



COMHAIRLE CHONTAE CHILL CHAINNIGH
KILKENNY COUNTY COUNCIL
TUARASCÁIL BHAINISTÍOCHTA MÍOSÚIL
MONTHLY MANAGEMENT REPORT
EANAIR - JANUARY 2021

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

Last Week January/First Week February
Public consultation webinars will be published for Draft City and County Development Plan.

REPORT AT A GLANCE

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



IF YOU ARE NOT FEELING WELL

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

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

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

IF YOU ARE FEELING WELL

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

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

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

If you develop symptoms of coronavirus:

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





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

Graphic: Paul Scott/IRISH TIMES GRAPHICS

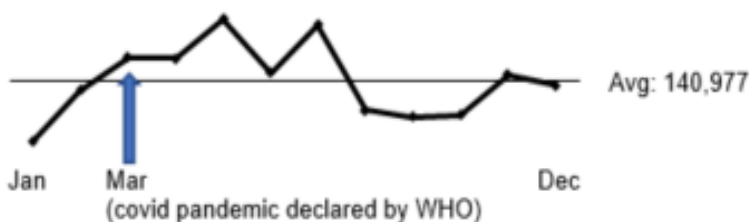


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COMMUNICATIONS TATISTICS JANUARY TO DECEMBER 2020

Facebook Reach

Jan to Dec 2020



Jan to Dec 2020 = **1,691,719**

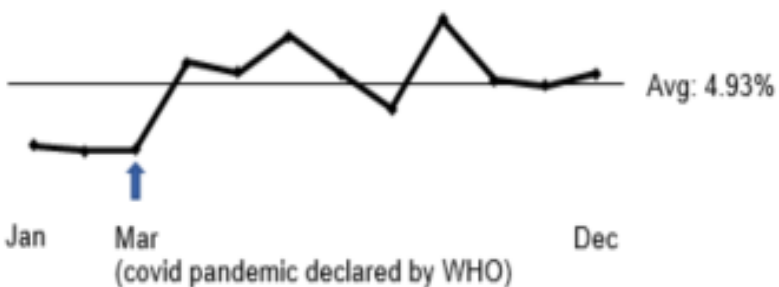
▲ **27%** on PY

Mar to Dec 2020 = **1,505,107**

▲ **35%** on PY

Twitter Engagement Rate

Jan to Dec 2020



Jan to Dec 2020 **4.93%**

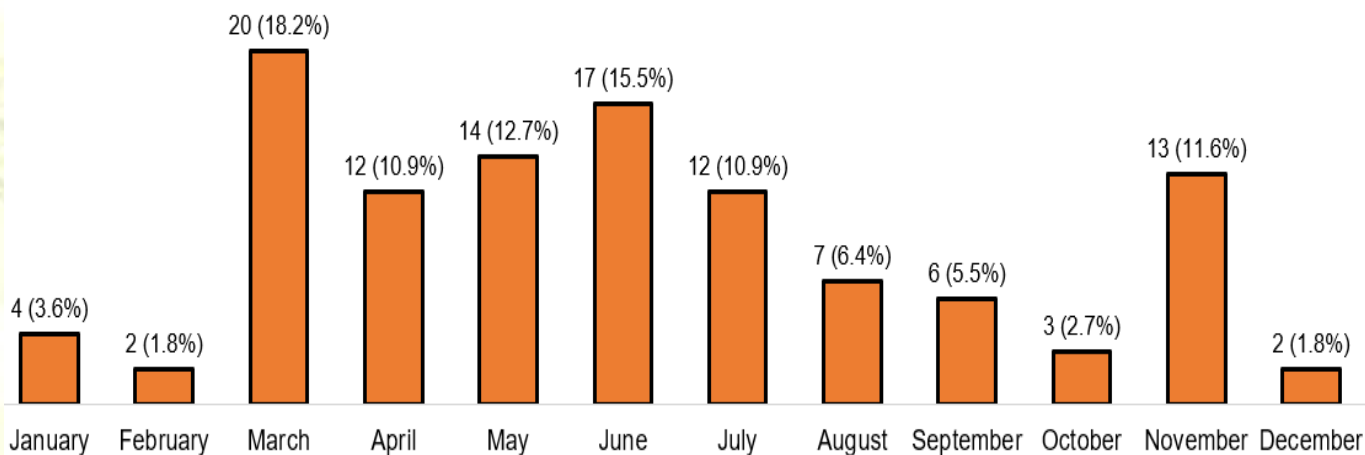
▲ **3.19 perc points** on PY

Mar to Dec 2020 **5.28%**

▲ **3.46 perc points** on PY

112 Press Releases: January to December 2020

% of overall press releases shown in brackets ()

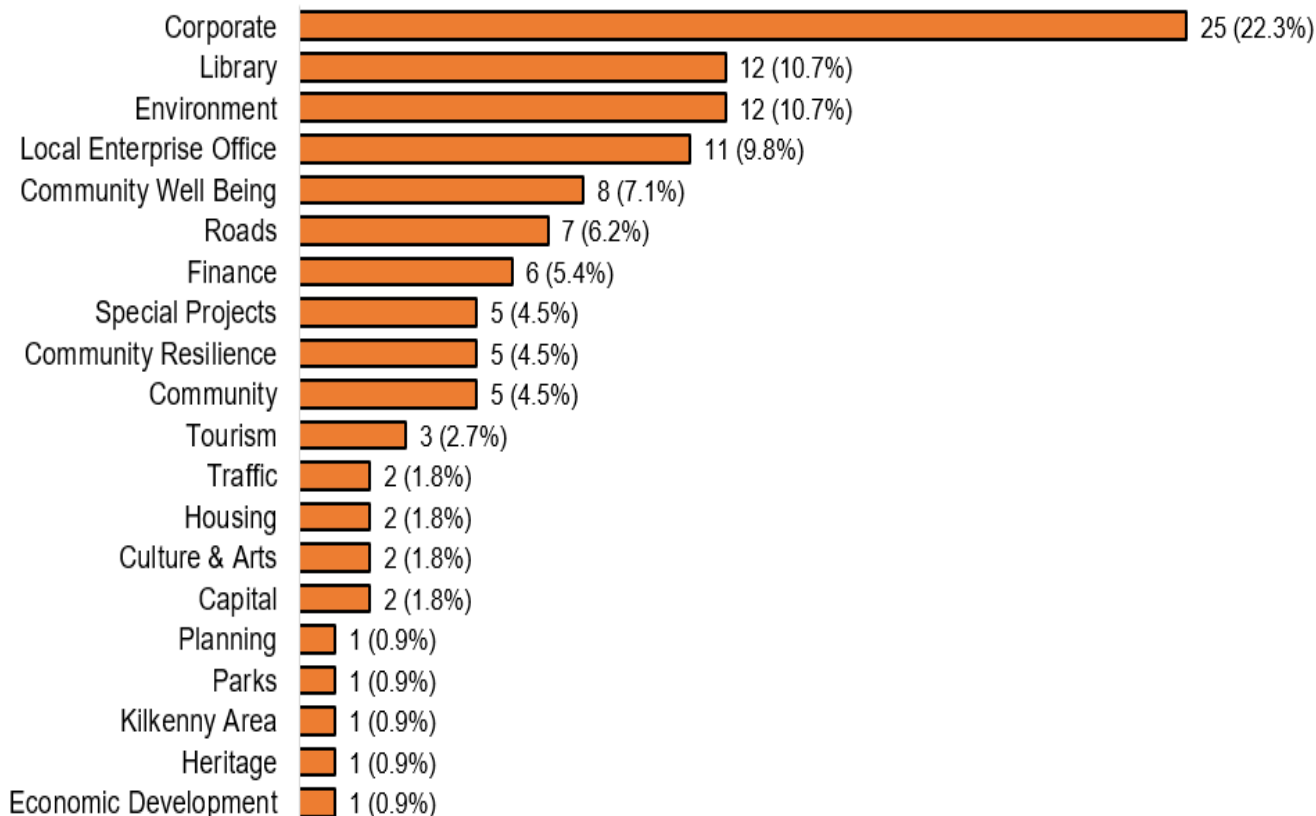




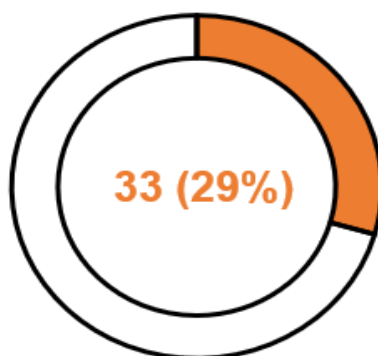
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Press Releases 2020; by Service Area

% of overall press releases shown in brackets ()



**COVID-19 Related Press Releases
2020**





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CORPORATE

YULEFEST KILKENNY

Christmas 2020 was a very different one for everyone and Yulefest Kilkenny this year had a new approach due to COVID 19 restrictions with a mixture of virtual and socially distanced events. Despite this and its challenges we remained committed to the spirit of Christmas while keeping ourselves and each other safe over the festive season.

Loads happened online at YulefestKilkenny.ie and social media channels and we asked everyone to interact with us.

Despite the restrictions, Yulefest Kilkenny designed an innovative programme of events that allowed people to celebrate Christmas safely in Kilkenny. The Council also provided financial support in the sum of €8,790.00 to the smaller towns and villages to light up the County for Christmas 2020 and the larger towns received financial to light up their towns under the Town and Village Renewal Scheme.

A lot of our usual Yulefest Kilkenny events did not take place this year but there were some familiar sites around the City including:

- The **annual Markets on the Parade** and operated in compliance with social distancing guidelines.
- The reindeers were seen around the City and thanks to additional funding from Kilkenny Leader Partnership **additional lighting was placed on the Parade.**
- A socially distanced **Santa's Christmas Village** was set up in the grounds of the Medieval Mile Museum.
- **"Festival in a Van"** in the run up to Christmas supported by Creative Ireland brought a much-needed festive spirit to nursing homes in Callan, Kilkenny City and Gowran. Performances by well renowned artists Luan Parle and Clive Barns together with local performers from Elize School of Singing in

Kilkenny City and tenor from Lady Desart Choir were live streamed on Yulefest social media accounts.

- **Garden of Light:** The Castle Yard at Kilkenny Design Centre was transformed into a winter wonderland as a place for people to come to reflect on the difficult year that was 2020 and remember family members or friends who passed away in 2020. The Garden was produced by the Design and Crafts Council in collaboration with the Council, Kilkenny Civic Trust, Kilkenny Design Centre and Castle Yard Studios and funded by Kilkenny County Council and Creative Ireland.
- **Virtual Christmas Recording from Kilkenny Castle by the Rafter Family:** This was a real Christmas treat for everyone by Kilkenny's own international award-winning Violinist, Patrick Rafter, alongside his parents, performing from The Long Gallery of Kilkenny Castle. We are grateful to the OPW for facilitating the recording which got huge reach and interaction on social media.
- **Online Santa Messages:** Yulefest social media had online messages from Santa for our small people in the run up to Christmas.
- **KCLR96FM Yulefest Package 2020: Through the support of Creative Ireland funding** KCLR96FM ran a media package for Yulefest Kilkenny 2020 with radio promotions, features and competitions which included:
 - **Santa Surprise Competition** with schools across the County getting involved.
 - **Sharing is Caring** where we heard listeners' stories of their favourite shops, services, businesses, restaurants, hotels, bars.
 - **Carlow/Kilkenny's most Festive Family.**
 - **Dial the Diaspora** where once weekly we connected a Kilkenny native abroad with their family at home on KCLR Live.
 - **Light Up Your Christmas** - Social Media Competition
 - **Window Shopping** - Social Media Competition



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- **Wolfwalkers - The Exhibition - Online Virtual Tour** at Butler Gallery which is an immersive multimedia experience highlighting core working drawings from Cartoon Saloon's new animated film Wolfwalkers.
- **Wolfwalkers Mural** on Mary's Lane by local artist Mick Manogue.

A video presentation will be given to the Members at the January Monthly meeting showing clips of the various initiatives.

MILLENNIUM CAPSULE OPENING

On 21st December, 2020, Cathaoirleach, Cllr. Andrew McGuinness, officially unearthed and opened the Millennium Capsule which was buried in the grounds of County Hall in the year 2000. In attendance were representative from local communities that would have contributed to the capsule in 2000.



Garden Of Light Ecumenical Service

The Council hosted an Ecumenical Service at the Garden of Light in the grounds of Kilkenny

Design and Craft Centre on Friday 18th December, 2020, where the Cathaoirleach and Mayor were joined by the Most Reverend Dermot Farrell, Bishop of Ossory and the Right Reverend Michael Burrows, Bishop of Cashel and Ossory. This Service was live streamed on Yulefest social media accounts.



The Garden of Light was created as a place to reflect and remember family and friends who passed away during 2020. The purpose of the Service was to reflect on the year that passed and look forward with hope to brighter days in 2021.



ROADS

NATIONAL ROADS

Kilkenny Major Schemes:

N25 Glenmore to Waterford Scheme

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



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N24 Waterford to Cahir Scheme

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

Kilkenny Minor Schemes:

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

N24 Tower Road:

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

N77 Ballyragget to Ballynaslee

A planning application under 177AE and a Compulsory Purchase Order application has been made to An Bord Pleanála for the above project in December 2020.

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 a simultaneous 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 in the coming weeks.

NON -NATIONAL ROADS

€16.7m was spent on non-national roads in Kilkenny in 2020. This work was carried out in a number of different areas and consisted of 340 projects around the county.

The main works were broken down as follows:

- Restoration Improvement.....€7,847,500
(83 projects covering 79km)

- Restoration Maintenance.....€2,256,000
(82 projects covering 101km)
- Drainage Works.....€652,195
(55 projects)
- Discretionary Grant.....€2,648,500
(75 projects on footpath upgrades etc.)
- Safety Improvement Works.....€368,000
(14 projects)
- Bridge Rehabilitation€200,000
(11 upgrades)
- CIR.....€729K
(14 lanes)
- LIS.....€291K
(6 lanes)

WATER SERVICES

Infrastructure Programme

A number of major and minor capital works progressed in 2020. The projects will provide significant upgrades to a number of plants and pipe networks which will be essential for the development of Kilkenny into the future. Some of the works ongoing & completed were:

Gowran Regional Water Supply Scheme -

Planning for this scheme has been granted and designs were progressed in 2020. The Compulsory Purchase Order for the required land and wayleaves is expected to be confirmed shortly. The scheme includes the construction of a new water treatment plant, reservoir, rising mains, development of two abstraction boreholes and decommissioning of an existing plant. The scheme will increase the water supply capacity to Gowran, Goresbridge and Paulstown, enable growth and development in the local area and improve water quality for over 1,225 residential and non-domestic properties.

Kilkenny City Regional Water Supply Scheme -

Planning for this scheme has been granted. Work on the scheme design progressed in 2020 and tenders were issued to the market. It is hoped to award the contract for this scheme in early 2021. The scheme involves upgrading the existing Troyswood Water Treatment Plant and ancillary



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works to facilitate the decommissioning of the existing water treatment plant in Radestown. When complete, the scheme will benefit approximately 27,000 people by providing a more secure and reliable water supply for the City and surrounding areas.

Pressure Management

In conjunction with IW, a detailed analysis was undertaken on the City network. To deliver a controlled pressure on the network, the throttled valves were replaced by Pressure Reducing Valves (PRV), with day/night controllers and with remote monitoring through our Scada system. The installation of this equipment on the network enables the existing network to service the Western Environs development. The works are also predicted to reduce leakage in the City by 0.5-1ML/day. Both PRV's were installed and commissioned in Q4 2020.

Find & Fix

The Find and Fix process continued through 2020 reducing leakage within the Bennettsbridge, Castlecomer, Thomastown, Inistioge, Callan, Gowran and Kilkenny City water supply zones. The leakage target for 2020 for Kilkenny was to reduce leakage by 1.8ML/day. Currently the actual leakage savings has been 2.4ML/day so the target has been exceeded.

PLANNING

Planning Summary	Total to December	
	2019	2020
Planning Applications Received	976	935
Planning Applications Granted	752	730
Planning Applications Refused	72	65
Complaints Received	116	104
Warning Letters Issued	119	89
Enforcements Notices Issued	37	16
Cases Closed	106	64

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

FORWARD PLANNING

City & County Development Plan:

The draft City and County Development Plan 2021 – 2027 was approved by the members and went on public display for its statutory public consultation. The consultation period runs from the 22nd December 2020 to the 12th March 2021 inclusive. Prior to publication of the draft a number of workshops were held with the elected members to facilitate input to the policies and objectives contained in the draft. The plan was published on Consult.Kilkenny.ie. Notification of the plan was published in the Kilkenny People. Hard copies were sent to the Council Members. Updates on the process are provided on the dedicated portal for the draft plan at Ourplan.Kilkenny.ie.

Hard copies of the Draft Plan can be purchased directly from the Planning Department. There are 3 books to the Plan. The hard copy of each book costs €100. Book 1 is the Plan for the City & County. Book 2 contains the appendices to the Plan and Book 3 contains the Environmental Reports (*the Strategic Environmental Assessment, the Flood Risk Assessment and the Natura Impact Assessment*).

Details of public consultation webinars will be published shortly to take place from the last week of January and the first week of February.

People can make submissions directly through the Council's online portal at <https://Consult.Kilkenny.ie/> or by email to ourplan@kilkennycoco.ie or in writing, marked "Draft City and County Development Plan", to the Planning Department, Kilkenny County



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Council, County Hall, John Street, Kilkenny R95 A39T.

Graiguenamanagh Local Area Plan

A joint draft Local Area Plan for Graiguenamanagh and Tinnahinch was finalised by Carlow County Council and Kilkenny County Council. The Draft Plan went on public display in December and public notice to this effect was given with details of a public consultation webinar on the 11th of January 2021. The plan is on public display for 8 weeks from 13th of November 2020 to 25th of January 2021. The webinar was held on the 11th January and approximately 40 people had registered for the webinar prior to the event.

Masterplans

In a parallel process, there are a number of masterplans being prepared for the areas of Loughmacask, St Canice's Campus (the former St. Canice's Hospital) and the Fairgreen area of the City. These were also impacted by Covid 19. Work is continuing with the preparation of these masterplans with Loughmacask being the furthest advanced. Members will be briefed on these before any draft masterplans are placed on public display.

Conservation

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

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

	Grant Funding	Private Funding	Total Cost	Total Projects Supported
BHIS	€98,000	€187,316	€285,316	10
HSF	€40,000	€ 26,895	€ 66,895	2
JJSP	€60,230	€ 16,254	€ 76,484	2
CMF	€ 7,121	Nil	€ 7,121	1

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

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

Conservation Grants for 2021 launched in November 2020 as follows:

- Built Heritage Investment Scheme 2021
- Historic Structures Fund 2021. The Historic Structures Fund will have two Streams:
 - **Stream 1** will offer grants from €15,000 up to €50,000 for essential repairs and smaller capital works for the refurbishment and conservation of heritage structures.
 - **Stream 2** will offer a small number of grants from €50,000 up to €200,000 for larger enhancement, refurbishment or reuse projects involving heritage structures, where a clear community or public benefit has been demonstrated.
 - **Pilot Stream for Vernacular Structures** - The purpose of the stream is to support conservation repairs and small capital works to vernacular structures.
 - **Pilot Stream for Historic Shopfronts** - To incentivise the conservation of historic shop fronts, each Local Authority is invited to submit an additional application under Stream 1 for eligible essential repairs and small capital works for the refurbishment and conservation of historic shop facades, windows, signage and other associated details to safeguard them and keep them in use.



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Building Control

A total of 319 valid Commencement Notices were received in 2020. This compares with 291 commencement notices in 2019.

Valid Commencement Notices	2020	2019
1 st Quarter	97	72
2 nd Quarter	74	84
3 rd Quarter	84	78
4 th Quarter	64	57
Total Valid Application	319	291

A total of 86 valid DAC/Part M Dispensation Applications were received in 2020. This compares with 60 in 2019.

Valid Disability Access Applications	2020	2019
1 st Quarter	21	21
2 nd Quarter	19	16
3 rd Quarter	22	9
4 th Quarter	24	14
Total Valid Applications	86	60

Taking in Charge

Four estates were taken in charge in Q4 2020:

- Glenvale, Ballyragget
- Ard Glas, Ban Ard, Tuar Na mBlatha, An Grainan, An Cuainin, Ferrybank
- Kingscourt, Callan
- Cois na Bearu, Graiguenamanagh

Works are ongoing on the following estates:

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

Vacant Sites

- Following the annual review of sites around the county, a total of 7 sites were added to the Vacant Sites Register on the 31st December

2020. Landowners have until the 28th January to appeal their entry to An Bord Pleanála.

- This brings the total number of sites on the Register to 36.
- Sites that have been on the Register for over a year are now liable for the 7% levy, and the process of issuing payment demands will commence shortly. Two sites have had their levy discharged to date.
- The number of cancelled entries due to site activation or improvement now stands at 14 sites.

PARKS

Annual inspections for all 31 playgrounds under the charge of the Council were undertaken in December by an inspector registered with the RPII (*Register of Play Inspectors International*). This inspection forms the basis of the schedule of maintenance and repairs for 2021 and is a requirement of our insurance cover. An extensive programme of works to repair and upgrade playgrounds was completed in December maintaining playgrounds to a high standard year-round.

Three playgrounds opened in Kilkenny in 2020. Tullaroan and Johnstown were developed by their respective communities with assistance from the Parks Department and upon completion were taken in charge and placed under the Council's weekly inspection regime. Ferrybank Playground was developed directly by Kilkenny County Council with the assistance of Council own funds and LIHAF funding through the Department of Housing, Planning, and Local Government.

In December, an extension to the playground in Woodstock was completed and will be ready for use as soon as ground conditions dry up. This was funded jointly by Kilkenny County Council and a Sports Capital Grant through the Department of Tourism Transport and Sport.

Works will commence on Piltown playground in Quarter 1 2021. The site, located to the rear of the



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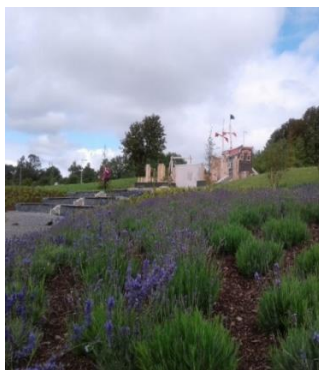
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old Garda Station on the Main Street, is an attractive riverside location. In addition to the playground a sensory garden and play area will be provided which will be of great benefit to those with sensory processing issues such as autism.

Images from Playgrounds around the County



Ferrybank Playground constructed in 2020



Fair Green Callan after cleaning and upgrades to equipment and surfacing and right Tullaroan Playground which opened in 2020



Johnstown Community Playground opened in 2020

South East Greenway

In late 2020 the Department of Tourism, Transport and Sport announced funding of €15.5m to cover the total estimated costs to construct the South East Greenway. Rail and sleeper lifting is now

completed and tenders are currently being assessed for the first two sections of greenway to be constructed, namely in the urban areas of Ferrybank and Rosbercon, New Ross. Detailed design is almost finalised for the remaining sections focusing in particular on underpasses and agricultural crossings and railway bridges. The works will include for upgrades to the bridge at Carrickcloney, Mount Elliot tunnel and the Red Bridge over the River Barrow all of which will be major features along the route offering great views of the surrounding landscape.

On the 18th of December an on-line public consultation was held to assist in identifying a suitable site for a public car park in the Ferrybank area. As part of this process the Council was also keen to highlight the need to develop links from surrounding residential areas to increase permeability and accessibility to the greenway for local users.

Leaflets explaining the process were dropped to 1,600 houses in the Ferrybank urban area. A report on the outcome of the consultation will be prepared soon and the final preferred site identified.



October 2020 - Lifting of old rails and sleepers along the route of the South East Greenway



December 2020 - View of old railway track through the Ferrybank urban area



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Woodstock Gardens

A number of socially distant events took place outdoors in Woodstock gardens this year.

In celebration of Kilkenny Day which took place on Sunday the 11th of October, Woodstock Gardens were backing the Cats. To mark the day a full team of our famous, 'Kilkenny Cats' were hidden around the trails and the challenge was for children to find their County Team.



December saw a busy build up to the festive period with people enjoying outdoor time in Woodstock during the Covid restrictions. The walks from the village were particularly busy with family groups meeting outdoors. Some festive themed props were installed in the gardens to celebrate Yulefest - a Christmas themed trail with elf images and festive reindeers were placed around the gardens.

Christmas Stars for Woodstock Gardens



The Arts Office, as part of the Community Resilience campaign 'Keep Well', organised a local primary school (*St. Mary's National School, Thomastown*) to paint and decorate the 3D Christmas Stars which went on display in Woodstock Gardens as part of Yulefest 2020.

The conservatory mural by Gillian Campden was completed and a Christmas tree was erected to bring some extra festive cheer to the building.

The gardens were open right through the Christmas period with the exception of Christmas day.



Works to improve the Winter Garden were undertaken just before Christmas with the re-turfing of the side slopes and the last of the topiary planting will be added in January. The two panels of the formal garden furthest from the house have been temporarily seeded with a pollinator friendly wildflower meadow. In time these will also be formally planted to the original layout of the Victorian period.

An ORIS application has been made to continue the Woodstock estate walks further south towards the Brownsford Stream and Waterfall, returning to Woodstock via the 'American Road' which is so called as it was the way emigrants leaving Ireland for the last time in the 1800s travelled for the boats to the US. The waterfall is a stunning feature in Woodstock which is little known as it is tucked deep into the woodland.



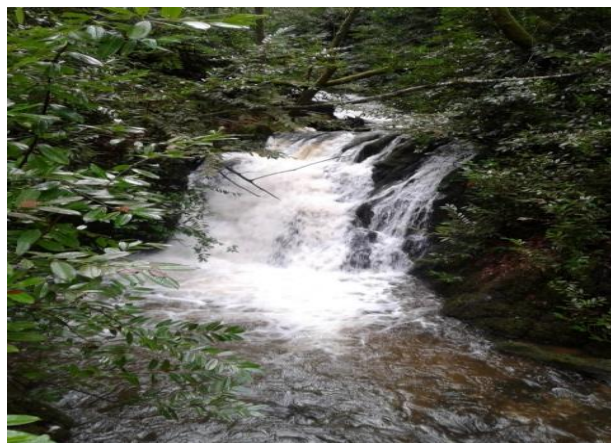
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*Waterfall at the Brownsford Stream
in the Woodstock Estate*



Brown's Wood, Freshford – Before and After

Amenity Grants

The main objective of the scheme is to encourage and aid small-scale works to improve the local environment and encourage community involvement in the upkeep and maintenance of public amenities. In 2021 there will be an increased focus on supporting pollinators through projects which are funded. Community groups will be encouraged to manage amenities in a more sustainable manner in line with the pollinator plan which the council has adopted and in line with actions set out in the Council's Climate Action Policy for 2020.

Outdoor Recreation Infrastructure Scheme (ORIS)

Works under the current round of ORIS Measure 1 funded schemes are now complete. Applications under this heading can attract funding up to €20,000 plus match funding. The projects completed this year included the following:

- Freshford Loop Walk - surface upgrade
- Kilkenny Outdoor Activity Trail - Marketing of amenities including flyers and brochure development;
- Tory Hill, Mullinavat - Improvement works to existing walking trail
- Woodstock Estate, Inistioge - Social media marketing campaign to promote Woodstock Garden and Trails within the estate.

ORIS Measure 2 funded schemes can attract funding up to a maximum of €200,000, plus match funding, works are expected to commence at Poulanassy Waterfall in Quarter 1 2021.

Whilst in Graiguenamanagh the reconstruction of the 400m Silaire Wood boardwalk along the River Barrow along with the rehabilitation of the existing woodland trails was completed and reopened to the public in November. Apart from the nuts and bolts the new boardwalk is made from 100% recycled plastic, made from a mixture of blended plastic from household items such as bottle caps, plastic film and margarine tubs. It is anticipated, subject to Covid-19 restrictions, that enhancement works to the carpark and the installation of the new signage and seating will be completed in early 2021.



Silaire Wood Boardwalk



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KILKENNY COUNTY COUNCIL

TUARASCÁIL BHAINISTÍOCHTA MÍOSÚIL

MONTHLY MANAGEMENT REPORT

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ENVIRONMENT

Kilkenny Biodiversity & Recreational Countryside Park



Over the last quarter of 2020, and after many months of work, significant project milestones were hit to bring this proposal closer to a reality.

In November, a funding application for the maximum available amount, of €500,000, was submitted to the Department of Rural and Community Development under Measure 3 of the Outdoor Recreational Infrastructure Scheme (ORIS).

On the 11th December, the proposal went out to public consultation under Part 8 of the Planning and Development Regulations. The proposals will remain on public display until the 22nd January and submissions / observations relating to same will be accepted up to the 5th February. It is intended that a Part 8 Planning Report will be prepared and presented to the Elected Members in Quarter 1 of 2021.



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

Bring Banks

The Council provides and manages 46 Bring Banks across the City and County. The Bring Banks have seen a massive increase in usage in 2020 compared to previous years. It is clear to see from the tonnages collected in 2020 that usage increased with the introduction of Covid 19 restrictions and have remained at an increased level throughout the year. A total of 2,609 tonnes were collected in 2020 compared with 1,881 tonnes during 2019, representing a 39% increase year on year.



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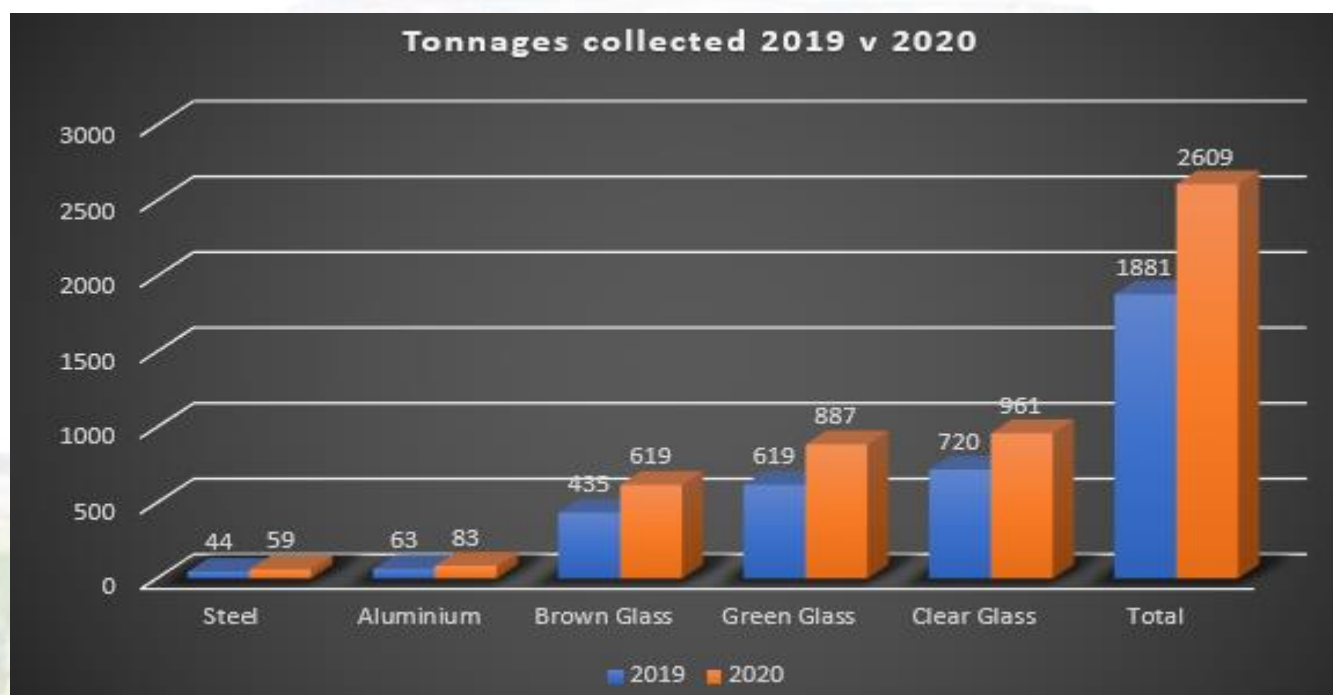
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Over this period our Enforcement staff continued to work very closely with our Service Providers to ensure the level of service was in keeping with demand. This was particularly challenging as the main Service Provider is also contracted to a number of other Local Authorities who are also experiencing a similar trend.

The Council deployed an additional 10 CCTV cameras at the Bring Banks in 2020 around the City and County, bringing the total number of cameras across our 46 Bring Banks to 20. The introduction of same has significantly reduced the volume of littering at these sites despite the increase in usage.



Climate Alliance - Taking Local Action On Global Climate Change

At the end of 2020, Kilkenny County Council joined the European Climate Alliance. Kilkenny, Carlow and Wexford local authorities were the first in Ireland to join. The Climate Alliance is a pioneer in global climate action, with long-established traditions of collaboration with indigenous peoples as well as specific CO₂ reduction goals, to which each member municipality commits itself. Since their foundation 30 years ago their network has grown to over 1,700 members in 26 European countries.

Being a Climate Alliance member means being part of a network dedicated to climate action, teaming with like-minded local authorities.

Environmental Complaints

The number of complaints logged and investigated during 2020 saw a significant increase on the 2019 figures with 1,307 complaints logged for 2020 compared with 1,042 for 2019 (25% increase). Of the complaints received in 2020, a total of 999 related to litter and waste management issues compared with 895 complaints in 2019. The following table provides a broad breakdown of the complaint categories relating to litter and waste.



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Categories	2019	2020
Illegal Dumping/Litter	661	737
Graffiti	2	1
Dog Fouling	25	29
Bring Banks	6	14
WEEE	10	3
Green Waste	5	3
Hazardous Waste	8	2
Waste Collection	0	4
Waste Management	13	8
Burning of Waste	23	55
Abandoned Cars/ELV	86	76
Tyres	8	7
Election Posters	6	12
Unauthorised Signage	42	48
Total	895	999

Despite the restrictions imposed due to Covid 19, the Enforcement Team remained very active with 223 litter fines issued in 2020.

Recommended Minimum Criteria for Environmental Inspections (RMCEI) Plan for 2020

Each Local Authority submits a plan to the EPA for evaluation and score. The Plan submitted by Kilkenny County Council received a score of High for 2020, retaining the score achieved in 2019. Under the 2020 Plan a total of 2,000 planned inspections across Waste, Water, Noise and Air were listed. The restrictions put in place to combat the spread of Covid 19 impacted our ability in relation to planned inspections that require site visits and/or meetings with landowners.

However, the Environment staff endeavored to carry out as many inspections as possible whilst adhering to Government and HSE guidelines and indeed in some cases exceeded the yearly target for particular inspection requirements.

Despite the impact of Covid 19 and the restrictions put in place, 90% of the planned inspections were completed. The Department and EPA acknowledged that the full inspection programme could not be achieved given the restrictions and that consideration would be given to same when evaluating the 2020 returns.



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A summary of the inspections undertaken during 2020 is provided in the below table:

RMCEI Inspections	Planned 2020	Completed 2020	RMCEI Inspections	Planned 2020	Completed 2020
Inspections relating to water pollution incidents	21	36	Bring bank Surveillance	150	470
Discharge Licences to waters	25	25	Bring Bank Inspections	84	75
Inspections in relation to solid fuel regulations	38	35	Other SW or GW protection inspections	96	96
Inspections of existing planning permissions	550	766	Ambient Monitoring (us/ds WWTPs)	192	242
Ground Water quality (planning inspections)	80	270	Additional BOD analysis for Water Services	550	554
Multi-agency inspections including vehicle inspections and multi-agency site inspections	1	2	WFD Monitoring, op & surv, samples taken (WFD)	377	339
Routine Litter Patrols (City)	175	171	WFD investigative monitoring, samples and analysis	52	52

Litter Management Plan 2021-2023

The Litter Management Plan 2021-2023 is now in draft form and will be circulated to the elected members and a public consultation phase will follow. It will also be presented at the next SPC4 meeting scheduled in April and afterwards presented for adoption at the May Council meeting. Your input into this policy document would be appreciated as it sets out priorities, targets for litter management for the next three years.

Waste Awareness Activities

Kilkenny's virtual waste week took place between the 23rd-27th of November and promoted information all about waste management across Kilkenny County Council's social media platforms.

The "Paint Smarter" campaign, a project collaboration between Waterford, Kilkenny and Carlow Local Authorities devised 10 top tips on how to avoid wasting your money on paint. The simple tips cover purchasing, using, storing paint and disposal. The campaign launch took place during waste week and continues into 2021. The campaign aims to reduce the levels of waste paint presented at local civic amenity sites across the region and campaign resources have been offered to other Local Authorities via the Local Authority Waste Prevention Network.





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ENVIRONMENT EDUCATION ACTIVITIES

Green Schools

An Taisce's Green School Office has indicated to Kilkenny County Council that 55 schools are due to renew their green flag before the end of the academic year. The Environmental Awareness Officer will reach out to schools on their return to in-school learning to determine how many assessment visits will be required. Assessments this year will take an online format with the Environmental Awareness Officer organising a short online meeting to touch base with the school to hear about how they have progressed through the 7-step environmental programme. An Taisce is being very understanding regarding the difficulties schools are facing due to Covid restrictions and the programme has adjusted accordingly.

DIY Plastic Bottle Greenhouse Competition



The Environment Section is running a competition for secondary schools and youth groups to construct a greenhouse from plastic bottles. Groups were asked to register in December and 6 secondary schools are participating. Each school group will receive an Eco-Unesco "Get Drastic About Plastic" online educational workshop as part of the competition programme.

The competition timeline will be adjusted when the schools return to ensure groups have sufficient time to compete. This is an initiative of Southern Region Waste Management Plan and the Council's Climate Change Adaption Strategy 2019-2024.

Climate Change



Home Energy Saving Kits

Cathaoirleach Cllr Andrew McGuinness launched the Home Energy Saving Kits in November which are now available to borrow from every library branch. The kits assist householders to detect potential energy savings and will be a great asset for tidy towns groups and schools who wish to borrow the kit to explore energy conservation.

Climate Ambassador Programme

The Environmental Awareness Officer has been accepted onto An Taisce's Climate Ambassador Programme. The Climate Ambassador programme is Ireland's first ever initiative to train and support individuals taking action on climate change. The programme is co-ordinated by the Environmental Education Unit of An Taisce with support from the Department of Communication, Climate Action and Environment. This is to assist the promotion of climate change teaching in the county and to strengthen the understanding of climate change within the Council. Both initiatives above complement Kilkenny County Council's Climate Change Adaption Strategy 2019-2024.



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Carlow/Kilkenny Dog Shelter

In line with HSE/Government guidelines on essential services the Carlow/Kilkenny Dog Shelter and Dog Warden Service has remained open to the public but by appointment only. Further information is available at www.kilkennycoco.ie.

Statistics	2019	2020
No of dogs entering shelter	400	261
PTS	3	2 (due to sheep worrying)

Horse Bye Laws

Kilkenny County Council advertised its intention to make revised Bye Laws for the Control of Horses in the County of Kilkenny. These new Bye Laws will also incorporate horse exclusion zones within Kilkenny City. The closing date for submissions to the Draft Bye Laws was 15th December 2020. Submissions were received. It is planned to bring these Bye Laws to the Council meeting in February 2021 for adoption.

Christmas Trees Collections 2021

Plans are in place to accommodate Christmas tree drop off locations for householders in January. Trees will be chipped and composted after the festival season. The collection period will run between the 4th January to 18th January at the following locations:

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

Civic Amenity Sites

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

Energy Management - ISO50001

Kilkenny County Council is currently pursuing ISO 50001 Energy Management certification to continue with the energy efficiency improvement trends. This certification will put in place a robust energy management system to manage energy consumption and the performance of significant energy users and realise energy saving and carbon reduction targets up to 2030 and beyond. As part of this process, SEAI approved, independent auditors were engaged to assess the Council's energy management system. Stage 1 of the certification audit process took place in late November with stage 2, the final stage, scheduled for mid-January. The feedback from the Auditor with respect to stage 1 was very positive.

Historic Landfill Sites

There are 14 Historic Landfill Sites (or closed landfills) in County Kilkenny formerly used by the Council for the disposal of waste. Local Authorities are required to carry out an assessment of the risk of environmental pollution on historic landfills according to a Code of Practice issued by the EPA, which involves a framework of assessments ranging from Tier 1 through to Tier 3 (remediation works). The



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Department currently fully fund remediation works of historic landfills. The Table below gives a summary of the status of each site up to the end of 2020:

No.	Site Name	2020 Allocation	2020 Target	Status - End of Year 2020	Expenditure Claimed from Dept.2020
S22-02572	Gowran	€19,503	Remediation Completed 2019. Close out 12-month defects period in 2020	Contract Retention for Remediation paid.	€19,502.48
S22-02589	Sherman's Donaghmore Ballyragget	€155,397	Complete Remediation & commence 12-month defects period.	Remediation completed. Defects period commenced.	€154,874.68
S22-02580	Oldcourt Inistioge	€11,332	Tier 3 Report & Cert of Authorisation Application submitted.	Final Tier 3 Report & COA application to be submitted to the EPA December 2020.	€10,375.43
KKTAL01	Talbotsinch Freshford Road Kilkenny	€29,495	Tier 2 & Tier 3 Report & Cert of Authorisation Application submitted.	Final Reporting & COA application to be submitted to the EPA January 2021.	€24,297.06
S22-02584	Thorpes Ballyragget	€11,332	Tier 3 Report & Cert of Authorisation Application submitted.	Final Reporting & COA application to be submitted to the EPA December 2020.	€10,375.43
S22-02595	Seven Houses Newlands	€24,499	Tier 3 Report & Cert of Authorisation Application submitted	Final Reporting & COA application scheduled to be submitted to the EPA December 2020.	€24,499.34
S22-02582	Skehana Castlecomer	€28,332	Tier 3 Report & Cert of Authorisation Application submitted.	Final Reporting & COA application scheduled to be submitted December 2020.	€19,060.20
S22-02590	Ardreagh Urlingford	€15,611	Consultant Procured & Tier 2 Report completed.	SI works completed 2020. All reporting due January / February 2021.	€15,611.20
S22-02591	Caherlesk Dunnamaggin	€20,000	Consultant Procured & Tier 2 Report completed.		€15,209.70
S22-02597	Ballykeoghnan Kilmacow	€17,500	Consultant Procured & Tier 2 Report completed.		€15,391.20
S22-02592	Sheastown	€18,833	Consultant Procured & Tier 2 Report completed.	Works Related Consultancy Services Tenders have been	€0

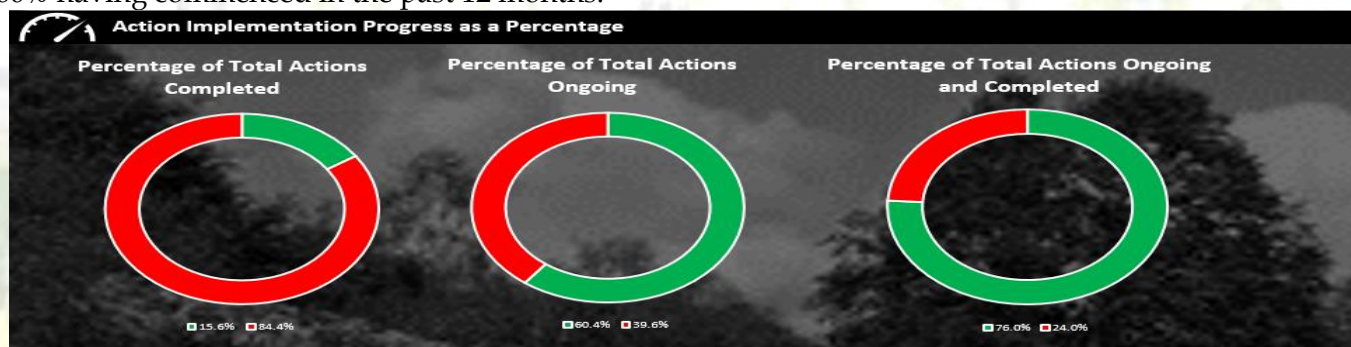


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S22-02597	Mallardstown	€20,000	Consultant Procured & Tier 2 Report completed.	reviewed. Successful Tender identified.	€0
S22-02594	Granny	€30,000	Consultant Procured & Tier 2 Report completed.	SI works completed 2020. All reporting due January / February 2020.	€14,846.70
S22-02578	Dungarvan	€27,500	Consultant Procured & Tier 2 Report completed.	SI works completed 2020 with SI Report due January 2021. Tier 2 Report now expected March 2021.	€10,500.00
€428,723					€334,544

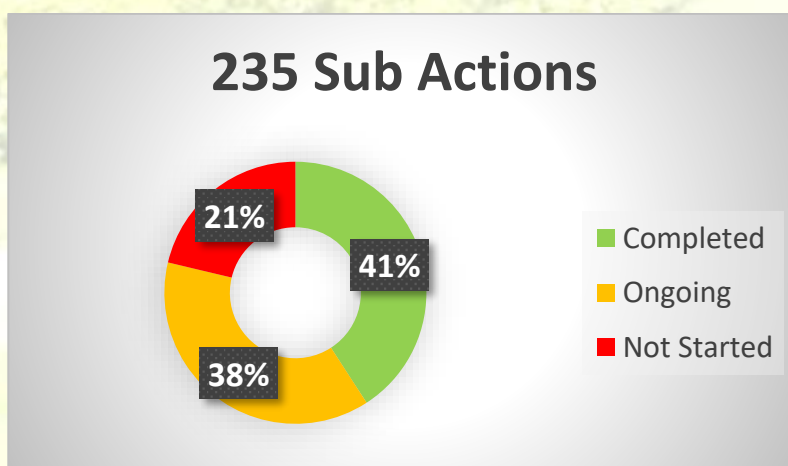
Kilkenny Climate Change Adaptation Strategy 2019 -2024 (CCAS)

In the last quarter of 2020 the Environment Section completed the annual review of the Kilkenny Climate Change Adaptation Strategy (CCAS) and submitted the findings of same to the Eastern & Midland Climate Action Regional Office and the DCCAE. To date, 15% of the 96 actions have been completed with another 60% having commenced in the past 12 months.



Dashboard of Action Progress to-date- Kilkenny Climate Change Adaptation Strategy 2019 -2024

A review was also undertaken of the CCAS Sub-action Plan which was developed in December of 2019. This Sub-action Plan targeted 235 specific actions derived from the 96 main actions within the CCAS. In total, and despite the challenges faced by the organisation around Covid-19, of the 235 sub-actions 185 have commenced and or completed, representing 79% of the total.





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Examples of Sub-Actions Completed:

- Ban of single use plastic cups, cutlery & straws in KCC buildings;
- Appointment of Cycling Officer in partnership WIT;
- Installation of enabling infrastructure - EV charging points in car parks in Thomastown, Griguenamanagh and the Fairegreen Callan - Completed
- Thomastown Mobility Management Plan - Completed;
- Work in partnership with NTA developing infrastructure for the new Kilkenny City Bus Service - Completed
- Improved facilities in meeting rooms to promote telephone conferencing - Completed
- Run Bulky Furniture Day at Dunmore and Granny CAS - Held 2019 & 2020
- Run / Support Shop Local Campaigns - A number of campaigns run to-date;
- Assess feasibility of installing an amenity trail in Dunmore civic amenity site - Completed. Plans and funding application progressing, planning process to commence 2020
- Circulate Waste Bye-law Leaflet to households and collaborate with the SEWMO media campaign to raise awareness of requirements
- Annual Local Authority Tree Planting Programme - Initiative to plant semi-mature pollinator friendly trees to mark significant milestones in Kilkenny -completed 2020 (120+ trees)
- Setup Flood Relief Project Office to advance 6 funded Projects
- Purchased electric vehicle for use by the Public Realm Warden (*Pilot Initiative*)
- Commence works on the Kilkenny Greenway.

In December, a significant number of on-line staff meetings were held with team leaders and designated persons within the CCAS to agree a new CCAS Sub-action Plan for 2021. On foot of this process a total of 234 sub-actions were agreed across the organisation, representing once again a very ambitious programme.

Veterinary Services

2020 was a very challenging year for our service. The service showed resilience to keep safe food on the shelves and the food supply chains open. In doing so we were very aware of trying to work in a safe manner with the stakeholders as well as the pertaining COVID 19 issues in the meat industry in general.

Quarter 4 is traditionally a very busy time for food businesses under the Council's supervision and for the service. Due to the increased demand for meat and meat products for the Christmas and New Year celebrations the year 2020 was no different. Six Red meat slaughterhouses slaughtered 1,353 cattle and 4,776 sheep during this period. Five premises slaughtered white meat which includes slaughterhouse and the on-farm slaughter of poultry (*different classification of premises*) they slaughtered 24,150 chickens, 11,650 turkeys and 850 geese and ducks. In addition, we were involved in one multiagency investigation and one national animal health incident during this period.

During this time, the service gave a second conditional approval to a new red meat slaughterhouse which had not been operational since 2000. It is the first new such slaughterhouse in Ireland for 20 years. There were a lot of steps to be taken to arrive at this juncture - structures, approval inspections for adherence to food law and training in animal welfare, Animal Identification and Movement System, Food Safety Management Systems etc. This was achieved by a lot of hard work with the stakeholders within a short period timeframe.



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Sampling activity continued and 17 samples were taken during this period. During the period there were six Dog Breeding Establishment Inspections and 3 inspections of the Dog Shelter.

It is noted that the Pandemic has illustrated the importance of maintaining local food supply chains to local retail outlets to service their local communities. It is a sector that should be supported and maintained by society and all government agencies, as the value to communities far outweighs pure monetary parameters i.e. reduction in food miles, maintaining a traditional skills network, less stress on animals – benefiting animal welfare, enabling people to work and shop locally etc. At the December Council Meeting, the elected members approved an extension to the Section 85 Agreement in place with Carlow County Council for the provision of food safety services delivered on behalf of the FSAI under a service level agreement in place with local authorities nationally.

COMMUNITY

Community Enhancement Programme (CEP) grants

The LCDC allocated a number of grants in the final quarter of the year under the Community Enhancement Programme (CEP) small grants to a total of €39,420 were granted along with 8 further medium size grants totalling €115,276. A further €46,621 was allocated in December for small Covid 19 related works for communities. This will be allocated in February 2021. A total of €201,317 will have been granted to small and medium community projects across the county under the CEP.

Kilkenny Migrant Integration Strategy

The Kilkenny Migrant Integration Strategy was developed as a participative process and involved linking in with services, community organisations as well as migrants living in Kilkenny. The Strategy was finalised in December 2020 and contains 23 actions for implementation over a 2 to

3-year period. A new Integration network will be established as part of the Strategy. It is expected the Kilkenny Migrant Integration Strategy will be signed off by the full Council in the first quarter of 2021.

SICAP Plan 2021

The LCDC are in the processing of overseeing the 2021 SICAP Plan for Kilkenny. The budget remains the same at €631,889. The SICAP Sub-group of the LCDC have recommended approval of the SICAP Plan 2021 to the LCDC as an agenda item for their January meeting.

Kilkenny Resettlement Programme 2018-2020

The final stages of the Government supported Kilkenny Resettlement Programme are in train with a final interagency resettlement meeting taking place in January. Kilkenny County Council and the Kilkenny Resettlement Interagency Group have resettled 141 Syrian Refugees as part of the Irish Governments Humanitarian Protection Programme. A final event was held in December with a presentation of a Jasmine plant to Cathaoirleach Andrew McGuinness, the event was livestreamed and can be viewed here: <https://www.facebook.com/KilkennyCoCo/videos/1754676758026732>.

Kilkenny One-Parent Families

The One-parent families steering group was established as part of a research project into the needs, and issues being experienced by One-parent families in the County. The research entitled Voice and Visibility research and action Plan was launched as an online event in November. The group will commence implementing actions from the plan

Healthy Kilkenny

We are currently in round 3 of Healthy Ireland Funding. This is a two- year funding scheme taking us to December 2021. Over the last quarter of 2020 Healthy Kilkenny has engaged Workhouse Union to consult with groups in Kilkenny to understand needs, experiences and barriers to mobility (walking, cycling, public



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transport) in Kilkenny City and public space. Consultations have been completed and report is to be finalised in January. Work with Lone Parents, people with disabilities and Physical exercise classes continue under this programme.

Kilkenny Traveller Interagency Group

The group has reconvened under the Director of Services for Community, Mary Mulholland. The group have met 3 times in the final quarter and plan to undertake a review of the needs analysis of Travellers in Kilkenny from 2014 and develop a two-year action plan that will be coordinated by the interagency group.

Town and Village Renewal

Under the Accelerated Measures, Kilkenny County Council received funding for 16 projects to the value of €461,200. Projects were completed in Callan, Castlecomer, Christmas lights for District Towns and Shop Local Campaign. The remaining projects are at various stages of completion. All must be completed by the end of March 2021.

Ten applications were submitted under the standard Town & Village Scheme. Results notified on 8th January, 2021. Successful applications for Thomastown, Stoneyford, Hugginstown, Kilmacow and Freshford.

Rural Regeneration Development Fund (RRDF)

One application was submitted under this fund in respect of relocation and development of public library space in Thomastown.

Keep Well Campaign

The Council submitted their plan under the Keep Well Campaign. Under this campaign Kilkenny was allocated €67,225 to be spent across three themes of the campaign, namely, "Your County", "Switching Off and Being Creative" and "Staying Connected". All actions under the Plan must be completed by March 2021.

Pride of Place

The 2020 IPB Pride of Place Awards Ceremony took place on Saturday the 21st November.

Castlecomer Discovery Park won the national award in Community Tourism and Clogh Community Group and Callan Town Team claimed runners up in population categories. Kilkenny County Council also won the national award for community engagement under the Local Authority category.

Callan Town Team Plan

A review of the actions from the Callan Town Team Plan is presently under way. An update on progress will be available in January 2021, this will also be promoted within the local community through an online magazine format.

Communications

Two Interactive Community Information Newsletters were completed in the last quarter 2020.

Kilkenny Recreation & Sports Partnership

A draft KRSP Interim Strategy was completed.

Tidy Estates Awards

Judging was completed for the Tidy Estates Competition. Results will be announced in January 2021.

Kilkenny Comhairle na nÓg

The AGM of Kilkenny Comhairle na nÓg was held in early November. The AGM was held virtually with 56 participants taking part. The topics discussed were climate change and mental health.

In December, a grant of €2,965 was awarded from the Department of Children and Youth Affairs for IT equipment. This grant will be used to buy a laptop and 8 tablets along with conferencing equipment to make it easier for Comhairle members to attend meetings virtually under current restrictions.

Kilkenny Children & Young Persons Services Committee (CYPSC)

The Kilkenny CYPSC was awarded €18,000 under the keep well campaign, the money is targeted at supports for vulnerable youth in the City & County.



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The actions under the CYPSC action plan continue to be rolled out, these include Mental Health posters, Internet safety information packs for parents, parenting support materials and funding to various initiatives.

CCFCS 2019 updates

Pil River Park: Having completed procurement in December 2020, the park will begin construction in January 2021.

Mooncoin Celtic: Have completed all works under the CCFCS programme including drainage and fencing.

Thomastown Scouts: Have been awarded LEADER funding to combine with the Council's CCFCS grant to begin the major redevelopment of the former primary school in Thomastown.

CLAR 2020

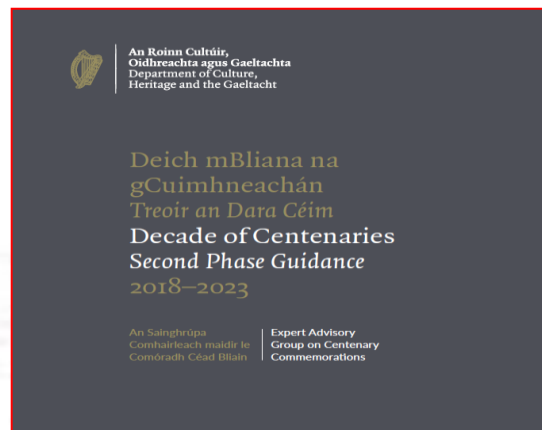
Kilkenny County Council was awarded €77,000 under the CLAR scheme comprising of €50,000 to Muckalee Community Creche, St Brendan's N.S, Muckalee Parish Committee for Completion of Car park and associated works and €27,000 Coolagh Church and Community Hall for Safety measures and access improvement.

HERITAGE

Decade of Centenaries Programme 2021

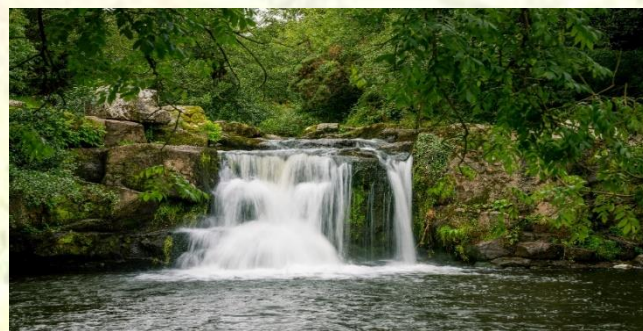
Kilkenny County Council received an allocation of €50,000 for 2021 from the Commemorations Unit of the Department of Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sports and Media to fund a programme commemorating the centenary of the struggle for Independence. The programme will include an open call/grant scheme to the public to submit project proposals in the first quarter of 2021. It will be administered by the Heritage Office, in accordance with criteria issued by the Department.

This addresses Strategic Priority 2: "Increase and diversify participation in culture" in Kilkenny County Council Cultural Strategy (Arts, Heritage and Libraries) 2018-2022.



Discovering Kilkenny's Wetlands

Wetlands are vital for biodiversity and as carbon sinks - a key resource in our efforts to adapt to climate change. In 2020, the Heritage Office commissioned ecologists to identify and map all the wetlands in the County. 250 sites were identified, and 15 of these were surveyed in detail. A colourful booklet on Kilkenny's wetlands, and where to visit them, will shortly be produced and disseminated. The project was co-funded by the Heritage Council under the County Heritage Plan. This project addresses Strategic Priority 2 of Kilkenny County council Cultural Strategy (Arts, Heritage and Libraries) 2018-2022.



Poulanassy Waterfall, Mullinavat

My Home Place

The Heritage Office, in partnership with KCLR and Ossory Youth, has developed a new 10 week radio series recording older Kilkenny people talking about their home place (e.g. growing up over a shop in Kilkenny City or life on a farm in rural Kilkenny). Young people from Ossory



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Youth will respond to each of the stories by creating original artwork, which will be presented to the older people. The artwork will be promoted along with the podcasts through social media. The series will run from mid January to March. It is funded under the Keep Well campaign, as part of the Government Plan for Living with COVID-19: Resilience and Recovery 2020-2021.

Cultural Programming for Yulefest

The Heritage Office, in partnership with Yulefest Kilkenny and KCLR, developed a programme of cultural and creative activities to encourage the public to engage with heritage and Yulefest, and support the community's wellbeing. This included photographic competitions of local shopfronts and heritage attractions, and connecting with school children, the diaspora, and the community. The programme ran throughout December on KCLR LIVE and was funded by Creative Ireland. This project addresses Pillar 1 & 2 of the Kilkenny Culture and Creativity Strategy 2018-2022.

LEO/ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Spring 2021 Training Programme

The Local Enterprise Office will launch its Spring 2021 Training Schedule (online) for entrepreneurs and employees in County Kilkenny, ranging from Start Your Own Business Programmes, Customs Training, and Working from Home to Management Development Programmes. Twenty six programmes have been scheduled and are now available for booking at <https://www.localenterprise.ie/Kilkenny/>

Brexit Supports For Businesses

The Local Enterprise Office continues to support businesses trading to and from the UK with the introduction of Brexit through a range of Brexit Advisory Clinics and Preparing your Business for Customs. The full range of supports are available on <https://www.localenterprise.ie/Discover-Business-Supports/Brexit/>



SHOP KILKENNY



The 'Shop Kilkenny - Keep it Local - Shop Safely' campaign, funded under Town & Village Renewal funding received great exposure in the run up to Christmas and over the New Year period, designed to raise awareness of the many small businesses across our county towns and villages, and remind shoppers to shop local and in particular shop local online. "By shopping locally, we support our towns and villages and keep local shopkeepers and service providers in business," says Fiona Deegan, Head of Enterprise.

The messaging around local shops, businesses and service providers creating local employment and supporting local clubs, charities and events was reiterated and the fact that they can't support our local communities without our patronage with the key request 'please support the businesses on your doorstep now when they need you most'.

The campaign included a number of elements to support local retailers and also included the promotion of the Kilkenny Gift Vouchers in



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conjunction with Kilkenny Chamber which provided much needed support for Kilkenny businesses.

This initiative also tied in with the national LEO “Look for Local” which also encouraged consumers and businesses to shop local, following a challenging year for small businesses across the country.

2020 LEO Statistics

In 2020, there were **1,058** employed in **178** Local Enterprise Office financially supported businesses. There was a nett loss of approximately 20 jobs. 24% of the businesses created 158 jobs in 2020, while 34% of the businesses lost 178 jobs of which 116 may be recovered as COVID restrictions ease in the time. There was no change in employment in 42% of the business. In general, traditional manufacturing and internationally traded service businesses remained relatively static in terms of growth in 2020. The businesses in which losses were recorded include those reliant in some way on tourism and hospitality:

A total of **€500,375** in direct financial assistance was approved for **22** manufacturing and internationally traded businesses located in throughout the County;

€334,040 in Business Expansion Grant assistance was awarded to **12** businesses with a forecasted job creation of **139** jobs over a 3 year period. Business Expansion grants assist businesses to make investment in growing their businesses and employment numbers;

€89,560 in Priming grant assistance was approved to start-up businesses with a forecasted job creation of 15 jobs. Priming grants assist businesses with start-up investment costs.

€46,775 was awarded in Feasibility Study grants to **6** businesses looking at product development and market research;

€30,000 awarded in Grad Start funding, enabling businesses to avail of Enterprise Ireland graduate assistance;

The average cost per job in 2020 was **€2,750**;

6 Technical Assistance for Micro Exporter grants awarded totalling **€11,959**. This scheme supports businesses to consider exploring their export market opportunities;

7 businesses have participated on Lean for Micro in order to assist them to review their processes to become more competitive and innovative;

267 Covid-19 Business Continuity Vouchers were paid totalling **€608,320** towards mentoring and consultancy to assist businesses address COVID related issues;

€274,889 was paid to **56** businesses under the Local Enterprise Office Client Stimulus Fund. This scheme aimed to support the cashflow of these businesses in the face of COVID and Brexit;

8 businesses were approved Micro Enterprise Assistance scheme funding to the value of **€7,861**.

2 Business participated on the Lighthouse South East regional programme for established businesses to assist them to innovate within their businesses;

6 new businesses participated on the BrightStart South East regional programme to help entrepreneurs define their business idea and develop an action plan to deliver their business goals. The 2020 programmes were specifically aimed at Female-led Start-Ups and Green/Technology based Start-Ups;

A total of **€514,217** in loan finance was approved to **22** businesses under the Microfinance Ireland Scheme in order to introduce cashflow into their business;

302 businesses were approved funding totalling **€694,643** under the Trading Online Voucher Scheme to assist in developing and improving their online trading capabilities;

747 students from **13** secondary schools participated in the Student Enterprise Programme – a national programme aimed at encouraging an entrepreneurship culture in secondary schools;



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A total of **1,671** entrepreneurs and employees participated in **118** Training and Management Development programmes – the majority of which took place virtually during the year, including:

- **10** Business Owners participated on Advanced Management Development to assist them in preparing their business for Brexit and COVID challenges;
- **12** Business owners participated in Management Development training to assist businesses define the future strategy of the business;
- **146** participants completed **11** Start Your Own Business Courses introducing participants to all the elements they need to consider when setting up a new business;
- **88** businesses participated in Brexit related courses designed to assist business to prepare for Brexit such as customs procedures;
- **2** businesses have participated in the Food Academy Programme – a specifically designed programme developed by the Local Enterprise Offices in conjunction with Bord Bia and Supervalu for artisan food and drink producers in order to develop their products;

A total of **1,133** businesses availed of one-to one mentoring support across an array of business disciplines including financial, marketing, HR and strategic management;

1 Client (LoanITT Ltd) transferred to Enterprise Ireland in 2020 and we look forward to tracking the future of this Fintech business and it continues to grow in the future.

HOUSING

Housing Capital Delivery 2020

Rebuilding Ireland Targets

Kilkenny Revised Targets 2018-2021

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

The capital schemes delivered in 2020 are outlined in the table below:

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

Housing Allocations 2020

Offers by Kilkenny County Council.....	201
Allocated	134
Refused	48
Pending.....	19
<i>(offers made late 2020 -houses not ready yet)</i>	

Nominations to Approved Housing Bodies for 2020

Total Nominations Made	208
Allocations Completed.....	110
Refusals.....	45
Nominations made but not completed at 31/12/2020.....	53
<i>(the majority of this figure is Margaretsfield/Nuncio Road)</i>	



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Under Construction at 31st December 2020 [208 units]

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

Tender Stage [119 units]

- 88 units (houses/apartments) and community facility at Crokers Hill, Kennyswell Road, Kilkenny
- 6 units at Golf Links Road (Mulhalls Shop) Kilkenny
- 25 Units at Ladywell, Thomastown.

Detailed Design / Pre -Tender Stage [36 units]

- 2 Units at Inchacarron, Mullinavat
- 2 Units at Old Fire Station, Graignamanagh
- Old Fire Station, Thomastown, refurb to 1 bed unit
- 1 Accessible bungalow, Circular Road, Kilkenny
- 1 Accessible bungalow, Haggardsgreen, Callan (Buy & Renew)
- Reconfiguration of 1 apt to 2 units- Ayrfield, Granges Road

Vacant Homes:

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

December Monthly Statistics

Number awaiting social housing support at 31 st December (Gross Need)	1,899
Number of assessment interviews carried out in December:	32
LA/RAS/Leasing allocations up to end of December (offers made):	20
Number of HAP tenancies to 31 st December:	854
Number of LA tenancies surrendered in December:	4
Anti-social behaviour cases in December:	40
New Homeless Presentations in December:	23
Maintenance Calls for 31 st December:	446
Maintenance Calls year to date	5341
No. Housing Loans Approved to date (Annuity/Construction)	17
Amount of Loans Approved to November 2020	€2,426,230

Housing Waiting List

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

Year	Number on Housing List
December 2020	1,899
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

Loan Type: Annuity/RI Home Loan

Received	57
Approved	17



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Amount Approved €2,400,930
 Paid..... 20
Amount Paid: €2,901,730

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. The estimated position at 30th November 2020 is as follows:

Grants Paid 2020		
Scheme	No.	Amount Paid
HGD - Housing Adaptation Grant	81	€862,879
MAG - Mobility Aid Grant	34	€127,169
HOP - Housing Aid for Older Persons	87	€452,864
Total	202	€1,442,912

Grants Approved & Committed 2020		
Scheme	No.	Amount Paid
HGD - Housing Adaptation Grant	118	€1,260,907
MAG - Mobility Aid Grant	46	€178,493
HOP - Housing Aid for Older Persons	157	€905,918
Total	321	€2,345,318

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.

Homeless Update

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

	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
January	37	29	37	27	23
February	30	26	32	14	27
March	18	26	21	16	24
April	26	25	18	20	19
May	34	28	29	20	14
June	31	24	20	16	12
Total	176	158	157	113	119
July	31	34	15	31	19
August	32	27	26	28	22
September	27	24	19	26	26
October	30	27	27	25	26
November	32	29	23	16	23
December	21	19	6	17	17
Total	349	318	273	353	252

Currently, there are 4 households in Hotel emergency accommodation and 4 households in transitional emergency accommodation.

Maintenance Calls 2020 Breakdown

Maintenance Calls	5,341 Calls
Itemised repairs logged	6,612 repairs
Repair items completed in 2020	4,305
Completed maintenance requests	65%
Ongoing/programmed/reassessed once restrictions fully lifted	26%
Tenant Responsibility	6%
Invalid	3%



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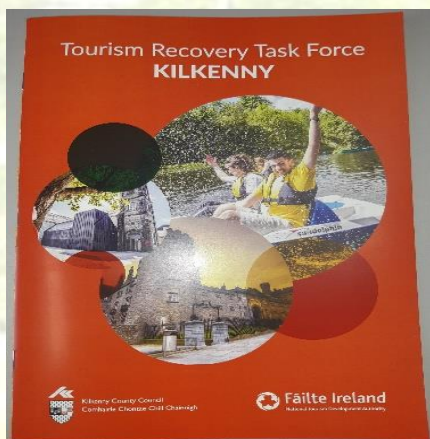
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TOURISM

Kilkennys Tourism Recovery Taskforce Publishes it's End of Year Progress Report

After an extremely difficult year for the Tourism and Hospitality Sector our Recovery Taskforce published a progress report on their work in 2020. Kilkennys' Tourism Recovery Taskforce was established in June 2020 as an emergency response to the drastic decline in Tourism business due to the COVID 19 Pandemic and the restrictions as a result of the virus. Fáilte Ireland and Kilkenny County Council engaged a group of stakeholders from local agencies, local businesses and tourist attractions to gain the insight and experience of all in responding to the virus. A copy of the taskforce report is available on request. Please contact martina.comerford@kilkennycoco.ie if required.



St Mary's Lane Murals ~ Wolfwalker

St Mary's Lane received a Wolfwalker makeover in December when a second Wolfwalker mural was completed to complement the existing artwork on the lane. Funding was received from Creative Ireland to support a local artist to complete the piece. The Wolfwalker theme was continued in an effort to both brighten up our medieval laneway whilst also supporting local artists in the current climate. The Wolfwalker film has been nominated for an Oscar for 2021 so it is fitting that Kilkenny, "the home of Wolfwalker"

acknowledges the wonderful creation of our local animators Cartoon Saloon.



Visit Kilkenny.ie & Kilkenny Tourism

Kilkenny Tourism worked with Kilkenny's best food producers and top restaurants to launch a second 'festive' cookbook. Entitled 'Kilkenny Christmas Traditions', the on-line book was a huge success with 2,215 Page visits. Kilkenny Tourism promoted Cookbook recipes and online Shopping on all it's social media platforms throughout December.

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

Kilkennys 'County-Wide' On-line Christmas Market

Kilkenny Tourism worked with members throughout the lockdown to join forces and open Kilkenny's first ever On-line Christmas Market.

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

<https://visitkilkenny.ie/kilkenny-online-christmas-market/> offered a variety of gifts from Kilkenny's best loved and renowned craft makers from across the county. The market turned out to be a huge support to our local shop Kilkenny campaign with the initiative reaching 25,512 Facebook users, Seeing 45,845 impressions.



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Overall visits to www.visitkilkenny.ie website are up 38% since the launch of the Christmas Market.

Election of New Chair Kilkenny Tourism CLG

Kilkenny Tourism is delighted to announce the election of Ciarán Conroy as their new Chairman. Ciaran brings with him a wealth of experience to the role, as a senior manager with over 25 year's commercial business experience and a proven track record in strategy, marketing and business development. Ciaran replaces Brian Tyrrell who was thanked by the Board for having given so generously of his time and for his efforts.

Thank You to Kilkenny's Welcome Team

Cathaoirleach Andrew McGuinness expressed the thanks of Kilkenny County Council to our Welcome Team for all their volunteering efforts in 2020. The Kilkenny Welcome Team was established following the re-opening of the City in late summer 2020 and was a huge positive in Kilkenny's efforts to welcome visitors back to our City. The initiative of the Recovery Taskforce was a great success and the calibre of our volunteers was the main reason for this.

Cllr McGuinness thanked the volunteers over a socially distanced coffee at Butler Gallery and asked that they continue to work with us into 2021 when we can again re-open our city and welcome visitors back again.



FIRE SERVICES

Capital Projects

The Minister for Housing, Local Government and Heritage, Darragh O'Brien T.D., announced a new €61 million Fire Service Capital Programme 2021-2025.

The programme will see Kilkenny County Council's Fire Service benefit by securing funding of over €8 million for the construction of two new fire stations together with a funding allocation for a new fire engine to complement the continued improvement of the existing fire stations and fleet of emergency vehicles.

€1.7 million has been provided for new Fire Station in Urlingford and a Grant Allocation of €6 million to relocate the Headquarters in Kilkenny City to a site on the outskirts of the City.

A new fire station will be provided in Urlingford and the existing Fire Services Headquarters in Kilkenny City will be replaced to meet the demands of a modern fire and rescue service.

Fire Safety Certificates

132 applications for fire safety certificates were received in 2020. This was a 25% increase in 2019 applications.

Fire Services Acts 1981 & 2003

- In 2020 Fire Prevention staff have made 54 inspections of premises both to provide advice and to enforce legislation.
- 87 Licence Applications were processed under Section 24 of the Fire Services Acts 1981 & 2003.

Community Fire Safety

Home fire safety visits have been postponed due to Level 5 Lockdown.

Fire Brigade Operations

- Fire Brigades responded to 824 turnouts up to the 18th November 2020. The same period last year we responded to 815 turnouts.



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Callan and Kilkenny City Fire Brigades at a recent fire in a thatched roof. The quick action and the great work of both Brigades prevented the fire from spreading and thus were able to save the house.

ARTS

Winter Poetry Online with Dr Derek Coyle

Our 6-week online poetry course, with lecturer, poet and author Dr Derek Coyle ran from 12th November to 17th December. The participants worked to build up and enhance their poetry portfolio with the ambition of submitting work to competitions, magazines and online journals. Below are a few of the very favourable comments received from the attendees.

Rhyme Rag Ensemble

Our Rhyme Rag Ensemble members attended a workshop in November with American poet, workshop facilitator and spoken word artist, Beau Williams. He engaged the young poets with free-writing, what makes good imagery in a poem; incorporating the 5 senses, using metaphor and simile.

Rhyme Rag Poetry Workshops with TY students

Stephen Murray facilitated a full day poetry workshop with transition year students in the CBS Secondary School here in the City during October and online workshops with Colaiste Mhuire and Pobail Osrai in early December. Stephen has facilitated workshops for the Arts Office for the last six years and is very popular with both students and their teachers.

Knitted Together Project

Our blankets plus the donations of baby jumpers and hats left for the Elkana Charity, South Africa.



Because of all the hard work of our volunteers we had blankets left over and we distributed them to the Good Shepherd Centre, St. Canices Homes for the Elderly, St. Marys Homes for the Elderly, Amber Women's Refuge and the O'Neill Centre. The blankets were beautiful and would raise the spirits of all the recipients.



A very different Bookville took place in October. The Bookville 2020 *Bookville in a Book* was created based on the primary school curriculum and over 10,000 copies were distributed to the 75 primary schools in Kilkenny City and County plus the Arts Office Siamsa families. The feedback was excellent. See below some wonderful feedback from the teachers in the schools

- Brilliant book, really captured the children's imaginations. Work was all fun and catered to children's interests. Work could all be done independently which was important.
- The booklet had a great variety of activities to fully engage children. They looked forward to opening it every day.
- Children across a wide age group really enjoyed every detail of this
- As we work with children with moderate, severe and profound GLD and with ASD it'd be great to have something aimed at them in the book.

Arts Office Partnership with VAI (Visual Artists Ireland)

The Arts Office partnered with VAI to roll out Cafés and workshops online for visual artists in



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the Kilkenny area. The first Café took place on 6th October with six guest speakers including Arts Officer, Mary Butler. The guest's speakers presented their organisations and the help and support they offer to visual artists. Additionally, an online workshop, with 23 attendees, took place in November. Due to Covid-19 restrictions all other activities were deferred to 2021.

Kilkenny County Council Arts Office in collaboration with the thirty other local authorities and the Arts Council of Ireland announced PLATFORM 31 in November 2020. This is a nationwide artist development scheme offering an opportunity for artists to develop their practice and test new ideas of collaboration, research, audience development, place-making and sharing their work. The scheme is designed to support and offer career development for 31 mid-career artists (one artist in each of the 31 local authorities around Ireland) Successful artists will receive a bursary to invest in their practice, combined with participation in an advisory and developmental framework and a peer network.

Creative Ireland

Some of our Creative Ireland partner projects were affected by the lockdowns e.g. the Wolfwalkers exhibition in Butler Gallery only opened for a few days in October and was rescheduled for January 2021 but this has again been put on hold due to the Covid restrictions. However, it will take place in due course. The KCAT Pop Up Studio Exchange had to defer their workshops because of Covid but it is their intention to roll out this project as soon as it is possible. On the other hand, our Knitted Together project thrived during lockdown and the Na Cailleacha project completed the first phase of their project before the 2nd lockdown happened.

They intend to hold the exhibitions, which were part of this project, in Spring 2021. The Covid Care concerts, facilitated by Mobile Music Machine in locations outside our nursing homes, were well received by the residents and offered a different type of entertainment.

Covid Care Concert in Kilkenny

The Arts Office WE'VE GOT THIS mural on Bateman Quay and Audrey Dowling's inspiring posters around the City and County plus St. Luke's Hospital Campus were a welcome relief from the stark yellow Covid posters. We also supported Clogh Writers and Eigse Sliabh Rua to help them improve their IT capabilities which will help them to continue their projects, online, in the future. Our Freefone Poetry Phone 1800272994 was well received around the country and not just the county of Kilkenny.

Arts Office Grants 2021

We advertised our 2021 Arts Act Grants, Tyrone Guthrie Bursary and The Moth Bursary during December with a closing date 18th January 2021.

Siamsa

Our very popular Siamsa programme moved online in October and Create School rolled out their Brickflicks - *Stop Motion with Lego Animation*. The kids learned about different parts of making a film work and tips/skills to use when making their own films. All participants received a digital copy of their movie through YouTube.

Hug A Book Christmas Spectacular

Kilkenny Arts Office supported Yulefest 2020 and St. Johns Junior School with Hug A Book Christmas Spectacular. The idea behind the 'Hug a Book' project is firstly to engage parents and then to encourage and support them to improve the oral language skills of their children.

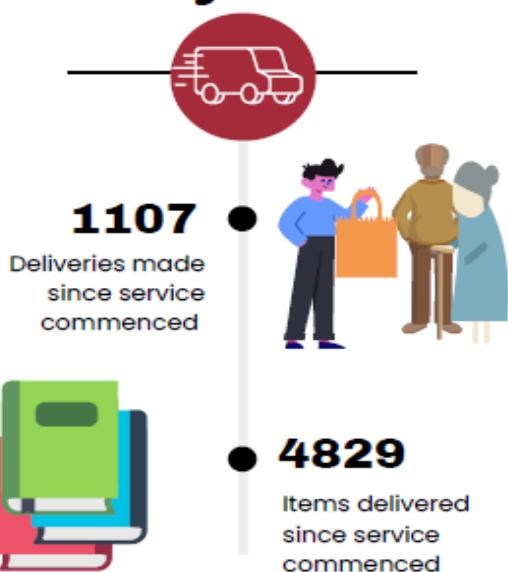
For Christmas *'The Jolly Christmas Postman'* in hardback was selected, as it is an award-winning classic to suit all ages and all cultures. Most of the families at St. Johns are just beginning to build a collection of books and a hardback Christmas book would remain in the home for many years. A special craft pack was included with the book so that families could make their own Christmas cards.



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LIBRARY

Door to Door Library Service



KEEP WELL
AND STAY CONNECTED

**DIAL
-A-
STORY**

To listen to a Story from local Kilkenny Writers
FREE PHONE 1800 300309
Brought to you by Kilkenny County Council Libraries.

StarSource, pobal, Kilkenny, Kilkenny County Council, Kilkenny County Council Libraries

Keeping Well: Dial A Story

As part of the national **#KeepWell** Community Resilience Campaign, Loughboy & Thomastown Library Writing groups have written a selection of short stories for callers to enjoy. To listen, anyone can ring freephone **1800 300 309**



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

Online Services use:



3,994

eBooks borrowed
▲ 49% on 2019

2,655

eMagazines borrowed
▲ 28% on 2019



16,450

eNewspapers borrowed
▲ 90% on 2019

4,021

Songs accessed
▲ 97% on 2019



4,872

eAudiobooks borrowed
▲ 45% on 2019

2,884

Online Course sessions
▲ 61% on 2019



298

Language sessions
▼ 36% on 2019



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Winter Programme: Light Up Your Nights



Light Up Your Nights: Adult events

Our Winter Programme for adults was packed with workshops and events online - from Chair Exercises to Mindfulness for Winter Days, and flower arranging to paper crafts, all of our videos proved very popular!



Light Up Your Nights: Children's events

Children were treated to a host of workshops, from art, craft and storytimes with staff to singalongs with Denis and his parrot Polly, music workshops with Mini Musos, and paper crafts with Zoe.



Encouraging minds: Literacy Programme

Our Encouraging Minds Literacy Project targeted groups needing extra support around literacy. We ran a series of online workshops for Seniors and the ASD community on managing stress, music therapy, yoga workshops and interactive craft sessions.



Our mobile library has commenced service to over 20 primary schools across the county, delivering over 3,000 books recently. Significant investment has been made in reading resources and literacy stock suitable for all ages.



As part of our 2020 Library Decade of Centenaries Celebrations, we commissioned photographs of decade themed sites, which were printed as a collection of postcards. These were distributed via our Door to Door Service and are available for viewing via <https://digital-archive.kilkenny.ie/> Copies available also via the Library Service.



Our Door to Door service continued across the County. Local library staff contact members to chat about the type of books they would like to receive. The service helps the most vulnerable in our communities by keeping their minds active and engaged.

**October-December
Other Initiatives
and Programmes:**

**Bookville
Kilkenny**

**Kilkenny
Day**

Science Week



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**Website
October-
December**

Users

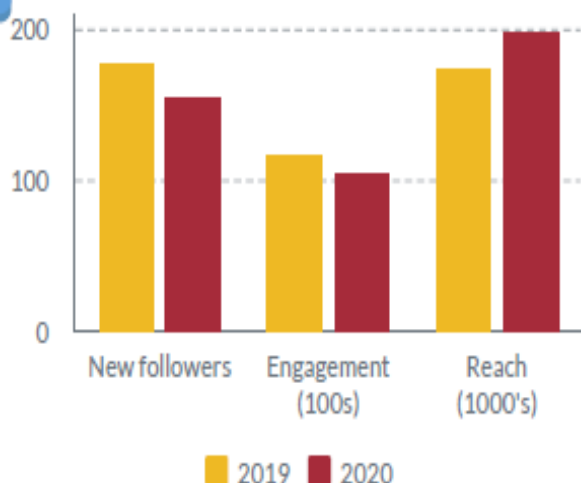
4,372

Pageviews

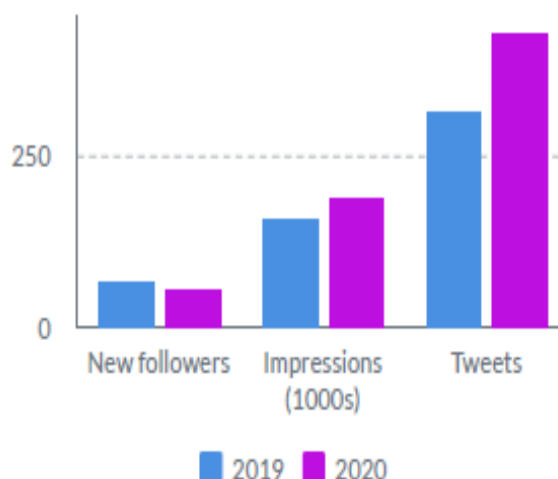
21,018



Facebook Oct-Dec 19 v 20



Twitter Oct - Dec 19 v 20





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FINANCE

The expenditure by service division to the end of December is set out in table 1. The total expenditure for the twelve months to the end of December was €111.86m compared with the annual budget of €83.6m.

The total expenditure for the year includes a number of Covid related expenditure items that were not included in the budget. The Development management expenditure figure includes a sum of €11.7m relating to the restart grants and €1.2m relating to additional support payments processed through the Local Enterprise office. All of these payments were fully grant funded. The miscellaneous services expenditure includes an adjustment of €8.6m relating to the Covid rates waiver which has been fully compensated by the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage.

The total expenditure for the year excluding these Covid related adjustments amounts to €90.36m which is €6.8m higher than the adopted budget. The majority of this increase is accounted for Housing and Roads where grant allocations were higher than the adopted budget.

The accounts for 2020 are only in draft at this stage. The final numbers for 2020 will be available for the March Council meeting.

Table 1	Actual YTD December 2020	Budget Full Year 2020
	€'000's	€'000's
Housing & Building	20,828	17,623
Road Transport & Safety	27,048	22,688
Water Services	7,156	6,576
Development Management	22,631	10,525
Environmental Services	11,203	11,463
Recreation & Amenity	6,955	6,425
Agriculture, Education, Health, Welfare	596	639
Miscellaneous Services	15,443	7,623
OVERALL TOTAL	111,860	83,562

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. In October Government announced that the waiver on commercial rates for businesses impacted was being extended by another three months for the nine months covering the period to the end of December 2020. The compensation arising for Kilkenny is €8.6m which has been fully paid.

An application for compensation for the loss of income on Goods & Services and additional costs incurred in 2020 due to Covid was submitted to the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage in December. Compensation for funding of €2.5m has been sought from the Department. In



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addition a separate submission has been made to the Department for compensation for loss of housing rents income amounting to €622k due to not being able to implement the rent review in April 2020. It is critical that there is a positive outcome from these applications for compensation in order to achieve a balanced outcome for 2020.

Additional Government support will be required for the sector in 2021 as the pandemic continues to have a serious impact on the sector.

Capital Expenditure

The total expenditure on capital projects in 2020 was €53m with housing accounting for €32m and roads accounting for €12.9m of the total. A new term loan of €5m was drawn down in 2020 and it is estimated that another loan of €5m will be required in 2021 to provide the required match funding.

Bank Overdraft

The bank overdraft facility was utilized six times during 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.

Rates Revaluation

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 the appeal outcomes and outstanding appeals:

- 197 Rate Customers appealed their valuation to the Valuation Tribunal. The total value of rate demand under appeal is €4.5m, 22.6%. 169 appeals have been completed to date of which 29 withdrawn by the property owners. 135 of the 169 appeals have resulted in a reduction in the valuation, 4 confirmed the decision of the revaluation and 1 resulted in an increase in the valuation.
- The total income lost to date is €779k and If this trend continues the estimated total loss in rates income will be in the region of €1m.

Re-Start/Restart Plus Grants

The Restart Grant Plus Grant Scheme closed as of 31st October, 2020. A total amount of €11.7m has been paid out to businesses in Kilkenny on behalf of the Department of Enterprise Trade and Employment.

Rates Waiver

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