Monthly Statistics

Number awaiting social housing support at 31 st August (<i>Gross Need</i>)	1,954
Number of assessment interviews carried out in June:	34
LA/RAS/Leasing allocations in June (<i>offers made</i>):	9
Number of HAP tenancies to 30 th June:	874
Number of LA tenancies surrendered in June:	6



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Anti-social behaviour cases in June:	66
New Homeless Presentations in June:	22
Maintenance Calls for 31 st August 2020	373
Maintenance Calls year to date	3241
No. Housing Loans Approved to date (<i>Annuity/Construction</i>)	15
Amount of Loans Approved to 31 st August 2020	€1,338,430

Housing Waiting List

The current **gross** Housing demand at 31st August and a comparative analysis with previous years is outlined below:

Year	Number on Housing List
August 31 st 2020	1954
December 2019	1,988
December 2018	2,067
December 2017	2,180
December 2016	2,059 (Statutory Assessment 2016)
December 2015	2,744

Housing Loan Activity 1st January to 31st August, 2020

Loan Type: Annuity/RI Home Loan

Received.....	22
Approved	10
Amount Approved	€1,338,430
Paid.....	16
Amount Paid:	€2,258,230

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 31st August 2020 is as follows:

Grants Paid 2020		
Scheme	No.	Amount Paid
HGD - Housing Adaptation Grant	49	€526,966
MAG - Mobility Aid Grant	25	€87,006
HOP - Housing Aid for Older Persons	50	€244,975
Total	124	€858,947

Grants Approved & Committed 2020		
Scheme	No.	Amount Paid
HGD - Housing Adaptation Grant	89	€1,001,236
MAG - Mobility Aid Grant	30	€122,459
HOP - Housing Aid for Older Persons	100	€545,889
Total	219	€1,669,584

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



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Homeless Update

Details of homeless presentations up to 31st August 2020 along with the comparative, monthly presentations for 2017, 2018, 2019 are set out below.

There have been 160 Homeless/Potentially Homeless presentations at 31/08/2020

	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
January	37	29	37	27	23
February	30	26	32	14	27
March	18	26	21	16	24
April	26	25	18	20	19
May	34	28	29	20	14
June	31	24	20	16	12
Total	176	158	157	113	119
July	31	34	15	31	19
August	32	27	26	28	22
September	27	24	19	26	
October	30	27	27	25	
November	32	29	23	16	
December	21	19	6	17	
Total	349	318	273	353	

Currently, there are 5 households including 1 child in hotel emergency accommodation and 5 households in transitional emergency accommodation.

Incremental Purchase Scheme

6 Affordable home for sale in Hoban Park, Callan, Co. Kilkenny



Completed Scheme at Hoban Park, Bolton, Callan

In July, Kilkenny County Council advertised the sale of six newly built affordable homes (3 bed two story) at Hoban Park, Bolton, Callan under the Incremental Purchase Scheme (IPS). This scheme allows for persons who qualify for social housing supports to purchase 'designated' newly built local authority houses at a discount.

The closing date for a receipt of applications was the 31st August, 2020. There are 19 applications received.

COMMUNITY

Pride of Place

The online judging for the 2020 National Pride of Place Awards took place towards the end of August. The groups from Kilkenny participating in this year's competition include, Castlecomer Discovery Park, Clogh Village, Ferrybank Allotment project and the Callan Town Team. An online awards ceremony will take place in November 2020 where the winning projects will be announced.

Department of Justice Community Based CCTV Scheme.

Urlingford have been awarded €15,000 towards costs for the implementation of the Urlingford Community Based CCTV scheme, 11 cameras in total will be erected.

Tidy Estates Competition

The 2020 Kilkenny County Council Tidy Estates Competition judging is presently underway.

Community Information E-Newsletter

In August issue 19 of the Kilkenny County Councils Community newsletter was published, this e-newsletter continues to inform the general public on community related information, including, funding, project updates etc.

Town & Village Renewal

The Council received funding for projects in Callan, Castlecomer and Inistioge under the Accelerated Measure Round 1. Further funding



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was received under under Round 2 for Graiguenamanagh, Kilmacow, Mooncoin, District Towns and County wide. Applications also submitted under Round 3 for 3 county wide projects, Ballyhale, Graiguenamanagh, Freshford and Kilkenny City.

Closing date for submission of standard Town & Village Renewal applications to the Department is extended to 30th September and the Council can submit up to 10 applications this year. Following receipt of expressions of interest, applications are being finalised in respect of Ballyragget, Freshford, Thomastown, Paulstown, Stoneyford, Kilmanagh, Muckalee, Fiddown/Glenmore, Kilmacow and Hugginstown.

CLAR

10 applications have been submitted for consideration under CLAR for funding of €306,650 in Kilmanagh, Clogharinka, Muckalee South, Collaghmore, Kilmacar, Mothell, Kilmaganny, Muckalee North, Crosspatrick and Kilmanagh.

FIRE SERVICES

Capital Projects

Kilkenny Fire Service have taken the delivery of 2 second hand fire engines for Urlingford Fire Brigade to replace their 18-year-old vehicles. Revised layout drawings and cost plans for the new Urlingford Fire Station have been sent to the Department for approval. The delivery of a new fire engine for Callan has been delayed due to Covid-19 restrictions and is now due at the end of September 2020.

Fire Safety Certificates

80 applications for fire safety certificates were received to 31st August 2020. This is a 20 % increase in 2019 applications for the same period last year. These applications were administered by staff working from home and from our Headquarter station due to Covid-19.

Fire Services Acts 1981 & 2003

- Fire Prevention staff made targeted inspections of premises both to provide advice and to enforce legislation.
- 1 Fire Safety Notice under the Fire Services Acts 1981 and 2003 was revoked during this period.

Community Fire Safety

Ongoing public messaging campaigns are being maintained through our social media channels to encourage members of the public to install smoke alarms and to test their smoke alarms once a week to ensure that they are working.

Talks and information to various communities is on hold due to current Public Health restrictions.

Personnel have been carrying out Home Fire Safety visits to vulnerable people

Kilkenny Fire and Rescue Service Primary Schools Programme (PSP) is postponed for the moment. This programme has been running since 2006 and over 19,112 3rd class pupils have received fire safety awareness talks.

Operations

Fire Brigades responded to 506 turnouts up to the 14th August 2020 compared to 444 in 2019.

Increase of 40 % in fire calls and a decrease of 49% in road traffic accidents.



Firefighters attended incidents during Storm Ellen and Storm Frances

Training

Weekly training has recommenced round the county following Induction Training on Covid-19.



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LEO/ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Autumn Training Programme 2020 Available to Book Online Now

The Local Enterprise Office has launched the Autumn 2020 training programme schedule for entrepreneurs, owner/managers and employees of micro-enterprises. Due to Covid19, all training courses will be delivered online. There is a total of 36 courses on the programme including Start Your Own Business Courses and Webinars.

As Brexit looms, the onus is on business owners to be aware of how it could significantly impact on their current economic activity. To help prepare and inform businesses, the Local Enterprise Office will host a number of events including "Brexit Business Advisory Clinic" on Thursday 8th October which involves one-to-one telephone meetings with our Brexit Advisors. In addition to this, there will be 2 Prepare your Business for Customs workshops. All of these events are free but pre-registration is required.

In 2020 to date, over 1,262 participants have attended training programmes organised by the Local Enterprise Office ranging from Start your Own Business Courses, Social Media Marketing Courses to Covid19 related Courses and Webinars. The Autumn Training schedule is designed to support small businesses and start-ups in our local communities.

The full training programme schedule is now available to view on www.localenterprise.ie/kilkenny

Microfinance Ire. Opens new €15M Covid19 Fund
Microfinance Ireland has opened its new €15 million Covid-19 fund to support small businesses through the current period of uncertainty and to protect jobs that have been impacted by the coronavirus pandemic. Small businesses can apply for loans up to €25,000 for a three-year term with no repayments and no interest due for the first six months of the loan. The Local Enterprise Office is supporting clients by assisting with loan application. All MFI loans

submitted via the Local Enterprise Office can avail of a reduced interest rate of 4.5%.

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*)
- **1,262** business owners and employees attended 69 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
- **793** entrepreneurs have received **one-to-one mentoring** to assist them in relation to particular issues within their business ranging from business continuity to ICT
- **384** 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 €676,719
- **197 Trading Online Vouchers** were approved totalling €456,951.24 in order to assist businesses to implement e-commerce within their business
- **102** participants attended **6 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 **11** have been approved to date with total loan value of **€296,000**
- **6** businesses have 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 approved **Technical Assistance Micro Export Assistance Grants** in order to assist them access overseas markets totalling €10,496



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ARTS OFFICE

Culture Night – 18th September

The Arts Office and other organisations around the city have a full programme for 2020. The National Design & Craft Gallery's CONNECTED, a Kilkenny Sculpture Trail, can be viewed around the streets of Kilkenny. The Amelia Stein's exhibition *The Bloods* and a new public engagement project, *A Neighbourhood Museum*, will be at the centre of the Butler Gallery's Culture Night events plus scavenger hunts and talks. TADA! Theatre, Thomastown, will host a live zoom workshop for children.

Broadsheet Poetry Trail & Free Poetry Phone

This year, instead of a public live launch, the 2020 published Broadsheet poems will, as part of Culture Night, be printed as large posters and displayed in shop windows around the city. They will also be recorded by actors and will replace the current poems on the freefone Poetry Phone 1800272994

<https://culturenight.ie/events/>

Exhibition

~~Less Stress~~ More Success

This exhibition commenced on 12th September and is part of Kilkenny County Council Arts Office's 'Emerging Curator in Residence Programme'.

Open Circle

We will continue to offer online projects between September and December 2020. In September we will engage with our two groups of women online, with visual artist Carrie Lynam for an exciting textile programme and an eight-week creative writing course with Kilkenny based author Tara Heavey.

The women have also engaged in the Arts Office's other community arts projects such as the One Million Stars, Knitted Together and the Poetry Phone.



Open Circle papercuts feature as part of CONNECTED, Kilkenny Sculpture Trail



Some of the work undertaken by the women in facilitated sessions during the lockdown

Artlinks

New Social Media Initiative

The new Artlinks Instagram account continues to create a stronger online presence for ArtLinks and its members by sharing members' work. It also highlights the supports that Artlinks offers. The account currently has 505 followers and regular posts and one live event to date. 4 artists from across the region have been featured on the account to date with a further five to feature between now and the year end.



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LIBRARY

Online Services

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



2,803

eBooks borrowed in
July & August

▲ 101% on 2019



1,708

eMagazines borrowed
in July & August

▲ 21% on 2019



10,267

Newspaper issues
read in July & August

▲ 4269% on 2019

3,331

eAudiobooks borrowed
in July & August

▲ 84% on 2019



2,698

Online course classes
in July & August

▲ 570% on 2019



90

eLanguage classes in
July & August

▼ 70% on 2019





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Book and Browse Library Service



15776

Items issued in
July & August



11,042

People visited our
branches

5 Branches

Operational in:
City Library
Graigenamanagh
Ferrybank
Loughboy
castlecomer



Door to Door Library Service



572

Members served
since we started



2069

Items delivered
since we started



Book and Browse:

- 15,776 books borrowed from branches in July and August.
- 11,042 visitors to branches.
- Service available in Castlecomer, Ferrybank, Graigenamanagh, Loughboy and City Library.
- Members book a 30-minute timeslot online through kilkennylibrary.ie, or by phoning/emailing the library.



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Door to Door Delivery Service

Our door to door delivery service for over 70's continues, with 3 full rounds completed for the county. Still as popular as ever, 572 people received over 2069 books since the initiative began. Due to demand, we have decided to continue this service, and round 4 is currently underway.



Partnership with Music Generation Kilkenny

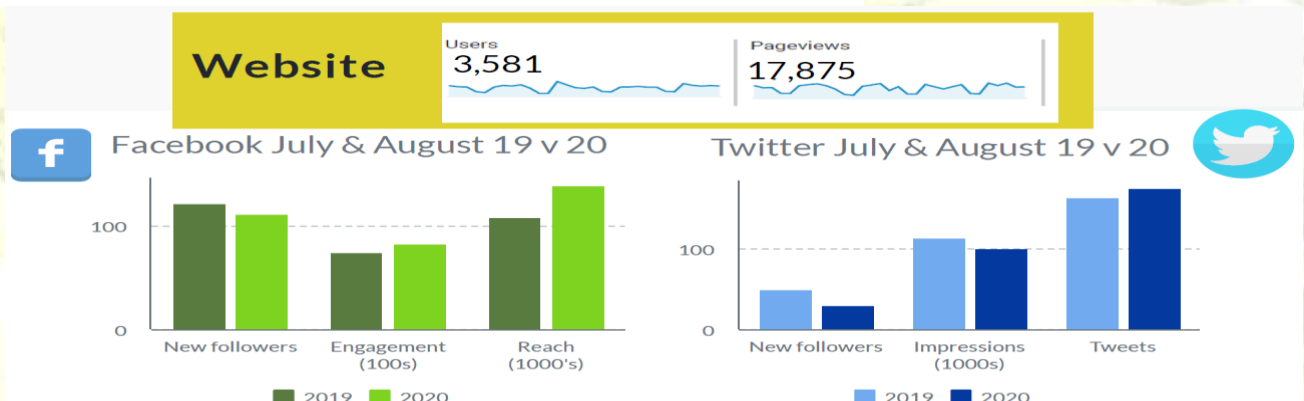
As part of our Community wellbeing initiative, we recently partnered with Music Generation Kilkenny to promote wellbeing amongst families with young children. Led by experienced practitioner, Karen McMahon, short workshops were shared online twice a week for the month of August. These were very well received.

Freegal Music Streaming Service Launched

Freegal is a free music streaming service which has been added to our suite of online services. Access is available with your library card from Kilkenny County Council Library Service. Users have three hours unlimited streaming per day and up to three free downloads per week. Freegal offers access to 15 million songs, including Sony Music's catalogue of legendary artists, and over 40,000 music videos.

Summer Stars

Our national Summer Reading campaign ran throughout July and August this year. With children spending more time at home, we have tailored this year's challenge by increasing access to more eBooks and eAudiobooks than ever before, along with eMagazines, and a programme of storytimes/quizzes. All available on kilkennylibrary.ie and our social media platforms. All participants will be entered into a random draw for vouchers for a local business.





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FINANCE

The expenditure by service division to the end of August is set out in table 1. Total Expenditure for the eight months to the end of August was €60.5m compared with the annual budget of €83.6m.

Table 1	Actual YTD August 2020	Budget Full Year 2020
	€'000's	€'000's
Housing & Building	13,655	17,623
Road Transport & Safety	16,091	22,688
Water Services	4,470	6,576
Development Management	9,151	10,525
Environmental Services	6,629	11,463
Recreation & Amenity	3,930	6,425
Agriculture, Education, Health, Welfare	384	639
Miscellaneous Services	6,251	7,623
OVERALL TOTAL	60,561	83,562

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

The audit of 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%).
- 154 appeals have been completed to date (22 withdrawn).
- 126 of the 154 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 = **€715k.**
- 40 appeals outstanding (1 appeal withdrawn)

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



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Impact of covid-19 on Council Finances.

As previously advised to Council, Covid-19 is presenting serious financial challenges as all income streams have been impacted. The estimated shortfall in commercial rates income for 2020 is €8.7m. The Government have announced a six month waiver on commercial rates for businesses impacted by the crisis and that compensation will be provided to Council. The estimated income from the compensation is €5m leaving a net shortfall of €3.7m. Income from goods and services is also expected to be down by €1.7m. Additional Covid related costs of €0.5m are also forecast for the year.

This leaves an estimated shortfall for 2020 of €5.9m in the absence of any further Government support.

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.

There is a significant risk that the Council will incur a deficit for 2020 based on the current projections.

Budget 2021

The budget process for 2021 has already commenced. As already stated the covid-19 crisis is presenting unprecedented financial challenges for the Council in the current year and will continue to do so into 2021. All income streams are and will be impacted for the foreseeable future. Council will be asked at the September meeting to maintain the same local adjustment factor for local property tax for 2021. This will maintain income of €1.1m which will be essential in maintaining essential council services for 2021. A separate report is being sent to Elected Members on this matter.

Re-Start/Restart Plus Grants

The Re-Start Grant Plus builds on the original Restart Grant and is a support for small and medium enterprises to assist 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 business to qualify they must also meet the following criteria:

- Be a commercial, trading, entity
- Operate from a premises that is commercially rateable by a local authority
- Have 0 - 250 employees
- Have a turnover of less than €100k per employee to a maximum of €25m
- Have suffered a 25%+ loss in turnover between 1 April and 30 June 2020
- Commit to remain open or to reopen if closed
- Intend to retain employees that are on the Temporary Wage Subsidy Scheme (TWSS).

In most cases the grant will be the amount of the rates assessment for the premises for 2019 with a minimum grant of €4,000 and a maximum grant of €25,000 (or maximum of €15,000 for businesses that received the maximum €10,000 under the original Restart Grant Scheme). An additional 40% for pubs, bars and nightclubs that remain closed in accordance with Government Guidelines announced by An Tánaiste, Leo Varadkar on the 28th August.



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To date, Kilkenny County Council has received 1,079 Restart Grant Plus applications. The Restart Team has approved and paid 720 applications totalling €3,852,500. This is in addition to 966 applications processed under Restart 1 with a total payment of €2,948,925.

In addition to processing applications the Re-Start Team has dealt with over 1,300 Re-Start phone calls and 2,400 e-mails since the commencement of the project. The Restart Plus Grant continues to be actively publicised in local and social media platforms.

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 30th September, 2020 (*subject to review*).