

CHIEF EXECUTIVE REPORT

DECEMBER 2021 ISSUE



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



IF YOU ARE NOT FEELING WELL

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

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

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

IF YOU ARE FEELING WELL

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

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

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

If you develop symptoms of coronavirus:

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



LET'S BE SAFE – NO HANDSHAKES!

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

December Sounds will take place in St. Canice's Cathedral as follows:

- *Monday, 20th December*
Brid Lyons, Cormac Begley & Liam O' Maonlai.
- *Tuesday, 21st December*
Bird On The Wire - The Songs Of Leonard Cohen with Pauline Scanlon, The Whileaways & Guests
- *Wednesday, 22nd December*
Elise, Lemoncello, Malojian & Seamus Fogarty.

Community Monuments Fund 2022

Closing date for receipt of applications is 15th February 2022.

Heritage Capacity Fund 2022

Closing date for receipt of applications is 5.00 p.m. Tuesday 11th January, 2022.

National Heritage Week 2022

National Heritage Week 2022 will take place from 13th to 21st August 2022

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ROADS

Major Projects *(Included in NDP- Funded by TII)*

N24 Waterford to Cahir Scheme

Kilkenny is the lead authority on this project. It is 60km in length and has a projected cost of €600 - €720m. It will link up with the Limerick to Cahir Scheme which is a few months further ahead in the process. The Consultants are working through Phase 2 on this scheme. An options report will go out to public consultation in early January 2022.

All the information on the scheme is available on the website N24waterford2cahir.ie.

N25 Glenmore *(New Ross Bypass)* to Waterford Scheme

A route corridor has now been selected for the scheme *(Navy route)* and the Phase 2 Gate Review Statement has been submitted to TII for approval to proceed to Phase 3 *(Design & Environmental Evaluation)*.

The overall outturn cost for the project is expected to be €90 to €120m.

All the information on the scheme is available on the website: N25waterford2glenmore.ie.

Minor Projects *(not included in NDP-Funded by TII)*

N24 Tower Road *(Safety Scheme)*

This scheme is currently subject to final design and tender preparation. Landowner negotiations are on-going. It is envisaged that the scheme will go out to tender towards the end of Q1 2022 with a view to construction commencing towards the end of Q2 2022.

The overall outturn cost for the project is expected to be circa €10m.

N77 Ballyragget to Ballynaslee

This Scheme has received both 177AE Planning approval from An Bord Pleanála and CPO confirmation by Kilkenny County Council. The Stage 4 review documentation is being prepared and subject to the approval of TII.

The scheme will progress through to Phase 5 *(Enabling & Procurement.)* The overall outturn cost for the project is expected to be circa €10m.

N24 Carrick Road

The preparation of the necessary documentation to make a simultaneous application to An Bord Pleanála for Planning Approval under 177AE and also Compulsory Purchase Order Approval for the scheme is on-going.

It is expected that subject to TII approval to proceed to make these applications in early Q1 2022. The overall outturn cost for the project is expected to be circa €10m.

Castlecomer Footbridge

The footbridge and associated works are under construction at present. The bridge was lifted into position over the night of Tuesday 23rd November.

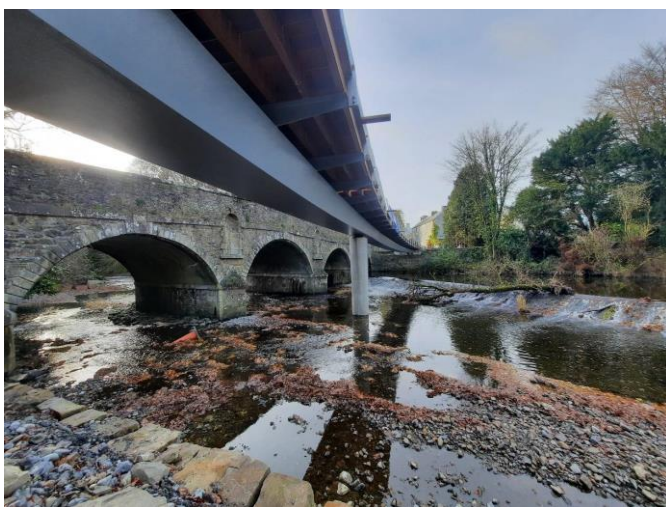
Subject to progress over the coming weeks the footbridge is intended to be open by the end of Q4 2021. The construction costs for the project is circa €1m.



Photos of Bridge Transportation and installation on night of 23rd November 2021



Drone view of new Footbridge & Existing Road Bridge.



View underside of new Footbridge

OTHER TII FUNDED WORKS

HD17 Safety Works.

Consultants have been appointed to undertake the design for improved facilities for pedestrians and cyclists on Ossory Bridge, N10 Kilkenny Ring Road which had been identified as part of the HD17 programme. The scheme design will be progressed by the Bridge Management Office of Kildare County Council through a Section 85 Agreement with Kilkenny County Council. It is expected that the works deemed required will be completed by the end of 2022.

Major Pavement Schemes:

Two major pavement schemes were completed in 2021 for a combined value of just under €2m to address approx. 4km of the national road network.

- (i) N76 Riversfield to Ahanure
- (ii) N77 Oldtown to Ballyragget

Other Pavement Works:

A contract has been awarded under the Skid Resistance Programme to Lagan Asphalt Ltd for approx. €2m to undertake pavement improvement works on 8 different roundabouts and some approach roads on the Kilkenny Ring Road. This work is expected to commence in Q1 2022 subject to suitable weather conditions.

Under the same programme a section of 700m works was completed on the N24 to the west of Mooncoin Village for a value of €230,000.

A section of pavement improvement works was completed within Ballyragget Village under the Capital Maintenance Programme for a value of approximately €160,000.

Fencing Retrofit Programme

This programme has continued in 2021 and works on the N76 at Cuffesgrange and Tullaroan for a combined value of approximately €100,000 have been completed to date. Planning for the next set of works continues and subject to funding allocations in 2022 it is expected that further sets of works will be procured in 2022.

Before & After Fencing Arrangement



PLANNING

DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT

<i>Planning Summary</i>	<i>Total to November</i>		<i>% Difference</i>
	<i>2020</i>	<i>2021</i>	
Planning Applications Received	96	81	-16%
Planning Applications Granted	69	71	3%
Planning Applications Refused	8	5	-38%
Complaints Received	95	116	22%
Warning Letters Issued	79	98	24%
Enforcements Notices Issued	15	21	40%
Cases Closed	61	94	54%

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

While the number of planning applications received during November this year (at 81) is down compared to the same month last year, overall the total number of planning applications received so far this year is up over 20% compared to the same period last year.

FORWARD PLANNING

City & County Development Plan:

The City and County Development Plan came into effect on the 15th October, 2021. On the same date, the Minister for Local Government and Planning issued a Draft Direction to Kilkenny County Council as regards certain aspects of the Wind Energy Strategy as adopted in the Plan.

The Council as required, published the Minister's Draft Direction and sought submissions from the public before the deadline of 12th November. Over 720 submissions were received. The Council's Chief Executive prepared a Report to include a summary of the submissions received and her views on the submissions.

The report also included a summary of the views and recommendations of the Elected Members as expressed at the Special Meeting held to discuss this matter on 6th December, 2021.

The Chief Executive submitted her Report to the Minister and the Office of the Planning Regulator (OPR) on the 10th December, 2021.

The OPR must make a further recommendation to the Minister to either:

- o issue the draft direction with or without amendments; or
- o not to issue the direction.

Where the Minister is in agreement with the OPR's recommendation, he may then issue the final direction. The Council will await the Minister's decision.

Masterplans

An appointment has been made for Consultants to assist the Project Steering Committee for the St. Canice's Masterplan to commence the drafting of a Masterplan for the HSE's St. Canice's Campus. Once a draft plan is available, it will be presented to the Council and HSE before it is put out for public consultation.

Work is continuing with the preparation of a Masterplan for Loughmacask. A draft Loughmacask Masterplan has been prepared and is being internally reviewed before it will be presented to Members in the coming weeks prior to public display of the draft. The preparation of the Fair Green Masterplan will recommence shortly.

TAKING IN CHARGE

Roseleigh Housing Estate was formally taken in charge (TIC). Works are continuing on the following estates:

- The Fairways & Greenoaks, Ferrybank;
- The Greens, Thomastown;
- Whitehall, Paulstown;
- Filbuckstown, Mooncoin;
- Abbeygate, Ferrybank;
- Seville Rise, Callan Road.

There are now 35 estates on the Council's TIC list. The Taking in Charge Team will present an update of their proposed work programme for TIC 2022 to Elected Members at their MD Meetings in January.

VACANT SITES

There are currently 31 sites on the Vacant Sites Register, two of which are under appeal to An Bord Pleanála.

The number of cancelled entries due to site activation or improvement now stands at 16 sites.

For 2022, the emphasis will continue to be on the activation of sites currently on the Register and ongoing monitoring.

CONSERVATION

The following conservation grant projects have now been completed:

Built Heritage Investment Scheme: The total funding assigned for 14 projects approved in Kilkenny during 2021 was €117,600. The funding supported a wide-range of repairs to windows, external render, roof and rain water goods, lime pointing, historic shopfronts.

Historic Structures Fund: A total of 6 projects were supported with total grant-aid of €193,725 in Kilkenny under the HSF in 2021.

Historic Town Initiative: Phase 2 of St. Mary's Church, Callan boundary iron railings and masonry conservation works have been completed. The project was part funded by the Heritage Council's Historic Town Initiative

BUILDING CONTROL

421 valid commencement notices were submitted in the first 11 months of 2021 compared to 319 for the same period last year (*i.e. increase of 32%.*)

55 valid applications for Disability Access Certificates/Part M applications were received for the first 11 months of 2021, compared to 78 for the same period last year.

PARKS/SPECIAL PROJECTS

Parks & Playgrounds

Annual independent inspections of all playgrounds under our care were conducted in early December. These are an added layer of checks to compliment the in house weekly and quarterly inspections. The annual checks are a detailed check of safety of all playground features and highlight any issues which require attention to ensure continued safe play.



The Parks & Projects Team will undergo training in early 2022 to enable staff to also undertake quarterly inspections of all 31 playgrounds from next year. These inspections are required to satisfy the insurance requirements for playgrounds.

It is important to acknowledge the community groups involved in assisting us with the maintenance of the playgrounds, as their local involvement is invaluable in maintaining the presentation of these amenities to such a high standard.

Grass Cutting Pollinator & Wildlife Friendly Projects

As partners to the All-Ireland Pollinator Plan, the Parks & Projects Department is working to manage open spaces in a more sustainable way. Mowing is being reduced where practical across the County in an effort to increase the biodiversity of grass areas in parklands and playgrounds and residential estates. We are currently reviewing our grass maintenance contracts for next year's cutting season and are adding extra areas where the cutting regime will be changed in favour of allowing wildflowers to grow.



This will allow access to a valuable food source for our important pollinators. Information signage will be erected explaining the rationale to the reduced mowing frequency. Where new planting is carried out it will also be chosen for its pollinator friendly characteristics. The grass maintenance tenders will be advertised in December for the year 2022.

Amenity Grants

The majority of applicants in receipt of an Amenity Grant are now in the process of submitting claims to drawdown their grants with 70% of the funding drawn down to date. In total €140K was allocated to 181 groups across the County. The range of works involved tree planting, grass cutting, planting flowers, erecting signage and many other amenity type projects. An increase in the number of groups making efforts to manage their areas in a more sustainable way has been observed and is being supported by the Amenity Grant. For example, many groups are reducing the frequency of grass mowing and allowing flowering plants to grow while others are planting pollinator friendly planting schemes with flowering plants that provide food for our essential pollinators.

Bennettsbridge Riverside Amenity Area & Pedestrian/Cyclist Bridge

Feasibility Study & Design Options Report

Improving connectivity for pedestrians and cyclists on either side of the River Nore in Bennettsbridge has been a long standing challenge due to the narrow cross-section of the existing stone arch bridge. The village has also been unable to develop its recreational riverside amenity potential due to limited access to the river and receiving lands forming part of the natural floodplain. To assess if a design solution can be developed to address these issues, the Council and Kilkenny LEADER Partnership are working in partnership to engage consultants to undertake a Feasibility Study & Design Options Report. The successful tenderer will be tasked to assess the following infrastructural interventions a) a riverside amenity/amenities with access to the river for water-based activities, b) the construction of a new pedestrian / cyclist bridge over the River Nore and c) modifications to the existing bridge structure to cater for pedestrians / cyclists.

The overall objective is:

- (a) to provide for better connectivity within the village as a whole for day to day life and
- (b) to create an amenity space, or spaces, adjoining the river for both locals and visitors alike to explore and enjoy.

The latter providing for year-round access to the river with respect to water based recreational activities such as kayaking, canoeing, boating, fishing, whilst also creating an amenity space attractive in its setting so that the public can enjoy and immerse themselves safely in a biodiversity rich environment to picnic, socialise etc. It is envisaged that the realisation of such proposals would create significant growth opportunities for the local economy.



Recreational Connectivity Link between Woodstock Estate and the South East Greenway ***Feasibility Study & Route Selection Report***

With the delivery of the South East Greenway in 2023, opportunities are being assessed that will allow Kilkenny's towns and villages capitalise from the economic benefits that will be derived from this flagship recreational offering. In addition to the studies already being undertaken for Glenmore and Slieverue, a tender has been prepared for consultancy services to undertake a Feasibility Study & Route Selection Report for a Recreational Connectivity Link between Woodstock Estate and the South East Greenway. The tender documents for the service requirements were prepared recently, the tender will be advertised in mid-December with the submission deadline set for the end of January 2022. The successful tender will be tasked with providing a design solution to deliver a safe cycle and walking route for visitors and local communities that connects Woodstock Estate / Instioige with the new South East Greenway along its Raheen to Mount Elliott section, near New Ross. In order to maximise the potential to attract visitors in significant numbers to the proposed Woodstock Link. The design team will be tasked with putting forward a number of trail options that will be reasonably easy to travel along in terms of gradients, be attractive in terms of setting and points of interest and most importantly feel safe for a variety of users.

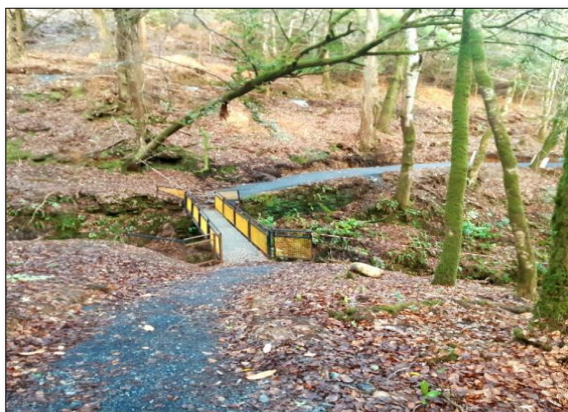
This element of the project is being progressed in partnership with Trail Kilkenny / Kilkenny LEADER Partnership under the LEADER Programme 2021-2023, with match funding from Kilkenny County Council. As part of the arrangement the Council agreed to provide technical expertise and oversight with respect to preparation of the Consultancy Brief and subsequent delivery of the Brief requirements. This initial stage of the project will set-down a blueprint with respect to planning requirements and increase our ability to attract future capital funding to deliver this project.



2020 Outdoor Recreational Infrastructure Scheme (ORIS) - Measure 2 Project Update: ***Woodstock Estate***

Under the ORIS Measure 2 project in Woodstock, works to rehabilitate some 2.0km's of old Victorian Pathways linking the Brownsford Stream Waterfall and nearby Swiss Cottage ruin, back towards the main gardens are nearing completion. Some of the pathways had been lost for decades under vegetation. In order to find and restore these, extensive clearance of the invasive cherry laurel had to be undertaken. This newly restored trail will compliment the existing Ladies Loop (3.0km) and Woodstock Loop (4.5km) Walks. This new trail will extent southwards from the above trails to the Brownsford Stream Waterfall, where visitors are led over a bridge and back northwards up though the newly restored pathway and onwards through the Woodstock Garden Woodland Walk and Noble Fir Avenue. The total length of this new section will be circa. 3.25km's. Visitors availing of this new trail will be afforded spectacular views of the waterfall from the bridge and overhead views of the wider watercourse as they meander up the hill away from the stream.

Planting will be undertaken shortly using native woodland saplings and once the native flora regenerates in this area over next spring / summer the walk will offer a truly magical experience. It is anticipated that the works with the exception of the seating and signage will be completed before the end of the year and that the trail will be officially opened to the public early next year.



Moat Field Loop Trail, Westcourt, Callan – Phase 2

Discussions are still ongoing with the relevant stakeholders with respect to the Council entering into a long-term lease agreement for the lands required to facilitate this phase of the project. It is anticipated that negotiations will conclude in early 2022. Subject to getting this agreement in place, a design brief will be prepared to engage Consultant Engineers to prepare the detail design and tender documents. The deadline to drawdown funds from the Department with respect to this project is the end of August 2022.

2021 Outdoor Recreational Infrastructure Scheme (ORIS)

We are delighted to advise that in addition to the 7 Measure 1 applications allocated funding in October, the DRCD announced recently that the following applications have also been successful and will be allocated funding in 2022.

Funding Approved

Project	MEASURE 2 APPLICATIONS	Allocation
Woodstock Estate - Accessible Trails, Age Friendly and Disabled Parking and Wheelchair Swing	Upgrade of woodland and garden trails in Woodstock Estate to improve accessibility for all. Designated age friendly and disabled parking provision. Refurbishment of toilet block to improve accessibility and the installation of a wheelchair accessible swing and sensory play area.	€189,045
Rehabilitation of the Ardra Looped Walk & Arboretum Walk - Castlecomer Discovery Park	Trail rehabilitation to two established woodland walking trails located in the Castlecomer Discovery Park. The works include 2.1km of trail rehabilitation, surfacing and drainage, along with the provision of age friendly accessible amenity spaces and interpretation signage, on the natural and cultural heritage of the area. <i>(Both trails are free to use by the public).</i>	€195,945
Project	MEASURE 3 APPLICATION	Allocation
Kilkenny Countryside Park - Cycle Swim Play Stay, from the City to the Park.	Kilkenny Countryside Park -. The focus of this application is linked to recreational amenities along the North Kilkenny Cycle Loop providing local amenity/tourism provision to Walk, Run, Cycle, Wild Swim, Play and Stay.	€499,500
Project	PROJECT DEVELOPMENT APPLICATION	Allocation
Castlecomer Discovery Park Masterplan plus Planning & Design for Free Activity Attractions	Engage consultancy services with an expertise in land-use planning, heritage, economics and tourism. The two key elements within the scope of the consultancy brief will include: (i) Development of a Masterplan for the Castlecomer Discovery Complex - including lands currently unutilised; (ii) Advance planning and design process of agreed activity elements identified in the Masterplan.	€50,000

The total funding amount secured under the ORIS 2021 programme amounts to €1,063,865, which represents an increase of 118.5% on the 2020 allocation. This will add significant value to the already impressive outdoor recreational offering within the County and help strengthen the outdoor Kilkenny brand.

Kilkenny Countryside Park



Now that funding has been secured under the Outdoor Recreational Infrastructure Scheme to deliver the new Kilkenny Countryside Park, the focus to mid 2022 will be the completion of the detail design and construction tender documents. This exciting project for Kilkenny will see the creation of a new Countryside Park sited on the 17 acre site of the old Municipal Landfill at Dunmore. The Park itself will provide for a wide range of offerings including a number of themed trails on Biodiversity, Landfill Infrastructure. Interpretative and Fitness.

Other features will include a enclosed dog friendly zone, outdoor class rooms, fitness stations, amenity spaces, natural play equipment along with educational opportunities related to natural heritage and biodiversity enhancement and management. The design ethos will also provide for opportunities to access sensory experiences in nature for people with an envelope of needs.

For visitors travelling by car, parking will be provided at a new carpark accessed off the Bleach Road and the Dumnore Community Carpark off the N77. Pedestrian access from the latter will be along the recently improved Mass Path to the rear of Dunmore Church and Community Hall. Disabled parking will be provided on-site and will be accessed via the Dunmore Civic Amenity Site access. People travelling to the Park from the City on bicycle or foot will be directed to the Bleach Road along the existing North Kilkenny Trail. Covered bicycle parking will be provided at the Bleach Road carpark and improved signage will be installed along the Bleach Road to alert drivers of the presence of cyclists. Funding to provide toilets within the Park grounds was also secured under the ORIS application.

One key objective of the overall project is to provide connected outdoor recreational amenities along the northern corridor of the Nore River valley, from the City to the Park, utilising the existing North Kilkenny Cycle Loop route, along the Bleach Road, which interfaces with The Weir swimming area. In addition to the development of the new Park, enhancement measures are also proposed at the swimming area which include a new covered bicycle stand area, soil cellular reinforced matting to provide a robust surface along the riverbank for grass establishment and erosion control, additional seating and enhanced accessibility interventions to the existing seating by adding ergonomic supports for backs and arm rests along with interpretative signage on the river ecology.



ENVIRONMENT

1. CLIMATE ACTION

Kilkenny County Council's Climate Action Team

Members of the Council's Climate Action Team have recently completed a Building Capacity training course delivered as part of the Local Authority Climate Action training programme. The training supports the work of the Climate Action Team in delivering local climate action measures across all local authority functions to align and meet national obligations on climate change. The Training will also assist the Climate Action Team to prepare for the forthcoming Climate Action Plan that the Council will be required to prepare in 2022. This Plan will have to set out how the Council intends to reduce the carbon emissions associated with the delivery of its services by 7% per annum by 2030 and by 51% overall.

Kilkenny County Council's Climate Change Adaptation Strategy

The Climate Action Team updated this year's Climate Change Adaptation Strategy report and a summary of the progress report was presented back to the Climate Action Team prior to it being forwarded for appraisal to the Department of Environment, Climate, and Communications. The Strategy lists a total of 96 actions with 235 associated sub actions. In 2021, 41% of the sub actions were completed, 38% of sub actions are ongoing and 21% of sub actions remained incomplete. Further examination of the incomplete sub actions (50 in total), reveals that 31 of the actions were not completed due to the lack of financial resources, while the other 19 actions were not completed due to Covid restrictions.

Cycle for Work Initiative

The Environment Section is continuing to progress this initiative to encourage staff to cycle to work and also to cycle at work for meetings and site visits around the City and Environs. Progress to date has included the installation of staff welfare facilities.

Environment Section is working in collaboration with Kilkenny City area staff and our Cycling Officer and have recently received grant funding for a bicycle storage facility. It is intended to purchase two e-bikes, a cargo bike along with some regular bikes for use by staff.

This is an environmentally green initiative and fulfils one of the actions in our Climate Change Adaptation strategy. Kilkenny County Council as one of the largest employers in the County and will lead by example and encourage other employers and businesses to take similar initiatives.

Energy

The Better Energy Communities Programme (BEC) is SEAI's national upgrade programme to support the retrofit of Ireland's building stock and facilities to high standards of energy efficiency, thereby reducing fossil fuel, operational costs and greenhouse gas emissions.

Kilkenny County Council has a number of projects currently underway which will receive 30% funding support from SEAI. These projects include a lighting upgrade and EV charger installation at Kilkenny Machinery Yard, along with roof insulation at County Hall. Applications for the 2022 Community Energy Grants scheme will be opening in Q1 2022.

RegEnergy is a European project which aims to break up existing structures for increasing the use of renewable energy in the North West Region of the EU. Kilkenny has some projects underway which will receive 60% funding support from the EU. These projects include a boiler upgrade, a change of fuel supply (Natural Gas to Biomethane), a heating control upgrade and a monitoring upgrade at Kilkenny Machinery Yard. Those projects will be completed in Q2 2022.

These projects will support the Council's journey towards 2030 public sector energy and carbon targets.

The following energy saving projects are also currently being undertaken:

- **Graiguenamanagh Library:** roof upgrade, windows upgrade, support provided through libraries small scale capital works
- **Thomastown Sessions House:** overall retrofit (Floor, Windows/door, walls, Roof insulation upgrade, Lighting Upgrade, Heat pump installation),
- **Watergate Theatre:** roof insulation, wall insulation and lighting upgrade (2022), support provided through cultural capital scheme.

2. RMCEI – Recommended Minimum Criteria for Environmental Inspections Plan 2021

The RMCEI plan has progressed significantly this year with a large number of inspections carried out to date. A number of Environmental inspections have yet to be finalised. We have moved our household and commercial inspections to on-line allowing business and homeowners to submit their information in a safe and secure manner.

Under the RMCEI in 2021 there is a total of 4,671 planned inspections, focusing on Air Noise and Water (Including Planning Referrals). The following table provides a summary of some of the key inspection areas under Air, Noise & Water to the end of October 2021.

Air Noise Water Incl. Planning (<i>Planning Referrals</i>)	Planned	Completed End October 2021	
Subtotal 6.4 Routine Water / Wastewater Inspections	1502	1309	87%
Subtotal 6.5 Non-Routine Water / Wastewater Inspections	48	49	102%
Subtotal 6.6 Routine Air / Noise Inspections	72	6	8%
Subtotal 6.7 Non-Routine Air / Noise Inspections	33	36	109%
Subtotal 6.9 Planning (Environmental) Inspections (Routine)	1082	1054	97%
Total >>	2737	2454	90%

Enforcement Actions (Litter & Waste)

The Environment Enforcement Team is very active in patrolling and carrying out investigations. The type of waste inspections include, Construction & Demolition, Commercial Food Waste, Household Food Waste, Abandoned Cars, Disposal by burning and backyard burning.

The Enforcement Team are currently working on Litter Quantification & Litter Pollution Surveys around the City and County as a means of capturing the quantities of waste in our County. These surveys are an important part of our ongoing work under the RMCEI.

Environment Complaints

All complaints are logged on the CRM (Customer Relations Management) System and investigated. The number of complaints being received by Environment staff for investigation is slightly down with 1,186 cases logged to date compared with 1,243 for the same period last year. The nature of these complaints range from littering, illegal dumping, water quality and abandoned cars. However, the vast majority continue to be related to littering and illegal dumping. Despite the restrictions imposed due to Covid-19, our Enforcement Officers remain very active on the ground in dealing with these complaints while adhering to Government and HSE guidelines.

3. Dunmore Recycling & Waste Disposal Centre



The Dunmore Recycling & Waste Disposal Centre continues to grow as a service provider within the functional area of Kilkenny County Council, providing an accessible waste management service to the greater Kilkenny Community. 2021 has been no exception with an 11% increase on customer numbers using the facility in the year up to October 31st compared to the same period in 2020.

The facility continues to cater for waste and recycling from both household and small businesses, accepting mixed residual waste and segregated paper, plastic, card, metal, timber, bottles, cans and WEEE. The Dunmore Recycling & Waste Disposal Centre strives to encourage segregation of waste in order to reduce waste to landfill and promote recycling and reuse.

4. Bring Banks Usage

The Council provides and manages 46 Bring Centres across the City and County. To-date a total of 2328 tonnes of recyclables were collected from our Bring Centres in 2021. This represents a 2% decrease on the same period last year and is mainly down to the hospitality industry reopening after lockdown.

- Newpark Shopping Centre (*with 142 tonnes collected YTD*),
- LIDL Loughboy (*with 138.5 tonnes collected YTD*) and
- Lidl Shopping Centre (*137 tonnes collected YTD*)

are the busiest Bring Centres in the City Environs.

- ALDI Graiguenamanagh (*105 tonnes collected YTD*) and
- LIDL Thomastown (*102.44 tonnes collected YTD*)

are the busiest outside of the City.

Environment Staff are continuing to work very closely with our service providers to ensure the collection service is in keeping with demand, especially around long weekends and holiday periods. Kilkenny County Council is looking to increase the number of recycling centres in the County this year and is currently in discussions with the Tidy Town committees with regard to suitable locations.



Photo of Bring Banks in Glenmore, Co. Kilkenny

5. Anti-Dumping Initiative

The final KCLR radio promotion under the Anti-Dumping Initiative took place on the run up to Halloween. Radio adverts aired to remind business owners and householders to keep their rubbish secure and not offer waste for bonfires as it impacts local air quality. Kilkenny County Council will promote the illegal dumping campaign for the coming months and SPC 4 Members are asked to share the enforcement video across their social media platforms networks to ensure this important message reaches communities across the County.



6. Council's Waste Prevention Programme

A number of waste prevention projects are underway:

- The Council continues to support the **Castlecomer Discovery Park** to improve their environmental performance. In November, the Council organised a waste audit of their operations in association with the EPA as part of their waste characterisation programme of amenity centres. This was overseen by *Clean Technology* Centre of Munster Technological University.

- Conscious Cup Campaign** is an initiative to limit the environmental impact by the use of take away disposable cups. As the campaign uptake has been challenging during Covid, Carlow and Kilkenny County Councils held an information seminar on the 30th of September to encourage the community and businesses to participate locally. Since the webinar, the number of registered premises has doubled to 24 outlets. Kilkenny Lions Club members are encouraging local businesses in Kilkenny City to sign up. A press release was issued in November to highlight and to promote the campaign locally.



- Local Authority Waste Prevention Grant**

Kilkenny County Council was recently awarded funding for a number of community waste prevention projects from the Environment Protection Agency (EPA). The grant scheme period runs between November 2021-April 2022. The Environmental Awareness Officer will be collaborating with community partners to complete the following projects.

Project Name	Project Brief	Community Partner	Funding Amount
Re-cycle the Bicycle Project	Collect 15 junior balance bikes and 15 junior bicycles (2 nd -6 th class) by public donation and repurpose. They will then be Presented to St Canices Co-Ed School to be used annually for pupil cycle training.	KK County Council Cycling Officer	€2,500
Music Re-Generation	Seek out unused musical instruments in the community, complete minor repairs before being donated to MG musical instrument loan library.	Music Generation	€3,550
Re-Clash of the Ash	Seek out junior hurls for refurbishment and donate to a Club	GAA Club (TBC)	€1,200
Kilkenny Re-pair Directory	A community collaboration approach to be taken to update the online repair directory and to increase its profile in the county.	Keep Kilkenny Beautiful (KKB)	€1,000
Dunmore Re-Use Hub	Minor repairs required to make an existing shed suitable for storage	Numerous Communities in 2022	€9,000
Total	Grant Funding		€17,250

7. Tidy Towns

Tidy Town national results were announced on the 12th of November.

Kilkenny City was runner up to Ennis in Irelands Tidiest Large Urban Centre. Kilkenny City was only 4 marks behind Ennis who won the overall national title. Kilkenny retained its gold medal status and was joined this year by Inistioge who graduated to a Gold medal which was their overall objective since competing in the Entente Florale Competition in 2018.

Inistioge was only three marks behind Geashill, Co. Offaly who won their category. Tullahought village retained its silver medal winner status. Listerlin village won the County Endeavour Award. They achieved the highest % increase in marks from the previous year, gaining 14 marks and also scooped the SE Covid Community Award. It is also very positive news that there were 4 new groups to the competition this year (*Mooncoin, Paulstown, Dunnamaggin and Kilmoganny*) bringing the total number of Kilkenny entrants to 25 this year.

Anti-Litter Infrastructure Grant

Following the issue of Department Circular on Anti Littering Infrastructure Capital Supports last May, Kilkenny County Council has successfully drawn down €74,576 to benefit each Municipal District area. The infographic below illustrates how the funding was invested.

Rialtas na hÉireann
Government of Ireland

Litter Infrastructure Support Grant Scheme

In 2021, Kilkenny County Council invested €74,576 for:

- The installation of three solar compacting bins for Callan, Thomastown and Gaignamagh
- The replacement of 24 street litter bins in the Municipal Districts of Castlecomer and Piltown
- The provision of an additional 13 solar compacting bins in Kilkenny City
- Supported communities to eliminate litter at waterside amenity locations across the county during the summer season

Help us by doing your bit. Bin it or bring it home

Kilkenny County Council
Comhairle Chontae Chill Chainnigh

#greeningkilkenny
#binit

8. Casual Trading Bye-Laws Review

The Draft Casual Trading Bye-Laws in respect of the Municipal Districts of Castlecomer, Callan - Thomastown and Piltown were approved for public consultation by the Members at the October Monthly Council meeting.

The Draft Bye-Laws are currently on public display with submissions invited from the public. The Draft Bye-Laws are available for public inspection at our offices and on consult.kilkennyie. The public are invited to make submissions or observations on <https://consult.kilkennyie/> or in writing in respect of these Draft Bye-Laws on or before Friday, 10th December, 2021.

The Council will consider any submission in relation to the proposed Bye-Law within the specified period.

9. Animal Welfare Standards Committee

The Animal Welfare Standards Committee had its latest meeting on 14th December.

The Animal Welfare Standards Committee was established to advise and make recommendations to the Council on:

- addressing incidences and issues relating to animal welfare, specifically in relation to dogs and horses;
- controlling the number of horses and dogs maintained at sustainable levels, particularly in Kilkenny City;
- promoting the Council's Animal Welfare Standards for Dogs and Horses to animal owners; and
- monitoring and providing oversight of the Council's Animal Welfare Standards for Dogs and Horses.

JJ Tobin, Veterinary Officer continues to carry out monthly inspections at the Dog Shelter to ensure the site is operating efficiently and effectively. To-date, 137 dogs have been dealt with in the Carlow/Kilkenny dog shelter, with 80 of these dogs rehomed by the Shelter and by charities. The remainder of the dogs were reclaimed. The number of dogs dealt with in the shelter has reduced significantly since the onset of Covid in 2020.

There were 16 horses impounded so far in 2021 of which 15 were rehomed and one was PTS. A recent horse count carried out in Kilkenny City and Environs found that there are 24 horses in in the City area, 14 located around St. Mary's and 10 at Wetlands. Some of these horses are on private lands. Overall there is a reduction in the number of horses compared to previous years.

10. River Basin Management Planning (RBMP)

The draft RBMP is now on public consultation and sets out the proposed measures that are necessary to protect and restore water quality in over 4,000 water bodies throughout the country to good status. The draft Plan will be subject to a period of public consultation until the end of March, 2022.

The consultation document can be viewed on <https://www.gov.ie/en/consultation/2bda0-public-consultation-on-the-draft-river-basin-management-plan-for-ireland-2022-2027/>

It was agreed at the recent SPC 4 meeting that the SPC4 members will prepare and make a submission on the draft River Basin Management Plan.

COMMUNITY

The Commercial Premises Paint Scheme 2021

This grant assists businesses throughout the County with the cost of painting the front façade of buildings and traditional signage throughout the County. The maximum grant allowable was €450 or 50% of cost of works whichever is the lesser.

A total of 18 applicants received grants under the scheme in 2021 as follows:

- Kilkenny East8 Applicants
- Kilkenny West.....2 Applicants
- Kilkenny City..... 8 Applicants

Comhairle na nOg 2021

The AGM of Comhairle na nOg took place online on Thursday November 4th 2021. 62 young people from across Kilkenny City and County registered to take part in the Zoom event. These young people represented 19 different secondary schools and Community based organisations throughout the County and engaged in workshops on Mental Health & Climate Change which were facilitated by staff members from Comhairle na nOg, Kilkenny County Council, Carlow & Kilkenny Children & Young People's Services Committees. The following recommendations to be worked on by Kilkenny Comhairle na nOg for the year 2022 are as follows:

Youth Mental Health "Continue with the development of Compass and to partner with relevant stakeholders to ensure that information in relation to mental health services reaches young people where they are at."

Climate Change "Continue to work on raising awareness of the impact of single use plastics on the environment and work towards disseminating information to young people in how they can reduce their impact."

On behalf of Kilkenny Comhairle na n'Og a sincere thank you to the Schools, Community organisations and Family Resource Centres who took the time to ensure their young people attended the event.

Kilkenny Recreation & Sports Partnership

Strategic Plan - Consultations for the new Kilkenny Recreation & Sports Partnership Strategic Plan are now complete. The draft report is presently being finalised and will be circulated to the KRSP Board and participating stakeholders in December 2021.

Rural Regeneration Projects - Thomastown

The 2nd edition of the Kilkenny County Council District Town Rural Regeneration promotional document will go live in December 2021. This document is a follow on from the first and widely read edition which showcased Rural Regeneration Projects in Callan. In 2022, a third and fourth edition will focus on projects in Castlecomer and Graigueanamanagh.

Community Activity Fund – Kilkenny LCDC has been allocated €272,638. This fund will be administered as part of the Community Enhancement Programme. The Scheme will be advertised on 5th January, 2022 with grants of up to €1,000, €5,000 and €20,000. Full details will be circulated to all Members in January.

Kilkenny LCDC

Social Enterprise Grants – Minister Humphreys announced the successful applicants under this scheme on 6th December, 2021. Successful applicants are:

Buddy Bench	Purchase of IT equipment	€2,900
DAYSE CLG	Purchase of test solar/battery energy system	€5,000
KBK(Kilmanagh, Ballycallan, Killaloe) Comm. Enterprise Group Ltd	Renovate old livestock trailer for storage	€2,693
Windgap Community Development	Kitchen equipment	€4,000
Callan Community Energy	Purchase of exhibition trailer	€4,000
Community Radio Kilkenny City	IT equipment and audio storage capacity	€4,000
Castlecomer Discovery Park	Purchase of IT equipment	€3,000
Active Connections	Protective gear for participants	€951

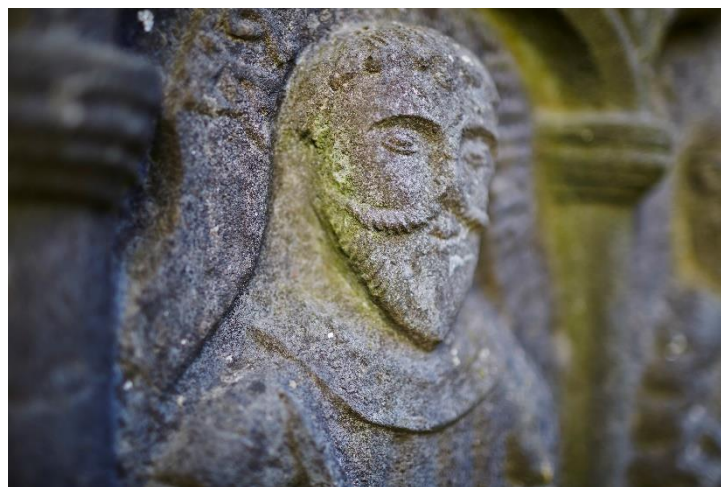
HERITAGE

Community Monuments Fund 2022

The Community Monuments Fund is now open for applications for 2022. This grant scheme is for the conservation, maintenance, protection and promotion of archaeological monuments and is funded by the Department of Housing, Heritage and Local Government. Closing date for receipt of applications to the Heritage Office of Kilkenny County Council is 15th February, 2022. Funding is available in three streams:

- (i) Essential repairs and conservation works at archaeological monuments
- (ii) Conservation Management Plans/Reports for archaeological monuments
- (iii) Access infrastructure and interpretation at archaeological monuments

If you have any questions please contact the Heritage Office to discuss. Applications and queries to heritage@kilkennycoco.ie. For details see <https://kilkennyheritage.ie/2021/11/community-monuments-fund-2022/>



Heritage Capacity Fund 2022

The Heritage Council invites applications for the Heritage Capacity Fund 2022 for not-for-profit heritage-focused non-governmental organisations with a demonstrated national relevance. see <https://www.heritagecouncil.ie/funding/funding-schemes>

Closing date is 5.00 p.m. Tuesday 11th January, 2022. To watch an information clinic about the scheme (*what it covers, who can apply, Q&A's*) see <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wCFefNsMmYM>

Please note: A separate **Community Heritage Grant Scheme** will be advertised in January 2022 for community/voluntary and not for profit organisations to apply for funding for heritage projects.

National Heritage Week 2022

National Heritage Week 2022 will take place from 13th-21st August 2022 and we will bring you further news on the 2022 theme as soon as its available.

Biodiversity in Schools open for bookings

"Biodiversity in Schools" are back visiting schools with their full programme of all new biodiversity workshops for primary and secondary schools and teaching resources which include information on Birds, Bugs, Trees and Wildflowers to name a few of their very interesting programmes. Kilkenny schools have one of the highest rates of participation of any county in this scheme which we are delighted with and would like to keep building on this. So, if you know of any schools in Co. Kilkenny that you think would like to be involved please pass this information on.

Further details available at <http://www.biodiversityinschools.com/>

LEO/ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Student Enterprise Programme 2022 Launched

The launch of Ireland's largest Student Enterprise Programme, which is now in its 20th year, took place on 12th November. At the launch, this year's Student Enterprise Programme Ambassador was announced as all-Ireland winning Limerick hurler, Sean Finn. The Local Enterprise Office Kilkenny encourages participation and engages with both the teachers and students in the secondary schools throughout the County. The Programme runs from September 2021 to May 2022, and involves students experiencing what it is like to be an entrepreneur i.e. from the business idea stage to marketing, sales and preparing a business plan. There are 3 main categories; Junior (*1st year students*), Intermediate (*2nd and 3rd year students*) and Senior (*4th, 5th, 6th students*) along with optional competitions such as 'My Entrepreneurial Journey' and the 'Creative Business Idea Video'.

877 students from 14 schools across the County have registered to participate in the competition in County Kilkenny. In March 2022, the County Final will be held and one business from each category will compete for a place at the prestigious National Final event in The Helix, Dublin on the 18th May 2022. Keep up to date on www.studententerprise.ie.

LEO Key Performance Indicators

A total of €670,234 in direct financial assistance has been approved to 31 manufacturing/ internationally traded service businesses in 2021, linked to the projected creation of 134 jobs over the next three years.

€247,785 in Business Expansion Grant assistance awarded to 14 existing businesses with a forecasted job creation of 40 jobs. Business Expansion grants assist businesses trading greater than 18 months to make investment in growing their businesses and employment numbers.

€264,470 awarded in Priming Grant assistance to 4 start-up businesses with a forecasted job creation of 90 jobs. Priming grants assist qualifying businesses with start-up investment costs.

€56,111 awarded in Feasibility Study grants to 4 businesses.

6 Technical Assistance for Micro Exporter grants awarded totalling €11,869 This scheme supports businesses to explore export market opportunities.

3 Grad Start Grant awarded of €90,000 leading to the creation of 3 jobs.

6 Green for Micro Grants awarded totalling €12,870. This scheme supports businesses to become greener and more sustainable.

6 Microfinance Loan applications have been approved totalling €78,900.

12 business have completed LEAN for Micro assignments. These projects are focused on supporting businesses to look at efficiencies and cost saving within their business.

919 business owners/employees have engaged in 79 training programmes. A total of 13 Start Your Own Business Course have been delivered with 157 participants. The highest level of participation was in digital marketing related programmes with 363 participants. Currently 5 businesses are engaged in an intensive 'Begin to Export' programme, with the overall aim of developing a Strategic Export Plan to support each company in developing a successful entry into an export market for the first time.

We continue to support small businesses in developing their trading online presence with 86 clients approved grant assistance under the Trading Online Voucher Scheme to the value of €190,329.

16 businesses (7 businesses from Kilkenny and 9 from Carlow) commenced the Management Development Business coaching programme on November 3rd. This is a joint initiative between LEO Kilkenny and Carlow and will combine management theory, powerful peer learning, networking and action learning approaches through group and one to one coaching sessions.

Local Enterprise Development Plan to 2024

The Local Enterprise Development Plan (LEDP) to 2024 was adopted by SPC for Economic Development, Enterprise Support, Tourism, Planning & Development at their recent meeting. The vision for the LEO in the plan is to develop and sustain a positive enterprise ecosystem at local level that will in particular drive new added-value start-ups, the further growth of small and micro enterprises and enhance local economies. The LEO will promote entrepreneurship, foster sustainable business start-ups and develop existing micro and small businesses to drive job creation and to provide accessible high-quality supports for business ideas. Entrepreneurs and businesses will be supported to:

- Increase exports;
- Build resilience;
- Increase productivity;
- Prepare for the Low carbon economy;
- Embrace the Digital economy;
- Innovate;
- Be managed by ambitious & capable individuals;
- Fuel regional growth.

Local Economic & Community Plan (LECP)

The LECP Guidelines were officially launched on the 11th November. The new revised guidelines build on the lessons learned from the current LECP cycle, as well as reflecting the needs of communities and businesses as we emerge from Covid-19. The Department of Rural and Community (DRCD) in collaboration with DHLGH will continue to support the development of the LECPs through a series of events over the coming months, starting with an online Introductory Event held on 9th December.

This event provided an overview of LECP Guidelines, highlighting what is new, planned timeframes and highlighted linkages with relevant strategies and initiatives. This initial session will be followed by a series of training webinars to ensure SPC and LCDC staff have the necessary skills to develop and implement their LECP.

Retail Excellence Awards - Irelands Friendliest Place

Kilkenny County Council recently applied to AIB's Excellence in Retail Awards and were successful in being shortlisted as a finalist in Ireland's Friendliest Place Award. The standard was very high this year as all retailers are working so hard to make a strong recovery post pandemic. Well done to all the stores in Kilkenny City who participated and a special thanks to Cathaoirleach Fidelis Doherty and Sector Rep. Anne Barber who represented Kilkenny at the awards night held in November. Unfortunately, Kilkenny did not come out as overall winners, but we were delighted to be finalists and represented on the night. The Awards provide great exposure to the business community and Kilkenny's commitment to offering an excellent experience when visiting Kilkenny.



#tastekilkenny Food Tourism Initiative

Kilkenny County Council applied for funding under the Department of Agriculture's Food Tourism Grant in 2021 towards marketing and PR for our local food tourism brand #tastekilkenny. €25,000 was secured for the project to promote the brand both locally and nationally. #tastekilkenny supported Kilkenny City and County in its re-opening efforts post lockdowns:

Videography: In summer 2021, a video was produced that saw "The Two Jackies", Jackie Tyrrell and Jacqui Hurley visit many local food and drink producers in the County and then taste our local produce at a number of restaurants and cafes in Kilkenny.

The video was showcased on all #tastekilkenny social media platforms and was also promoted on visitkilkenny.ie. Shorter clips of their adventures will be used going forward to promote the individual businesses featured on the shoot.

Photography #tastekilkenny has increased its image bank with new and updated assets now available to be both showcased on taste social media platforms but also made available to local food producers and restaurant/café owners for their own marketing and PR. Visit www.tastekilkenny.ie

#tastekilkenny Restaurant Week will be held in January 2022. All graphic design and creative has been created for the event. A small working group is working and engaging with local producers and eateries to ensure local produce on menus, a Kilkenny cocktail and special discount/speciality rates for the week.

Savour Kilkenny promotion - #tastekilkenny is eager to work with Savour Kilkenny, Kilkenny's most recognised annual food event. In 2021, the Savour Festival did not proceed but in order to begin the collaborative working partnership between the two brands, #tastekilkenny engaged Savour Kilkenny to include their content in all social media content in lieu of its wonderful October bank holiday weekend event.

Q4 2021 saw #tastekilkenny widen its audience reach and boost its media campaign in the run up to Christmas by placing editorial in both the Gloss magazine and the Sunday Independent. The focus of both pieces was the great food and drink offering in Kilkenny; the foodie destination, a choice of Michelin Star Dining, Outdoor Dining and great Kilkenny produce and Christmas hamper offers from local producers.

Tourism Recovery Taskforce

Kilkenny's Tourism Recovery Taskforce has worked in collaboration and partnership with its members to deliver on its key objectives in responding and supporting the tourism and hospitality sector in re-opening and welcoming visitors to Kilkenny since its establishment in June 2020.

The key priorities of the taskforce for 2021 were as follows:

Priority 1: Kilkenny for Families

Develop a concentrated focus on the family market supported by best in class approaches to packaging, itinerary development and collective marketing to target family business. Develop a major family event e.g. Hurling, Heroes & Heritage or Kilkenny Catwalk to launch a 2021 family focus.

Priority 2: Brand 2021

Objective: Deliver a 2021 Kilkenny brand action led programme supported by a roll out programme embraced by all tourism partners to deliver business across the city and county.

Priority 3: Kilkenny in the Evening

Objective: Develop a series of new evening time experiences in Kilkenny through activities and attractions partners and with the support of the retail sector to create a vibrant evening time experience for visitors.

Priority 4: Public Places

Objective: Activate public realm investment in new and interesting public spaces to deliver a calendar of niche events to communicate Kilkenny as an 'always on' destination.

2022 will focus our efforts on the development of Kilkenny's Destination Experience Development Plan led by Failte Ireland. Our taskforce has been a key driver locally in supporting our sector in the emergency responses required throughout the initial phases of the Covid-10 pandemic. In achieving its aims and objectives in this regard, we have reached our goals and the taskforce will now stand down. As we move to a new stage in the planning and further enhancement of the tourism offering in Kilkenny, we would like to sincerely thank each taskforce member for their support, their enthusiasm and their very hard work in delivering our Taskforce Plan for Kilkenny's Tourism and Hospitality Sector.

Visit Kilkenny Marketing

November saw work continuing through Kilkenny Tourism to promote Kilkenny and to encourage visitors to "come see, come do" over the winter season. In collaboration with Failte Ireland and their 'Keep Discovering Campaign' we ran radio campaigns targeting families to visit Kilkenny throughout Autumn and over the Christmas period. This included a competition and Spot ads on Dublin Q102 and FM 104 and a Cat Walk Trail Competition with 5 Day promotional advertisements on the Strawberry Alarm clock. A Sunday Independent Half Page Ad issued on the 7th November encouraging visitors to make a trip.



We have compiled the 'Ultimate Guide' to Christmas in Kilkenny which includes 19 events and all Yulefest events. The page went live on the website on 11/11/21.

<https://visitkilkenny.ie/experience/do/christmas-experience/>

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

Our marketing and promotional efforts are working in engaging tourists and keeping Kilkenny front of mind when planning a break. Website visitors are up 80% on November 2020 and new visitors to the site has increased by 86%.

Taste Kilkenny Food Producers Launch a Gourmet Christmas Hamper Range

Brand new from Taste Kilkenny Food Producers are three fabulous Christmas hampers which showcase an array of exceptional local products from all across the County.

With the countdown to Christmas now on, a group of Kilkenny based food and drink producers have collaborated to create remarkable range of seasonal hampers with something to suit everyone – and every budget.

Discussing the initiative, local food expert and business coach, Tracie Daly talks about not only offering customers a well-curated and delicious hamper selection, but also creating the opportunity to gift what is essentially a county-wide taste experience.

There are three hampers on offer. The ‘Gourmet Kilkenny Christmas Box’ comes in two sizes – ‘The Humdinger’ and ‘The Mini’.

The humdinger, as the name suggests, includes a whopping selection of premium products to tantalise your tastebuds with everything from homegrown beetroot, relish and olive tapenade, to homemade pesto and dressing as well as smoked chicken and chorizo, Irish gin infused smoked rainbow trout, pâté and caviar – yes, Irish caviar! How about that to add a little bit of oomph to your festive dining.

The Mini version of the ‘Gourmet Kilkenny Christmas Box’ simply features a smaller selection of these products.

For those who would like a little sweet indulgence, the ‘Sweet Kilkenny Christmas Box’ is filled with an assortment of treats including organic apple juice, homemade honey, marmalade and jam, elderflower cordial, cranberry sauce, brandy infused mincemeat, fruit cake and luxury granola.

“It has been wonderful to come together with other local food producers to curate this marvellous range of hampers which will see you through the festive period, or serve as a perfect gift for a friend or loved one.” said Helen Finnegan of Knockdrinna.

“We are also asking businesses to consider shopping local when showing their appreciation and thanks to clients and colleagues this Christmas, and what better way do that, than with one of these fantastic hampers, pre-wrapped and ready to gift.” added Mag Kirwan of Goatsbridge Trout Farm.

Any Kilkenny based food producers that would like to be included in future hampers are invited to contact tracie@traciedaly.com



HOUSING

HOUSING CAPITAL

151 units delivered in 2021 as follows:

Scheme	Project Name	Units	Approved Housing Body	Substantial Completion
KCC Direct Build	Glebeside, Donaguile, Castlecomer, Co Kilkenny	33		June 2021
KCC Direct Build	Pairc Nua [The Broguemaker], Castlecomer Road, Kilkenny City	18		June 2021
KCC Direct Build	Station Avenue Phase 2, Ballyragget, Co Kilkenny	22		June 2021
KCC Direct Build/Refurb	Ayrfield, Kilkenny City	8		May and Dec 2021
KCC Turnkey	Blackwater Grove, Lower Kilmacow, Co. Kilkenny	16		April 2021
AHB Turnkey	Cois Na Bearu, Graignamanagh	14	Cooperative Housing	January 2021
AHB Turnkey	Margaret's Field, Callan Road, Kilkenny	40	Respond	April 2021
		151		

Other Units 'Under Construction' as at 30th November 2021 – 139 units

- 58 units at Pennefeather Green, Hebron Road, Kilkenny (Turnkey)
- 8 units at Pennefeather Court, Hebron Road, Kilkenny (Turnkey)
- 2 Units at Shanganny, Jenkinstown (KCC Direct Build)
- 23 Units at New Orchard, Kilkenny City [AHB Calf Turnkey – Cluid]
- 12 Units Brother Thomas Place, Church Lane, Kilkenny GSC
- 17 Units at Limegrove, Belmont, Ferrybank
- Reconfiguration of 1 apt to 2 units- Ayrfield, Granges Road
- 25 Units at Ladywell, Thomastown (KCC direct build)

KCC Projects due to start [10 Units]

- 6 units at Golf Links Road, (Mulhalls Shop) Kilkenny (KCC direct build)
- 2 Units at Inchacarron, Mullinavat (KCC direct build)
- 2 Units at Old Fire Station, Graignamanagh (KCC direct build)

Tender Stage [90 units]

- 88 units (*houses/apartments*) and community facility at Crokers Hill, Kennyswell Road, Kilkenny (KCC direct build)
- 1 Accessible bungalow, Circular Road, Kilkenny (KCC direct build)
- 1 Accessible bungalow, Haggardsgreen, Callan (KCC direct build)



Site Works at Ladywell Thomastown - John Somers Construction – 25 units for Kilkenny County Council

Housing Delivery Action Plan

The Housing Delivery Team have prepared a Housing Delivery Action Plan for the period 2022-2026 which will be submitted to the Department of Housing on December 17th 2021. The Plan outlines plans for the delivery of social and affordable housing throughout the county including details of delivery in each Municipal District Area.

Consultation in relation to the Plan included engagement with Approved Housing Bodies, Developers, Landowners and Elected Representatives Plenary Council, SPC and Municipal District levels. The full Plan will be circulated on approval from the Department of Housing. Report on Kilkenny delivery under Rebuilding Ireland

HOMELESS SERVICES SUMMARY November 2021	
Homeless Presentations	35
Homeless Assessment Outcomes	
Prevention & Interventions	16
Emergency Service	8
Not eligible / Did not avail of service	11
HAP Place Finder Service	
No of Homeless HAP tenancies @ 1 st day of month	94
No of Homeless HAP tenancies created during month	3
No of Homeless HAP tenancies in place @ last day of month	97
Number of Homeless HAP tenancy breakdowns	0
Other Social Housing Tenancies supported / created during month	2
Households in Temporary Emergency B&B accommodation	3
Households in Temporary Emergency B&B accommodation with families	2
Households in Transition Emergency Accommodation (Own Front Door)	11
Households in Transition Emergency Accommodation (OFD) with families	2

SOCIAL HOUSING SUPPORT APPLICATION SUMMARY NOVEMBER 2021	
Number awaiting Social Housing Support at Nov 30 th (Gross Need)	1,622
Number awaiting Social Housing Support at Nov 30 th (Net Need)	683
No. of Social Housing Applications received in Nov 30 th	68
No. of applications incomplete / awaiting further information / clarification	49
No. of applications validated and ready for assessment during the month	25
No. of applications assessed during November	57
No. of applications awaiting assessment as at November 30 th	38

HOUSING ASSISTANCE PAYMENT SUMMARY UP TO NOVEMBER 30th 2021	
Number of active HAP tenancies to Nov 30 th	784
New HAP tenancies set up	145
HAP tenants allocated Social Housing	132
Closed HAP Tenancies	80
HAP Rent Reviews	188
Other tenancy amendments	521
HAP Calls Received 2021 year to date	3,432
HAP Calls Received November	317

NOVEMBER 2021 MONTHLY STATISTICS	
LA/RAS/Leasing allocations up to end of November (offers made):	16
Number of LA tenancies surrendered in:	7
Tenant Liaison Officer cases in November:	27
Maintenance Calls for November:	443
Maintenance Calls year to date	5,124

Housing Loan Activity 1 st January 2021 to 30 th November, 2021					
<i>Loan Type</i>	<i>No. Received</i>	<i>No. Approved</i>	<i>Amount Approved</i>	<i>No. Paid</i>	<i>Amount Paid</i>
Rebuilding Ireland Home Loan	55	20	€2,521,652	19	€2,502,477
Reconstruction Loan	0	0	€0	0	€0
Caravan Loan	0	0	€0	0	€0
Total	55	20	€2,521,652	19	€2,502,477

Grants Approved & Committed up to 30 th November 2021		
Scheme	No.	Amount
HGD - Housing Adaptation Grant	134	€1,263,924.95
MAG - Mobility Aid Grant	30	€128,686.40
HOP - Housing Aid for Older Persons	161	€960,093.56
Total	308	€2,352,704.91

Grants Paid Out up to 30 th November 2021		
Scheme	No.	Amount
HGD - Housing Adaptation Grant	65	€525,011
MAG - Mobility Aid Grant	19	€74,528
HOP - Housing Aid for Older Persons	94	€545,308
Total	178	€1,144,847

FIRE SERVICES

Capital Projects

4 tenders for the construction of a new fire station in Urlingford were received on the eTenders website. These tenders are in the process of being assessed.

Advertisements for a new site for Kilkenny City Fire Station were placed in the Kilkenny People over a two week period. Auctioneers appointed to identify and source possible site locations close to the City have expressed that there was a good level of interest and are in process of drawing up options for our consideration.

Funding for 7 battery powered Positive Pressure Ventilation Fans, Smoke Curtains and battery powered lighting was approved by the National Directorate for Fire and Emergency Management (NDFEM). This equipment will be in all Fire Stations in Q2 2022.

Fire Safety Certificates

- 94 applications for fire safety certificates were received to 8th December 2021.
(113 were received for the same period last year).

Fire Services Acts 1981 and 2003

- Fire Prevention staff made targeted inspections of premises both to provide advice and to enforce legislation.
- 75 Licence Applications were processed under Section 24 of the Fire Services Acts 1981 and 2003.
- 7 Dangerous Substance licence applications were received and assessed to-date.
- 65 Fire safety inspections of premises have been carried out to date (30/11/21) during the pandemic.
- SPC-5 reviewed and adopted Kilkenny Fire and Rescue Service's Fire Safety Plan 2021-2026.

Community Fire Safety

A number of Home Fire Safety Visits were carried out by Kilkenny City Fire Brigade personnel during November. Home Fire Safety Checks (HFSVs) are a significant element of our

Community Fire Safety Strategy. Fire service personnel call to houses by appointment and give fire safety advice to the occupants. A HFSV is usually carried out by two uniformed operational fire service personnel. They use a checklist to ask questions, try to identify the fire safety hazards in the house and recommend solutions. Fire safety advice is given, fire safety leaflets handed out and smoke detectors may be provided and fitted, where necessary. They also discuss the occupant's response should a fire occur in their home. The fire fighters leave the occupier with further advice and information to also make available to other members of the household. The primary aim of these HFSVs is to reduce the numbers of fires, deaths and injuries in the home by firstly preventing fires occurring and to ensure that when fires do occur, the occupiers are given early warning, and they know how to react quickly and safely.

Operations

Fire Brigades responded to 663 turnouts up to the 12th November 2021. The same period last year we responded to 712 turnouts.

ARTS

Knitted Together 2

We hosted our Knitted Together evaluation event on 4th November in Hotel Kilkenny. Many of the project participants attended and had a cup of tea and chatted about the project and how they felt it had helped and supported these during lockdowns.

90 blankets were donated to 7 charity shops and between the sales of the blankets and a raffle or two, over €3,500 was raised for the charity shops. The NCBI shop in Castlecomer had a coffee morning and got feedback from the customers that came in to the shop to look/buy the blankets. Because of this and due to demand, they have decided to host sewing classes in the new year having sourced tutors etc. We wish them luck in their new venture.

Comments from the Charity Shops:

It was a real community effort. Our customers loved the blankets. One lady bought 6 blankets. We were blown away by the level of skill. It raised awareness about the shop. Brought new customers through the door.

Emerging Curator in Residence Third Exhibition

Kilkenny County Council Arts Office presents *I Never Promised You a Dystopia* curated by Aoife Banks from the 6th to 19th December.

I Never Promised You a Dystopia is a virtual group exhibition featuring work by Bassam Al-Sabah, Kevin Gaffney, Jesse Jones, Vera Klute, and Doireann O'Malley. *I Never Promised You a Dystopia* is the third and final instalment in a three-part curatorial project that explores the shifting of perspectives in three chapters: Past, Present, and Future. Positioning other voices to the fore and providing new lenses with which to view our world, each exhibition focuses on an artist or artists whose work teases out alternative histories, hidden narratives, and speculative futures.

This programme is enabling Aoife Banks to gain direct experience in the field of curating exhibitions and the opportunity provides her with the platform to further develop her career, expand her artistic and creative networks, and avail of a mentoring programme with curator Eamonn Maxwell.

Exhibition online at:

<https://artspaces.kunstmatrix.com/node/8680327>

Poetry Phone

We have selected a new range of poems for the poetry phone. This new selection was undertaken by writer Elaine Feeney. We are also working with a scenographer to create an exhibition relating to a poem or / poem. All has yet to be revealed. Everyone can ring the Poetry Phone by dialling 1800 272 994 and select a number between 0 and 9 to listen to the poems.

Artist Supports

The Arts Office partnered with Visual Artists Ireland (VAI) to provide a new programme of events and opportunities for Kilkenny based artists. Tamm Moore, co-founder and Creative Director of Cartoon Saloon facilitated a webinar artist talk on 9th November with 15 attendees.

We also hosted an online Peer Critique, with Laura McCafferty, in two-parts on 4th & 11th November with four artists presenting in each session. Across the two sessions, eight artists in total shared their work with the rest of the group. This was a platform for artists to receive feedback

and the chance to generate a discussion around their work.

Local Live Performance

The Local Live Performance scheme is enabling us to provide work across the music and performance industry and to provide a diverse wealth of music and entertainment for the people of Kilkenny across the month of December.

Christmas is all about music and Kilkenny's Yulefest has brought the 'ceol and craic' centre-stage with their brand-new bandstand on the Parade in the heart of the City Centre. The music kicked off on Saturday, 27th November, 2021 at the opening ceremony and will continue all the way to December 23rd.

The **Yulefest Bandstand** is funded by the LLPPS scheme. The Yulefest Bandstand will provide entertainment throughout the festive season with over 50 live local acts performing over the next month. Performers include: Lady Desart Choir, Anthony McAuley Trad Trio, Patrick Rafter & Family, Code of Behaviour, Ali Comerford, The Pinsetters, The Screws, Leonard Barry, John Doyle & Andy Morrow, and many more. There are even some special non-musical performances too. This is a completely free event that can be enjoyed every weekend and every Thursday lunchtime on the Parade. All acts so far have been well supported and the music adds nicely to the festive atmosphere on the Parade.

December Sounds will take place in St. Canice's Cathedral Monday, 20th December with Brid Lyons, Cormac Begley & Liam O' Maonlai, Tuesday, 21st will host - Bird On The Wire - The Songs Of Leonard Cohen with Pauline Scanlon, The Whileaways & guests and finally Wednesday, 22nd December - Rollercoaster Records presents Elise, Lemoncello, Malojian & Seamus Fogarty. All ticket sales will support the following local charities Ciara Lawlor Memorial Fund, Cois Nore, Aislinn Centre, Chernobyl Kilkenny Outreach Group, Amber Womens Refuge & the O'Neill centre.

Finally there will be a series of ten concerts in ten care homes during December featuring Mary Coughlan, bringing music and joy to the nursing home residents and staff the week before Christmas



22,849
Items borrowed



8829
visitors



685
Internet and Wifi sessions

Decade of Centenaries

Kilkenny County Council Library Service are delighted to make available 2 specially commissioned publications covering events in 1921 which was one of the most memorable years in Kilkenny during the War of Independence period. These publications aim to enhance an understanding of and a respect for events of importance and complements the ongoing Decade of Centenaries programme at local authority and national level. Both publications have been researched and edited by local researchers and historians.



Kilkenny Men interned in Ballykinlar, County Down, 1920-21, researched and written by Orla Murphy, edited by Carmel Cummins. This work, a piece of original research, sheds a spotlight on this scarcely remembered event.

Kilkenny Jail Break, November 21st 1921, researched and written by Fergal Donohue. The large complex of the old Kilkenny Jail only survives now in the name 'Gaol Road'.



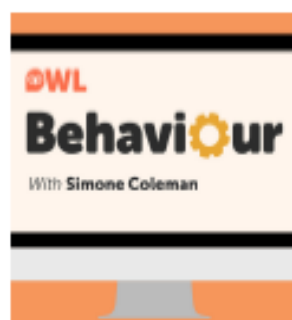
Science Week

We were delighted to work with Calmast in WIT as a partner in Kilkenny Science Festival again this year.

- Zoom workshops on the magic of bubbles for children with sensory needs in the autism units in school all over Kilkenny.
- Offered 250 hyacinth bulbs to our Door to Door Library users
- Held an escape room with BiOrbic for teenagers and adults
- Offered STEM kits and experiments to family resource centres and community afterschools.



OWL Programme: The Oral Words and Language Programme



We recently launched a new literacy programme, OWL, which was developed in response to literacy needs that emerged following consultation with a range of organisations including our Right to Read Literacy Network in Kilkenny. It focuses on developing the oral language skills of 0-3 year olds, by helping support parents, childcare practitioners and teachers to ensure a good oral language base from an early age, and reduce potential literacy problems in the future. These short online workshops with Speech and Language Therapist Melissa Lanigan, Behavioural Specialist and Trainee Educational Psychologist Simone Coleman, and Storyteller Neil Griffiths run online Tuesday and Wednesday nights.

Mitigating Against Educational Disadvantage Fund 2021

We were delighted to be granted €7000 funding under the MAEDF ETB funding stream. The money will be used to purchase sewing machines and art equipment to help people develop new skills.

Online Services usage:



1,999

eAudiobooks borrowed

▲ 17% on 2020



5,142

eNewspapers borrowed

▼ 6% on 2020



1,246

eBooks borrowed

▼ 7% on 2020



673

Online Course sessions

▼ 41% on 2020



1004

eMagazines borrowed

▲ 11% on 2020



406

Songs accessed

▼ 74% on 2020



Digital Engagement

Our staff have prepared, recorded, edited and published **447** posts on our social media platforms in November. Our videos views were **4,199**.

FINANCE

The expenditure by service division to the end of November is set out in table 1. Total Expenditure for the period was €95.47m compared with the annual budget of €89.9m.

Table 1	Actual YTD November 2021	Budget Full Year 2021
	€'000's	€'000's
Housing & Building	20,585	20,085
Road Transport & Safety	27,085	25,500
Water Services	7,152	7,115
Development Management	10,360	10,679
Environmental Services	10,460	11,748
Recreation & Amenity	6,556	6,647
Agriculture, Education, Health, Welfare	556	672
Miscellaneous Services	12,716	7,516
OVERALL TOTAL	95,470	89,962

Finance Update

The Covid-19 restrictions in place for the first six months of 2021 have had a serious impact on the Council's income streams to date, especially commercial rates and car parking income. A significant number of businesses had to close due to Covid. The Government announced an extension of the commercial rates waiver for the full year for businesses impacted. The quarter four waiver was more targeted than the waiver that applied for the nine month period. The value of the waiver for the full year amounts to €6m and compensation will be provided by Government for this amount. The cost of the waiver is included under Miscellaneous Services in the November accounts. The full year waiver has now been applied to all eligible rate accounts and businesses have been notified accordingly.

Income from car parking is also significantly below budget with only 63% of the annual budget figure received to the end of November. The forecast shortfall for the full year is between €700k and €800k. A submission has been made by the sector to the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage seeking compensation for the shortfall. The Department has announced that funding will be provided for the sector however the detailed allocation for each Local Authority has not yet been confirmed.

The bank overdraft facility was not utilised in the eleven month period to the end of November 2021.

Rates Revaluation

Following the full revaluation of all commercial properties carried out by the Valuation Office in 2017, 197 customers with a total rate demand value of €4.5m appealed their new valuation to the Valuation Tribunal. To date 187 appeals have been completed. 147 of the 187 appeals have resulted in a decrease in rates. The total income lost to date stands at €840k. If this trend continues the total loss of income may be in excess of €1m once all appeal decisions have been completed by the Tribunal.