

CHIEF EXECUTIVE REPORT

SEPTEMBER 2022 ISSUE

EXECUTIVE FUNCTIONS

A list of Orders made in the last month will be available in the Corporate Department for inspection by the Elected Members.

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

Draft Loughmacask Masterplan

Submissions and observation to the draft Plan are invited from the public and can be made up until 5.00 p.m. on Friday the 7th October, 2022.

Kilkenny LECP

Workshops will take place as follows:

Virtual – 19:00 to 21:00

- Castlecomer: 7th October
- Callan-Thomastown: 10th October
- Piltown: 12th October
- Kilkenny City – Springhill Court Hotel
5th October - 19:00-21:00

Let's Team Up to Clean Up

The first event will take place in Kilkenny City on 9th October, 2022

Age Friendly Recognition & Achievements Awards Ceremony in Dromoland Castle on 27th October 2022.

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CORPORATE

The Electoral Reform Bill has been passed by Dáil Éireann in July 2022, following its passage through the Seanad last week. The establishment of the Electoral Commission will proceed, with recruitment of its membership and Chief Executive. This groundbreaking legislation will bring about the development, modernisation and reform of Ireland's electoral system, structures and processes.

The key elements of the Bill include:

- establishment of a statutory, independent Electoral Commission for Ireland.
- the modernisation of our electoral registration process to deliver greater accessibility and greater integrity.
- the regulation of online political advertising to provide for transparency during electoral campaigns and ensure that our elections remain free from hidden influences on how we vote.
- provisions to protect the integrity of our electoral processes which will see the regulation of electoral process information and online electoral information in order to guard against manipulative or inauthentic behaviour during electoral campaigns.
- the strengthening of our regulatory regime in respect of political donations and accounts, including the provision of new investigatory and enforcement powers to the Standards in Public Office Commission.
- amendments to electoral law to provide that voting on the islands will take place on the same day as for the rest of the country.
- the extension of flexible voting facilities which are currently available to persons with physical illnesses or disabilities to persons with mental health difficulties.

ROADS

MAJOR PROJECTS

(Included in NDP- Funded by TII)

N24 Waterford to Cahir Scheme

The public consultation No. 2 on Alternatives & Options is complete and the Design Team is working through the submissions and starting the preparatory work on site investigations/studies that will feed into the selection of the preferred corridor.

MINOR PROJECTS

(Not included in NDP-Funded by TII)

N24 Tower Road (Safety Scheme)

The project is currently out to tender with a tender return date of 19th September, 2022. We should be in a position to appoint the Contractor in late Q4 2022 with works most likely to commence on the ground in early Q1 2023 with a 12/15 month construction period. An allocation of €3m was received for 2022. The overall outturn cost for the project is expected to be circa €10m.

N77 Ballyragget to Ballynaslee

An allocation of €500K was received for 2022 which will fund progression to preparation of contract documents and potentially provide for land acquisition. The Notice to Treat under CPO procedures will be issued during September 2022. The overall outturn cost for the project is expected to be circa €10m.

N24 Carrick Road

An allocation of €150k was received for 2022 which will fund progression to statutory approvals stage 177AE Planning approval and Compulsory Purchase Order approval which is likely to be submitted to An Bord Pleanála in late September or early October 2022. The overall outturn cost for the project is expected to be circa €10m.

OTHER

Kilkenny Ring Road Extension

The SAR Report (*Strategic Assessment Report*) has been submitted to the Department for consideration to proceed to design\planning.

Active Travel

The term 'Active Travel' relates to walking and cycling as part of a purposeful journey. Walking encompasses all users of footpaths including those with mobility issues such as wheelchair users and people with visual impairment. Communities are shaped around people and we want to make walking and cycling the most popular choice of transportation modes for everyday journeys and particularly those within urban areas. This will help people make healthy living choices and assist in delivering places that are happier, more inclusive and more prosperous.

Active travel like walking or cycling is good for the environment as it contributes to a reduction in carbon emissions that are causing climate change. Walking and cycling also helps improve the local environment by reducing air pollution and noise pollution. Reducing car journeys in favour of active travel will also improve road safety by making our streets safer for vulnerable road users.

Funding from the National Transport Authority (NTA) is allowing Kilkenny County Council to embark on an ambitious programme of upgrading and extending active travel infrastructure throughout the county. In Kilkenny City a number of consultants have been appointed to design upgrades to numerous routes including the provision of segregated cycle lanes and improved footpaths. The aim is to provide a high-quality network of interconnected cycle lanes and footpaths that are safe for users of all abilities to use. While the larger schemes will take time to plan and design, many smaller scale projects have already and continue to be implemented. Such works include a programme of footpath repairs, the protection of existing cycle lanes, provision of new road crossings and upgrade of laneways to facilitate safe walking and cycling.



Provision of Cycle Bollards on Bohernatounish Road



Provision of Road Crossing at Callan Road



Laneway From Dublin Road To Bishop Birch Place Before & After



Footpath Repairs At Glendine Before & After

ENVIRONMENT

Climate Action

The Programme for Government commits to an average 7% per annum reduction in overall greenhouse gas emissions from 2021 to 2030 (*a 51% reduction over the decade*), and to achieving net zero emissions by no later than 2050. These targets have been made legally binding by the Climate Action and Low Carbon Development (Amendment) Act 2021. In July, the Sectoral Emissions Ceilings were approved by Government, setting firm limits on each sector of the economy's emissions within the parameters of the Carbon Budgets.

Each local authority is required to make a five year plan (*a 'local authority climate action plan'*) which shall specify the mitigation measures and the adaptation measures to be adopted by the local authority within 12 months of the receipt of a request from the Minister (*Under Section 16 of the Act*). A dedicated Climate Action Team is currently in the process of being established with the appointment of our Climate Action Officer. The Climate Action Team will ensure coordination and collaboration between the various sections of the Council in its mitigation and adaptation measures.

The Climate Action Officer will be tasked with driving the climate agenda along with the preparation of the statutory Climate Action Plan setting out how Kilkenny County Council will reduce the carbon emissions associated with delivery of services by at least 7% per annum and 50% by 2030.

A Community Climate Action Programme was launched in November 2021, by the Department of Environment Climate and Communications (DECC) which will see €60m from the Climate Action Fund invested in community climate action projects and initiatives, and capacity building over a period of three years. A total of €24 million is being provided to local authorities to partner communities within their areas of operation to build low carbon communities in a considered and structured way. On this basis the DECC has approved a Community Climate Action Officer post. The recruitment process has commenced and it is expected that the post will be filled in the coming months. The Community Climate Action Officer will be involved with assisting and motivating communities, PPNs and

businesses to identify relevant projects/initiatives, which will contribute to meeting Ireland's climate targets and building awareness of the climate impact.

Local Authority Performance Framework

The updated Local Authority Performance Framework (LAPF) evaluates the performance of local authorities in progressing the National Enforcement Priorities (NEPs) designed to achieve national environmental outcomes.

There are 20 NEPs in total with 5 NEPs in each of the thematic areas of waste, air & noise, water and governance. The EPA's assessment of local authority performance is based on the information and data contained in the Recommended Minimum Criteria for Environmental Inspections (RMCEI) Plans, Data Returns and NEP Progress Reports which are submitted on an annual basis to the EPA, by each local authority. EPA and third-party intelligence may also be considered in the assessments.

2021 is the first assessment year for local authorities under the updated framework. The assessments are based primarily on the methodology detailed in the *Local Authority Performance Framework – Assessment Methodology and Guidance for Reporting by Local Authorities*.

Information related to the LAPF process can be found on the NIECE Website. A infographic of the Kilkenny County Council performance is given below. Out of the 20 NEPs Kilkenny scored excellent in 3, strong in 18, moderate in 8 and limited in 1 in the area of air monitoring. The local authority will review the results and seek improvements particularly in the area air monitoring.

Recommended Minimum Criteria for Environmental Inspections (RMCEI)

The National Environmental Management Information's System or NEMIS was recently launched to assist local authorities in recording their RCMEI data. This is Phase 1 of the project with an on line interface for the inputting of data. Environment staff are currently updating their inspections on the new system.

Phase 2 of the project will allow for a complaint's management interface and the use of mobile workforce. Kilkenny County Council has been part of the development board of this national project.

Environment Complaints

All Environment complaints received are logged on the CRM (*Customer Relations Management*) System. The number of complaints being received & logged by Environment staff for investigation for the first seven months of 2022 is 658 compared with 870 for the same period last year (*i.e. down circa 24%*). The nature of these complaints ranges from littering, illegal dumping, water quality and abandoned cars. However, the vast majority continue to be related to littering and illegal dumping.

WASTE, RECYCLING & COLLECTION

Bring Banks Usage

The Council provides and manages 46 Bring Centres across the City and County and a total of 1804 tonnes of recyclables were collected from our Bring Centres so far this year. This represents an 22% decrease on the same period last year and is mainly down due to the lifting of all Covid restrictions. Loughboy Shopping Centre (*with 92 tonnes collected YTD*), Newpark Shopping Centre (*with 89 tonnes collected YTD*) and Graiguenamanagh (*68 tonnes collected YTD*) are the busiest outside of the City. Environment staff are continuing to work very closely with our service providers to ensure the collection service is in keeping with demand, especially around long weekends and holiday periods.

All bottle and textile recycling receptacles have been removed at Lidl Loughboy due to development works involving the demolition of the existing store and replacing with a much larger new store at the same location. The store closed on the 8th of August 2022 and will re-open on the 23rd of February 2023. This has resulted in increased usage of bring bank facilities in nearby locations. To manage this increase, it has been arranged with the contractor to facilitate the frequency of collections at these points so as to ensure there is capacity and adequate service at these bring banks.



Anti-Dumping Initiative application for 2022

Kilkenny County Council has been awarded funding for the following projects under the Anti-Dumping Initiative for 2022.

Update on the progress of these projects is as follows:

PROJECT TITLE	UPDATE
County Wide Mattress Amnesty	724 Mattress's collected
Variable messaging boards for waste	Awaiting Delivery
Media campaign using ADI info	In Progress
Clean up of Bishops Mountain	In progress
Clean up of various Roadside verges around County	In Progress
Clean up @ Thomastown Bridge	In progress
Clean up @ Slieverue	Complete

Multi-Agency Inspection on an Unauthorised ELV site.

As part of our National Waste Priorities for 2022 Kilkenny County Council led an inter-agency operation involving An Garda Síochána, the Department of Social Protection and Revenue Inspectors on an unauthorised site in County Kilkenny. A significant number of End of Life Vehicles were found on site along with waste tyres and batteries. A Section 14 Notice was issued to the landowner directing the clearance of the site along with the requirement to produce evidence of the safe disposal of these materials.



Litter Awareness



The Team Up to Clean Up, Together for Kilkenny initiative was launched in June of this year. The initiative is kindly supported by PRL, Dawn Meats Group, John O Shea Trust and Glanbia PLC together with the waste management sponsor Panda Ireland.

This initiative will provide communities in Kilkenny an opportunity to complete an environmental action for the benefit of their local area. The first event will take place in Kilkenny City on the 9th October, 2022. The second event will be for both the County and City areas and will be held in February 2023, coinciding with Ireland's newest Public Holiday, St. Brigid's Day and will be open to communities from all over the County.

The Team Up to Clean Up, Together for Kilkenny will be a day of collective environmental action, a powerful collaboration between the Council, community, sporting groups, businesses and schools resulting in an estimate collection of 50 tonnes of litter.

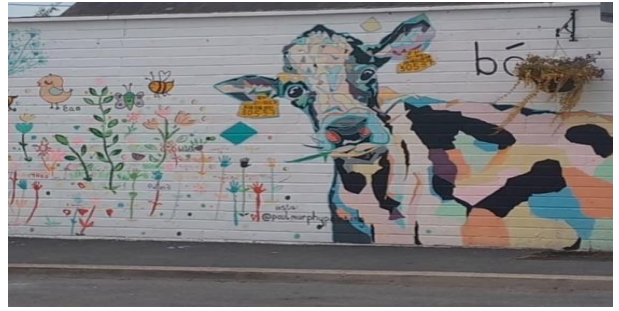
Stephens Barracks has become a supporter of Lets Team Up to Clean Up Together for Kilkenny. They have kindly offered their logistical expertise to assist the campaign with organising the community litter picking packs for the event in Kilkenny City on the 9th October. Each participating group will receive a pack worth over €100 including bags, litter pickers, gloves and hi vis vests. The bags for collecting litter will be made from 100~% Irish plastic waste. Each pack will also include 100 flowering bulbs, suitable for planting on the event day.



Calling on all resident groups in Kilkenny City to register and participate in this environment action day on the 9th of October, via <https://cleanup.kilkenny.ie/>

Tidy Towns

Recently Ballyragget Tidy Towns/Ballyragget Development Association hosted Kilkenny's Tidy Towns Forum. It was a very enjoyable evening and the walking tour gave ideas and support to other tidy towns groups who attended.



National Spring Clean

National Spring Clean is Ireland's most popular, well recognized and successful anti-litter initiative. In 2022, 5,640 groups registered to carry out clean-ups throughout the country. Volunteers who participated in the Spring Clean 2022 collected an estimated 2,600 tonnes of litter.

Burial Grounds

Community Monuments Fund 2022

Kilkenny County Council has secured €196,200 from the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage to help conserve and protect three medieval churches and graveyards at Grangefertagh, Clomantagh and Dunkitt. This funding is being provided under the Community Monuments fund 2022.

The applications for funding for these projects was made by the Environment Section and Heritage Office in February 2022 and grants were awarded for all three projects by the Department in April 2022. The works for Clomantagh and Dunkitt were tendered in June 2022 through e-tenders. The Conservation works proposed will help protect these historical sites from the impacts of climate change and keep them safe for current and future generations to access and appreciate.

Clomantagh Church and Graveyard

Grant aid of €85,000 for urgent works to stabilise and conserve the 13th Century church ruin including its distinctive double bell-tower, walls, doors and windows of the church.



*The Bell Tower
at Clomantagh Church
will be repaired*

Dunkitt Church and Graveyard

Grant aid of €85,000 for urgent works to stabilise and conserve the late 12th/early 13th C church and the adjacent graveyard boundary wall.

Works have commenced on the Clomantagh site in August 2022 and works are scheduled for Dunkitt in September 2022.



Dunkitt Church walls will be stabilised

Grangefertagh Church and Graveyard

Grant aid of €26,200 to prepare a Conservation Management Plan for the medieval church and graveyard which will provide a vision, policies and actions to help protect and conserve the site for future generations. The project is scheduled to be tendered in September 2022.



*The MacGiolla
Phadraig Tomb,
Grangefertagh will be
addressed in the
Conservation Plan*

Water Safety

The lifeguard season commenced on the June bank holiday weekend and cover was provided at The Weir, The Meadows, Thomastown and Graiguenamanagh on weekends from 2.00pm to 4.30pm and 5pm to 7.30pm throughout June. Daily cover was provided thereafter throughout July and August at The Weir, The Meadows, Thomastown, Inistioge and Graiguenamanagh.

The Council initially engaged 14 lifeguards to cover the 5 lifeguarded areas, however due to annual leave and prior commitments it was necessary to engage a further 4 lifeguards to ensure that lifeguard cover was provided. The months of July and August proved very busy on the rivers with the particularly warm weather. The lifeguards recorded almost 5,000 bathers at the lifeguarded areas. The lifeguards provided safety advice to approx. 300 bathers, prevented 56 accidents and performed 3 rescues in July alone.

Kilkenny Water Safety Committee ran their Summer Swim Week from the 18th to 22nd July at Graiguenamanagh and Thomastown Weir Pool Lifeguarded areas. Swim week was facilitated by our lifeguards. The Water Safety Development Officer and promoted it through Kilkenny County Councils social media channels. Swim Week was very well received in both communities with very positive feedback and was attended by over 200 children, all improving their swimming ability.

Kilkenny Water Safety Committee held their Annual Nore Swim event on the 6th August, the river was accessed at the Skate Park under St. Francis Bridge, with the exit at the slipway on Canal Square.

There have been several Lifebuoys reported missing along the River Nore in Kilkenny City over the past three months. The lifebuoys are checked weekly by staff of Kilkenny County Council. Frequently members of the public phone in to report lifebuoys missing from their holders. Kilkenny Aqua Canoe Club members have kindly retrieved a large number of reusable lifebuoys from the river this summer and returned them to for checking and reuse.

Irish Water Safety organised a widely publicised campaign, "Heed our Heroes", warning the public of the different hazards involved with fresh and sea water to the importance of swimming in safe places.

Lucy Cleere one of our river lifeguards in Kilkenny for the past few years was one of the six lifeguards selected for the campaign.

Animal Welfare

The Animal Welfare Standards Committee had its ninth meeting on the 1st of September, 2022.

JJ Tobin Veterinary Officer continues to carry out monthly inspections at the Dog Shelter to ensure the site is operating efficiently and effectively. Up to end of July 2022, there were a total of 204 dogs dealt with by the Carlow/Kilkenny dog shelter, with 66 of these dogs rehomed by the shelter along with 82 rehomed by charities. There were 12 dogs remaining at the shelter at the end of July.

There is a 98% increase on the number of dogs being dealt with by the shelter in comparison to this time last year.

End of July 2022 = 204 dogs dealt with
End of July 2021 = 103 dogs dealt with
Increase of 98%

PARKS/SPECIAL PROJECTS

Outdoor Recreational Infrastructure Scheme 2022 - Funding Applications

On the 3rd August Minister Heather Humphreys, Department of Rural and Community Development, announced that the following Measure 1 and Project Development applications were successful under the 2022 Outdoor Recreational Infrastructure Scheme.

Measure 1 Application Funded

Project Name	Description	Grant Awarded	Est. Total Cost
Dock Road to Barrow Valley Outdoor Activity Hub - Pedestrian/Cyclist Connectivity Link Upgrade - Graiguenamanagh	The rehabilitation of the Dock Road, a key pedestrian-cyclist link between the Barrow Valley Outdoor Activity Hub and the town of Graiguenamanagh. This link also forms part of the first section of the Brandon Hill Looped Walk and the Silaire Wood Trail.	€29,700	€33,000
Windgap Village Loop - Repair & Enhancement of Walking Trail	Repair of existing trail along Windgap village loop concentrating on access to Windgap grotto. Installation of new seating at rest areas and interpretive signage explaining this unique site	€29,700	€33,000
The Wood Road to the River Barrow Amenity Area - Pedestrian Connectivity Link- Graiguenamanagh	Re-establish and construct a pedestrian connectivity link between the Wood Road and the River Barrow Amenity Area in Graiguenamanagh	€29,700	€33,000
Pollrone Quay Community Walk - Mooncoin	Development of signed community walk over 5km of quiet local roads around Mooncoin village with a connection to Pollrone Quay and the River Suir.	-€16,182	€17,979
Woodstock Estate Marketing and Communications Plan	The further development and continuation of the promotion and marketing campaign for Woodstock Estate. The Estate encompasses 50 acres of Gardens and Arboretum along with riverside and woodland Victorian walkways within the wider 1000 acres of forestry.	€29,700	€33,000
Outdoor Kilkenny Digital/Social Media, Marketing and PR Campaign 2023	Outdoor Kilkenny Digital/Social Media, Marketing and PR Campaign 2023	€18,000	€20,000
Castlemorris Woodland Trail Repair & Enhancement Scheme	Upgrade & enhancement of existing network of woodland trails in Castlemorris wood, part of the old Castlemorris Estate.	€25,790	€28,655

Project Development Application Funded 2022

Project Name	Description	Grant Sought	Est. Total Cost
Kilkenny to Ballyragget & Castlecomer Greenway Link - Phase 1 - Kilkenny City to The Kilkenny Countryside Park - Feasibility Study, Route Selection Report & Planning.	To engage consultants to assess the feasibility of creating an off-road cycling/pedestrian link, along the line of old Kilkenny - Abbeyliex railway Line, connecting Kilkenny City Centre (<i>John's Green</i>) with the new Kilkenny Countryside Park located c.5km north of the City.	€50,000	€55,000

In addition to the above, the following KLP Measure 1 applications were also successful:

Project Name	Description	Grant Awarded	Est. Total Cost
Garyduff Loop Walk, Owinging	Garyduff Loop Walk, The development of walk in mixed woodland	€14,400	€16,000
Glen Combe Wood Loop Walks	Upgrade Glen Combe Wood Loop walks development	€29,700	€33,000
Kells Kings River Trail- Phase 2	Upgrade walking trail along the King's River	€29,700	€33,000

The Measure 2 & 3 ORIS funding applications are currently being assessed and announcement is expected over the next few months.

Outdoor Recreational Infrastructure Scheme 2022 - Works

Works are progressing on all 11 ORIS funded projects , which will see a total investment of circa €1.2 million in outdoor recreational amenity infrastructure and promotion.

Some of the works completed over the last few months include:

Kilkenny Countryside Park

The detailed design for the new Park at Dunmore is completed and tender documents are currently under review. It is anticipated that the tender for the works contract will be advertised in September.

Castlecomer Discovery Park, Rehabilitation of the Ardra Looped Walk & Arboretum Walk - The latter was completed earlier in the year, whilst significant progress has been made over the summer months on the rehabilitation of the 1.8km Aradra Trail and it is expected that same will reopen to the public in late October this year.



New Ardra Trail Rehabilitation



New Trail Head Signage

Woodstock Estate: Accessible Trails, Age Friendly & Disabled Parking & Accessible Play Equipment

Works to improve access for all to the gardens has been ongoing. A new pathway has been constructed from the carpark to the playground and significant surface restoration works was completed along a series of existing pathways, including the Monkey Puzzle and Noble Fir Avenues. On both avenues an unbound gold coloured stone material has been used, the properties of this material not only provide a very attractive finish but also make the area more accessible for people with mobility issues.



The tender process for the supply and installation of fully accessible play equipment has concluded and the tender awarded. This will see the installation of a new wheelchair See-saw and accessible Play Tower, the latter being funded via the Disability Participation and Awareness Fund. The design and tendering process for the other elements of the ORIS project, such as, enhancements to the toilet block, the installation of dedicated disabled and age friendly parking bays and the acquisition of a new electric mobility buggy along with the installation of sensory area have all been progressed over the summer.

Biodiversity

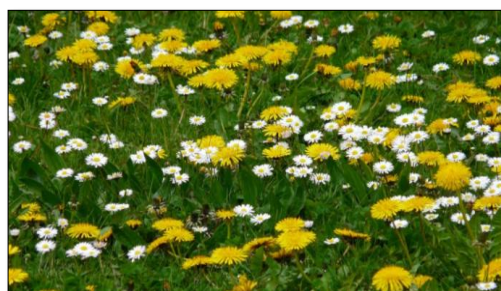
Changes in Mowing Regime

Attitudes towards grass cutting is changing amongst the population and whilst some still prefer the traditional mown lawn it is critical that Local Authorities continue to lead by example and promote the message about the importance of leaving and creating space for pollinators.

To this end, over the 2022 cutting season we have made significant changes to our grass cutting regime and where possible the traditional fortnightly cycle of mowing grass short was replaced with a longer 6 week mowing cycle to encourage pollinators.

These pollinator areas are mainly on embankments, wide road verges and in bigger residential areas with large greens, the latter was achievable with buy-in and support from respective local resident committees etc. Signage and media campaigns to inform the public on the reasoning behind these changing practices continued to play an important role in educating and obtaining buy-in for this necessary shift in policy.

The above changes have already yielded very positive dividends with an abundance of Dandelions and Daisies on display in early summer, with locations such as the Kilkenny Ring Road and Graiguenamanagh Relief Road looking particularly good.



*Graiguenamanagh Relief Road
early summer 2022*

The Parks Department is also managing the following areas under a one cut and lift per year regime as part of our biodiversity enhancement objectives:

- ✓ Dukesmeadows (4.8ha).
- ✓ Bishopmeadows (11.5ha).
- ✓ Pococke Valley (0.7ha).
- ✓ Melville Heights & Glendine Woods.

The annual cut of the above area's will be undertaken in September.

Woodstock Estate

During the summer months the garden and trails were very busy with visitors coming to this jewel of the South-east. The offering for the public continues to grow year on year with improvements to existing walks, the reopening of long lost walks, additional play activities, seasonal plant displays, greater accessibility and food and drink. Regarding the latter this summer saw the opening of our new Woodstock Ice-cream Parlour, offering a wide variety of cones and sundae's. This new addition has proven a massive hit with the public and the timing couldn't have been better with the glorious weather we got over the summer.



Sport Ireland Outdoors maintains the National Trails Register. The National Trails Register is a listing of developed trails in Ireland which are accredited by Sport Ireland. Trails listed on the register are also displayed on the website www.sportireland.ie/outdoors providing information about trails to the public. For a trail to become accredited Sport Ireland carry out a Trail Registration Inspection to confirm that it meets the standards both in terms of management of the trail and the trail infrastructure.

We are pleased to advise that following an on-site inspection the Woodstock Waterfall Loop Walk, which was opened earlier this year was passed fit for purpose and added to the National Trail Register in July.



South East Greenway

Detailed Design: Landowner agreements on the accommodation works for Lots 1 – 7 continue to progress and a number of agreements have been signed over the summer months.

It was decided to split Lot 5 into two sections of equal length comprising Lot 5a (*Ferrybank to Luffany*) and Lot 5b (*Luffany to Aylwardstown South*). TII have undertaken a final review of the tender documentation for Lot 5a and it is anticipated that the works tender will be advertised in the coming weeks. The review of the design to rock cutting faces for Lot 5b in accordance with TII specifications is ongoing

Construction: Lots 1 – 3 are substantially completed. The ramp access to the Greenway from the Abbey Road, Ferrybank is complete. Waterford City & County Council received tenders to widen the footpath at the connection point to the ramp access and a Letter of Intent has issued to the preferred contractor for these works.

The Greenway Project Office are exploring the possibility of opening sections of the Greenway as they are completed.

Links to Slieverue and Glenmore: Preferred options for both links have been identified. The Consultants are engaging an Ecologist to undertake Appropriate Assessment Screening on both links which will determine the planning process to be followed.

Other Links: In a joint initiative with KLP and Trail Kilkenny, the Feasibility Study & Route Selection Report for a further Link to Woodstock Estate, Inistioge is progressing. Punch Consulting Engineers have been appointed to undertake this work and the draft Feasibility Study is expected in September.

Lyme's Disease

Giving the recent concerns expressed by Elected Members of the risk of Lyme disease to humans, the Parks Department will over the next number of weeks undertake a risk assessment of amenity spaces that are managed by the Council. The sites identified and the risk assessment will be undertaken in line with the HSE recommendations. If any sites are identified as potentially posing a risk the appropriate warning signage will be erected at the main entry points into same. Information will be available to the public on the Council's website.

It should be noted that a HSE study found that *Lyme neuroborreliosis* is much less prevalent in the south east of Ireland than in the west. An estimated 2 – 2.9 persons per 100,000 are infected in the South East compared to 4-4.9 in the south west and that a tick bite can only cause Lyme disease in humans if the tick has previously bitten an infected animal. Ticks are most common in long grass, roughly grazed areas, old pastures, woodland edge type habitats and upland habitats. They are often associated with deer, sheep and goats. As a result, Lyme disease is most frequently found to infect hill walkers, campers or those working in woodland. Ticks can, however, be found in some urban parks where grass is long/woodland edge and can be brought to the home by dogs

Playgrounds and urban parks pose less risk given most are securely fenced and grass is in the main cut low. Ticks will most likely not have come into contact with infected animals so whilst a park or playground user may pick up a tick bite, the tick most likely cannot spread the disease.



PLANNING

DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT

Planning Summary	Total August	
	2021	2022
Planning Applications Received	81	78
Planning Applications Granted	62	47
Planning Applications Refused	8	7

FORWARD PLANNING

Masterplans

The draft Loughmacask Masterplan was put on display on the 26th August, 2022 and the public can view the plan on line at Consult.Kilkenny.ie and at the offices of the Planning Authority, the County Library and St. Canice's Community Hall. Submissions and observation to the draft Plan are invited from the public and can be made up until 5.00 p.m. on Friday the 7th October, 2022. Two public meetings have been arranged and advertised, the first was held on the 6th September, 2022 at Dicksboro GAA club and the second takes place on the 19th of September 2022 at the Fr. McGrath Centre in the Butts.

St. Canice's Campus

The preparation of the Masterplan for the HSE's St. Canice's Campus is ongoing. Loci consultants are assisting the Project Steering Committee in the drafting of the Masterplan. Draft concepts are currently being finalised into a draft plan which will be workshopped with the HSE. Following consultation with the HSE on these concepts, a plan will be drafted. Once a draft plan is available, it will be presented to the Council and HSE before it is placed on public display.

Abbey Quarter

The extension of the Abbey Quarter Masterplan area to include Vicar Street and Greensbridge St and a review of the phasing has commenced and a consultant team has been appointed led by O'Mahony Pike Architects. An inception meeting has been held and an initial site visit conducted with the consultants. A public consultation exercise is currently being prepared and will be rolled out as part of pre-draft preparations. The consultants will be engaging with a wide range of stakeholders as part of the pre-draft consultation.

Work has commenced on the preparation of a Masterplan for Urlingford Town Centre. The appointed consultants are currently working on this masterplan and several meetings have been held between the consultants, the Planning Department and the Community Section of the Council. A pre-draft public meeting was held on the 15th of August 2022 in Urlingford. The meeting was attended by the Town Team and interested parties. A format for the Masterplan has been developed and the document is being worked on presently. Once available the draft plan will be put on public display.

Consultants to compile Masterplans for the settlements of Ballyraget, Paulstown and Kilmacow were recently notified of the Council's intention to appoint them and following a standstill period an inception meeting will be arranged and work commenced.

E-Planning

Planning Section of Kilkenny County Council has been working in collaboration with the LGMA to introduce **e-planning** and it is envisioned that e-planning will go live in Kilkenny County Council before the end of Q3 2022. It will then be possible to register as a user and submit planning applications online to Kilkenny County Council. The LGMA has prepared a short YouTube video link below about e-planning:

<https://youtu.be/uQwoa-Zzr2c>

Taking in Charge

Arbourmount, Ferrybank has been taken in charge and works are continuing on the following:

- College Park, Callan Road
- Rathullard - Kilkenny
- The Greens, Thomastown
- Kiln Lane, Callan
- Castlehyde, New Ross
- Whitehall, Paulstown
- An Choill Rua, Paulstown
- Abbeygate, Ferrybank

Active Land Management

There are 17 sites on the Derelict Sites Register at present, with four additional sites being recently added, 2 in July and 2 in August. The Council is currently concentrating on Kilkenny City and to date - 10 Section 8.2 notices have been served, stating intent to add to the register. Works are being phased as below:

- Phase 1:** City – 19 sites – 9 active
Phase 2: Ferrybank and Towns >1,500
Phase 3: Rural Towns and Villages
Phase 4: Rural Area

There are 29 sites on the Vacant Sites Register and the number of cancelled entries due to site activation or improvement stands at 18 sites. Two additional sites have now appealed their payment demands.

The 2021 levy is now due for qualifying sites and payment demands were issued during February and early March. Measures are now being taken to pursue the non-payment of levies.

For 2022, the emphasis will be on the activation of sites currently on the Register, the pursuit of levies due and ongoing monitoring.

Guidelines on the Residential Zoned Land Tax were published at the end of June. The mapping of the relevant lands has commenced and must be completed by the 1st of October 2022.

Conservation

The Conservation Office manages all protected structures in Kilkenny County and City. These structures are recognised for the following special interest: Architectural, Historical, Archaeological, Artistic, Cultural, Scientific, Technical, Social.

An advisory service on conservation matters is delivered to the public and colleagues, while the conservation grants and funding applications are also delivered.

For the month of June, the Conservation Office has compiled reports on the following:

- Planning Referrals - 10
- Further Information Requests – 4
- Clarification Further Information Requests – 0
- Section 57 Declarations – 1
- Section 5 Declarations – 0
- Post Planning – 2

Conservation Grants

All approved Built Heritage Investment Scheme and Historic Structures Fund grant projects have commenced and are working towards completion.

Building Control

Valid commencement notices submitted: 239 for the first 8 months of 2022.

53 Valid Disability Access Applications have been received during the first 8 months of this year.

COMMUNITY

Pride of Place Judging

Pride of Place Judging took place in Kilkenny on the 24th and 25th August where the wider community and local committees participated in three local projects that were nominated to represent Kilkenny in this year's National Pride of Place Awards - Ireland's largest Community Awards Event. The projects representing Kilkenny this year included the Thomastown Recreational Amenity, Mullinavat Village and the Barrow Valley Tourism Camping Area in Graiguenamanagh.

Dubbed the 'Oscars of the Community Sector' the Pride of Place awards is an annual competition organised by Co-operation Ireland and sponsored by IPB Insurance. It promotes and celebrates the best in community development and recognises the selfless efforts of people in making their local area a better place to live, work and socialise. All of the three projects and communities that took part gave excellent presentations and the Judges were very impressed with the presentations and large crowds that came out to support the entries. The 2022 National Awards Ceremony will take place in January 2023.



Mullinavat Pride of Place 2022



*Thomastown Recreational Amenity 2022
Pride of Place*



Barrow Nore Project - Pride of Place 2022

Thomastown Recreational Amenity hosts Irelands largest Outdoor Basketball Exhibition Event.

SHOWTIME came to Thomastown in July in what was Ireland's biggest ever outdoor basketball exhibition game! This community event was held on Saturday the 9th of July in the newly developed outdoor recreational amenity in Thomastown. This was a family event where in excess of 700 locals came to enjoy this unique festival like event. As part of the first anniversary of the very popular new outdoor amenity that was developed by Kilkenny County Council, this exciting event showcased the skills of top Irish International, National League and Professional Players. Located in the Centre of the town, this Town and Village Renewal development was also nominated for a National Pride of Place.



*Irelands Largest Outdoor Basketball Expo
Thomastown Amenity*

Town & Village Renewal 2022

Streetscape Enhancement Measure 2022 (€100,000 approved for Callan)

Minister Humphreys announced the towns to receive funding under the 'Streetscape Enhancement Measure 2022 on 30th August. The Streetscape Enhancement Initiative will provide grants to property owners to improve street facades (either residential or commercial) and shopfronts.

This activity is funded by the Department of Rural & Community Development as part of "Our Rural Future", the Government's five-year strategy to revitalise rural Ireland. The 2022 Scheme applies to the town of Callan in County Kilkenny.

Under the scheme retailers and property owners will be provided with grants that they can be used to improve the facades of their buildings, carry out artworks or install features such as street furniture or canopies.

Eligible works include painting, signage replacement, shopfront improvement, scaffolding, materials, lighting and planting etc. Grant funding will be provided at 80% of total project costs. Matched funding of 20% is required.

Completed expression of interest's forms should be returned to the Community Department by 5pm on Wednesday 28th September, 2022. Once approved, property owners will have until 31st August 2023 to complete approved works.

Building Acquisition Measure

Kilkenny County Council was approved for funding to purchase property in Glenmore, to be developed for community use in the future.

CLAR 2021

Minister Humphreys announced allocations on 15th August, 2022. Kilkenny received a record approval of €325,521 to carry out 8 projects in CLAR areas in County Kilkenny. Successful projects are:

<i>Listerlin Public Lighting</i> Public lighting along footpath linking the national school to shop and church	€21,375
<i>St. Martin's GAA Club</i> Astro turf surface to upgrade MUGA	€50,000
<i>Muckalee Community Centre Ltd.</i> Fit out for community Centre kitchen, café and shop	€26,933
<i>Windgap Community Development Ltd.</i> Hard surface for car park outside Community Centre and Tea Rooms	€50,000
<i>Kilmoganny GAA Club</i> Community walkway at club	€40,663
<i>Naomh Aodhan Handball Alley</i> Renovate existing Ball Alley to modern standard	€44,550
<i>Galmoy Community Hall</i> Multi-use Activity area in Community Hall	€42,000
<i>Skeoughvosteen Community Centre & GAA</i> Provision of outdoor public and wheelchair accessible public toilets	€50,000

Total Funding received for CLAR in 2022 - €420,207.

2022 Age Friendly Recognition & Achievement Awards 2022

The Council submitted the “Knitted Together” project for consideration under the above awards and are delighted that it has been shortlisted under the Age Friendly Community Innovation category. The primary aim of these awards is to recognise and reward achievement in age friendly initiatives around Ireland. Shortlisted projects will be visited by the judging panel and invited to Ireland’s Age Friendly Recognition and Achievements Awards ceremony in Dromoland Castle on 27th October 2022, where winners will be announced.

Kilkenny LECP

(Local Economic and Community Plan) 2023-2028

Kilkenny County Council and the Kilkenny Local Community Development Committee has begun the process of preparing a new Local Economic and Community Plan (LECP). This Plan will build upon and replace the previous Plan, which covered the period 2016 – 2021.

The new LECP will set out for the period 2023–2028 the objectives and actions needed to promote and support the economic and local community development of County Kilkenny.

As part of the first step to inform the new plan a draft is prepared and open for consultation. See link: <https://www.yourkilkennylecp.ie/>

During the month of October there will be three virtual Workshops, one for each Municipal District in the County, as follows:

- Castlecomer (*virtual event*) Friday 7th October, 19:00-21:00
- Callan-Thomastown (*virtual event*) – Monday 10th October - 19:00-21:00
- Piltown (*virtual event*) Wednesday 12th October 19:00-21:00
Attend an in-person event
- Kilkenny City – Springhill Court Hotel
Wednesday 5th October - 19:00-21:00

You must pre-register for attendance. To register for the event for your area click the link: <https://www.yourkilkennylecp.ie/>

LEO/ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Local Enterprise Village at the Ploughing Championships

A Thomastown based business, The Cookie Co-op will get a chance to exhibit to almost 300,000 people at the National Ploughing Championships as part of the Local Enterprise Village. The initiative of the Local Enterprise Offices (LEOs) will see 31 small businesses, one from each LEO area take a stand in the Local Enterprise Village in the heart of the Ploughing Championships, opening their businesses up to almost 300,000 prospective customers across the 3 days of the event.



The Local Enterprise Village was launched by Damien English, T.D., Minister of State for Business, Employment and Retail along with some of the business owners, including Brian Walsh, founder of The Cookie Co-op. The Cookie Co-op who are supported by Local Enterprise Office Kilkenny, is an artisan confectionery company, producing hand-crafted baked goods including cookies, brownies, and cookie bars. The Cookie Co-op’s products are distributed for wholesale across the South East and Midlands of Ireland. Their products are also directly available for delivery to customers nationwide and sold at farmers markets in Kilkenny City and County.



You’re the Business

A new partnership involving Google, Enterprise Ireland and the Local Enterprise Offices focusing on supporting Irish businesses to upskill digitally and enhance their online capabilities was launched recently. ‘You’re the Business’ programme aims to accelerate Irish SME growth

through digitalisation in the form of a free of charge online training scheme, as well as an SME reward programme. This comes after recent research from Google found that significant gaps in the areas of digital skills and competence remain a concern for many SMEs.

Through the new 'You're the Business' digital platform, Irish SMEs will have access to a series of live training sessions which are free, are accessible on demand and are geared towards supporting companies at all stages of their digitalisation journey, including those at early stages right through to those more digitally-sophisticated businesses who are ready to export globally. The training will consist of three modules that will help businesses understand how they can use digital to get online, grow online and expand internationally. For further information on the various training modules visit: <https://yourethebusiness.withgoogle.com/>



LEO Training Programmes - The Autumn Training Schedule is now available to view and online booking available via our website www.localenterprise.ie/kilkenny

Oifig Fiontair Áitiúil Local Enterprise Office Autumn Training 2022



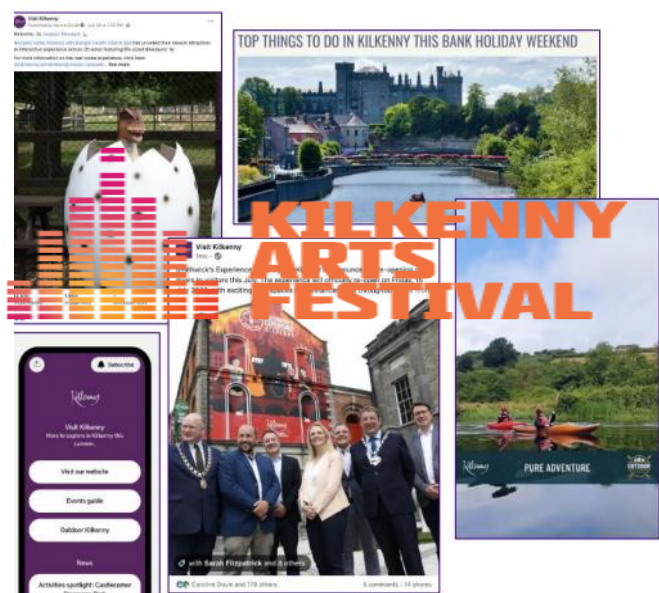
Starting a Business Programme - Ukrainian Support

Local Enterprise Office Kilkenny in partnership with Kilkenny Leader Partnership organised a Start Your Own Business Programme for 11 Ukrainian clients in Springhill Court Hotel on August 17th and 19th. As part of this programme, a translator was organised to address any language barriers that may exist. The notes for the programme were translated and confirmed suitable by translator.

Feedback was positive on the programme and all clients were offered additional one-to-one mentoring to provide support.

Summary of Direct Supports to Businesses Via Local Enterprise Office 2022

- A total of €403,748 in direct financial assistance has been approved for 14 manufacture /export service businesses located throughout the County. This assistance is linked to the projected creation of 41 jobs over the next three years.
- 6 Technical Assistance for Micro Exporter grant awarded totalling €12,320. This scheme supports businesses to explore their export market opportunities.
- 17 Businesses have commenced LEAN one to one consultancy programmes to investigate possible resource efficiencies and process improvements their businesses.
- 23 business have been approved a Trading Online Voucher totalling €46,801 to support the enhancement of their online trading capacity.
- 11 Green for Micro supports awarded totalling €24,354. This scheme supports businesses to becoming greener and environmentally friendly.
- 7 business applicants have been supported to make loan applications to the Micro Finance Ireland loan fund.



O'Connell Marketing took up the role of Marketing Consultants for Kilkenny Tourism in July and we are delighted to welcome them on board. The campaign for July and August was aimed at tourists visiting and those who have not yet planned Autumn stays to highlight all the great things there are to see and do throughout the City and County.

Key Messages we will move forward with into Autumn and the off-season are;

- Kilkenny is a year-round destination with something to see & do whenever you visit,
- Kilkenny is a culturally vibrant destination with world-renowned festivals & events.
- Kilkenny is the Medieval Capital of Ireland, home of Ireland's Medieval Mile & is the best example of Ireland's medieval heritage in the country.
- Kilkenny is a family fun destination with exciting outdoor activities & family fun throughout the City & County.
- Kilkenny has a top-class accommodation offering & boasts wonderful dining options.



Kilkenny Tourism CLG AGM Date: 14th September at the Parade Tower, Kilkenny.

Festivals & Events

Kilkenny County Council continues to support our year-round calendar of events with August hosting our oldest and most internationally renowned Arts Festival. Since its foundation in 1974, Kilkenny Arts Festival has gathered many of the world's finest musicians, performers, writers and artists in Ireland's medieval City. For ten days each August, the City's historic churches, castle, courtyards, townhouses and gardens offered a magical setting for unique collaborations and intimate encounters between audiences and artists. From outdoor theatre to contemporary dance, the Festival is dedicated to staging events of the highest calibre, thrilling audiences of all kinds.

In recent years the Festival has enriched its programme with major new initiatives like The Marble City Sessions, a cross-genre series of unique musical collaborations, hosted and co-curated by the great Irish fiddle-player and artist-in-residence Martin Hayes. Congratulations to all involved on a wonderful festival this year.



This year we were also delighted to be able to support AKA, Alternative Kilkenny Arts, a wonderful Kilkenny Arts fringe festival. AKA was back for its eight year and very excited to bring a dynamic world of music, art, craft and more to the streets and venues of Kilkenny City and County. This year's programme was full of amazing artists, crafts and performances which had something to suit everyone's interests.

Urban Animation – Creative Kilkenny July saw the first element of our Urban Animation project funded by Fáilte Ireland, "Creative Kilkenny" delivered in the form of three Outdoor Screens around the City. The intention for the installation of digital Culture Screens throughout Kilkenny is to connect with visitors, reminding them that Kilkenny is a City of creativity with so much to offer. Galleries, festivals, artists and venues will

be able to share high-quality work from film screenings; digital exhibitions; behind-the-scenes footage; commissioned artworks; to creative interactive engagement as people move throughout the City.

The screens are located on the Parade, at Butler Gallery and at MacDonagh Junction. Keep an eye for some breath-taking murals popping up around the City in the coming weeks as we continue to deliver the project!!



Tourist Numbers

Recent coverage in the media has reported that Kilkenny had the lowest numbers of domestic visitors nationwide in 2021 with a drop of 76% on our 2019 figures. To contextualise the findings we must remember that Kilkenny is a year-round destination with festivals and events bringing domestic visitors throughout the year.

In 2021, the season was predominantly focused on the summer as hospitality didn't reopen until June due to Covid-19 restrictions

Tourism businesses reported a very busy summer season in Kilkenny in 2021 but missed the extended season of Spring due to Covid-19 restrictions

The tourism sector worked well together during Covid under the Tourism Recovery Taskforce and a number of initiatives were set up to boost visitor numbers including Wolfwalkers, the Kilkenny Cat Walk and additional marketing funds were secured to promote Kilkenny in the Winter season.

The majority of festivals did not take place in their usual manner with events being partly virtual and partly in person which resulted in lower numbers than usual attending in person.

Kilkenny is recovering well in the tourism sector as indicated by the latest Failte Ireland hotel survey.

This can be viewed in its entirety at:

<https://www.failteireland.ie/FailteIreland/media/WebsiteStructure/Documents/Publications/failte-ireland-hotel-survey-final-summary-report-june-2022.pdf?ext=.pdf>

Inward Investment

Kilkenny County Council welcomed the announcement by Abbott to invest €440 million in a new state-of-the-art manufacturing facility in the IDA Business & Technology Park in Kilkenny City, which will create upwards of 800 new jobs.

Abbott are a well established US multinational medical devices and health care company with existing plants in a number of locations across Ireland. The proposed facility in Kilkenny will focus on the manufacture of the company's Freestyle Libre 3 product - a cutting edge product to continuously monitor glucose levels for diabetic care.

HOUSING

Housing Capital Delivery

Housing For All is the government's plan to increase the supply of housing nationally to an average of 33,000 units per year over the next decade. An increase in the delivery of affordable and social housing by local authorities and Approved Housing Bodies is central to the Housing For All plan. Kilkenny County Council has prepared a Housing Delivery Action Plan, for the period 2022-2026 to outline how social and affordable homes will be delivered to meet the targets set for Kilkenny under the Housing For All Plan.

Year	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026	Total
Social Build Units	170	149	153	164	167	803
Affordable Housing Units	5	14	21	18	18	76

Projected Housing Delivery 2022 - 2024

Delivery 2022	Project Status	Total Units	Housing for All Target
KCC Construction	Complete	80	
Approved Housing Bodies Construction	Complete	38	
KCC Acquisition	Complete	2	
Approved Housing Bodies Acquisition	Complete	5	
KCC Construction	Onsite for Completion 2022	11	
Approved Housing Body Construction	Onsite for Completion 2022	33	
Total Projected Delivery 2022		169	170
KCC Construction	Onsite for Completion 2023	41	
AHB Construction	Onsite for Completion 2023	15	
KCC Construction	To Commence Projected Delivery 2023	55	
AHB Construction	To Commence Projected Delivery 2023	8	
Acquisitions	To Commence Projected Delivery 2023	10	
Total Projected Delivery 2023		129	149
KCC Construction	Dept Approval Process Commenced	138	
AHB Construction	Dept Approval Process Commenced	15	
Acquisitions	Projected	10	
Total Projected Delivery 2024		163	153
Total Projected Delivery 2022 -2024		461	472

While the delivery pipeline to-date for the period 2022 to year end 2024 below the Housing For All target set for Kilkenny, further projects are under discussion for approval and commencement during 2023 and 2024 and it is expected to achieve or exceed the delivery targets set.

The Housing Capital Delivery Team continue to assess queries submitted in relation to sites for sale, potential turnkey developments and AHB proposals around the county which will be added to the delivery pipeline once they enter the four stage department approval process.

The Housing Capital Delivery Team are also concluding final accounts and sign off on recently completed projects at Piltown, Castlecomer, Callan and Ballyragget.

Traveller Accommodation Programme (TAP)

There have been 14 allocations under the Traveller Accommodation Programme in 2021. The Capital Delivery Team are progressing projects for delivery under Housing For All during the period 2023-2026.

A review of the TAP is currently being carried out in accordance with Section 17 of the Housing (*Traveller Accommodation*) Act 1998.

Proposed Part 8 application providing for a new unit at Corbettstown under TAP will not now be proceeding after consultation with statutory agencies.

Vacant Homes

The Vacant Homes Officer is continuing to process the CPO of vacant and underutilised sites in Kilkenny. Project proposals for refurbishment, redevelopment and reuse are also required in relation to CPO sites.

The Vacant Homes Officer is also processing applications under the Croí Conaithe (Towns) Fund for the refurbishment of vacant properties. 11 expressions of interest have been received to-date with 6 completed applications received. Under this scheme, a grant of up to a maximum of €30,000 will be available for the refurbishment of a vacant property for occupation of the homeowner. Where the refurbishment costs are expected to exceed the standard grant a maximum top-up amount of €20,000 is available where the property is confirmed to be derelict.

Details in relation to this scheme are available on our website **Croí Conaithe (Towns) Fund – Information and Application Form**. Queries and completed Application Forms to be emailed to housingcapital@kilkennycoco.ie.

Homeless Services

The number of homeless presentations being dealt with by our Homeless Services Team continues to increase, with the number of emergency beds and HAP rental properties reducing in number. This situation is leading to significant challenges in service provision for the Homeless Services Team. Based on the number of homeless presentations year to date there is a 22% increase in the number of homeless presentations. If this trend continues the number of people presenting in need of emergency accommodation in 2022 will exceed 400. This level of demand is unprecedented.

The availability of private rented accommodation to allow people to move from emergency accommodation has reduced significantly with less than 10 rental properties advertised in the county. In addition the number of HAP supported tenancies has reduced steadily over the past two years. As a result Kilkenny has reached capacity in its emergency accommodation and has a waiting list for emergency accommodation. We are aware of a number of rough sleepers in the county and are providing support services where possible.

It should also be noted that more than 50 families are currently seeking accommodation due to the service of a notice of termination of tenancy where properties are being sold or being removed from the HAP scheme. Locating alternative accommodation for these families is extremely difficult in the current property market.

For all of the reasons above it is expected that the number of people in need of emergency accommodation will increase and it will be necessary to source additional emergency accommodation as urgently as possible.

Homeless Presentations	Jan	Feb	Mar	April	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Total
2022	34	34	51	25	44	40	31	54					312
2021	18	34	26	24	42	37	34	24	41	42	35	13	370
2020	23	27	24	19	14	11	20	22	26	26	23	17	252
2019	28	13	16	19	21	16	24	32	23	26	18	17	253

HOUSING ASSISTANCE PAYMENT SUMMARY: CUMULATIVE AS AT MONTH END	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
2020 Number of active HAP tenancies to month end	868	876	876	882	886	886	887	874	873	876	871	854
2021 Number of active HAP tenancies to month end	854	853	854	850	840	830	824	811	803	790	784	774
2022 Number of active HAP tenancies to month end	772	770	767	762	761	761	752					

HOUSING ASSISTANCE PAYMENT SUMMARY UP TO AUGUST 31 st 2022	
Number of active HAP tenancies to August 31 st 2022	737
New HAP tenancies set up	61
HAP tenants allocated Social Housing	50
Closed HAP Tenancies	95
HAP Rent Reviews	165
Other tenancy amendments	282
HAP Calls Received 2022 year to date	2,443
HAP Calls Received August	316

SOCIAL HOUSING SUPPORT APPLICATION SUMMARY AUGUST 2022	
Number awaiting Social Housing Support at August 31 st (Gross Need)	1,649
Number awaiting Social Housing Support at August 31 st (Net Need)	764
No. of Social Housing Applications received in August	103
No. of applications incomplete / awaiting further information / clarification	61
No. of applications assessed during August	20
No. of applications awaiting assessment as @ August 31 st	76

HOMELESS SERVICES SUMMARY AUGUST 2022	
Homeless Presentations	54
Homeless Assessment Outcomes	
Prevention & Interventions	31
Emergency Service	12
Not eligible / Did not avail of service	11
HAP Place Finder Service	
No of Homeless HAP tenancies @ 1 st day of month	107
No of Homeless HAP tenancies created during month	3
No of Homeless HAP tenancies in place @ last day of month	110
Number of Homeless HAP tenancy breakdowns	0
Other Social Housing Tenancies supported /created during month	2
Households in Temporary Emergency Supported Accommodation	26
Households in Temporary Emergency B&B accommodation	6
Of Households in Temporary Emergency B&B accommodation that are families	4
Households (singles/couples) in Transition Emergency Accommodation (Own Front Door)	23
Households (Families) in Transition Emergency Accommodation (OFD)	9

Tenancy Management

The Tenancy Management Section deals with allocations, maintenance and anti-social behaviour complaints in relation to our tenants.

LA/RAS/Leasing allocations in August (offers made):	20
LA/RAS/Leasing allocations to date (offers made):	146
Tenant Liaison Officer cases in August:	88
Tenant Liaison Officer cases year to date:	426
Maintenance Calls for August:	453
Maintenance Calls year to date	3662

Housing Grants

Kilkenny County Council administers a number of grant options to assist older people and people with a disability in carrying out works which are necessary for the purposes of rendering a house more suitable for their accommodation needs. The annual budget is €1,977,000.

Grants Paid out up to 31 st August, 2022		
Scheme	No.	Amount
HGD - Housing Adaptation Grant	78	€787,913
MAG - Mobility Aid Grant	16	€62,070
HOP - Housing Aid for Older Persons	75	€415,337
Total	169	€1,265,320

Grants Approved & Committed up to 31 st August, 2022		
Scheme	No.	Amount
HGD - Housing Adaptation Grant	128	€1,233,232
MAG - Mobility Aid Grant	18	€70,598
HOP - Housing Aid for Older Persons	127	€722,266
Total	273	€2,026,095

Housing Loans

The Local Authority Home Loan Scheme (LAHL) replaced the Rebuilding Ireland Home Scheme from 4th January, 2022.

Housing Loan Activity 1 st January 2022 to 31 st August 2022					
Loan Type	Received	Approved	Amt Approved	No. Paid	Amt Paid
Rebuilding Ireland Home Loan	0	4	€451,750	4	€668,000
Local Authority Home Loan	43	4	€378,800	1	€90,000
Caravan Loan	0	0	€0.00	0	€0
Total	43	8	€830,550	5	€758,000

FIRE SERVICES

Capital Projects

Construction work has commenced on the new Fire Station for Urlingford. Good progress is being made by the contractors on the building of the new Fire Station.



Aerial photo shows the foundation for the new Fire Station.

Sourcing a new site for Kilkenny City Fire Station is still ongoing. Talks are ongoing with land owners.

Fire Safety Certificates

- 59 applications for Fire Safety Certificates were received to-date.
- 62 were received for the same period last year.

Fire Services Acts 1981 and 2003

- Fire Prevention staff made targeted inspections of premises both to provide advice and to enforce legislation.
- 25 Licence Applications were processed under Section 24 of the Fire Services Acts 1981 and 2003.
- 56 Fire Safety inspections of premises have taken place so far this year.
- 1 Fire Safety Closure Notice was served on a premises in Kilkenny City

Community Fire Safety

Fire Service personnel call to houses by appointment and give fire safety advice to the occupants. A HFSV is usually carried out by two uniformed Operational Fire Service Personnel. The primary aim of these HFSVs is to reduce the numbers of fires, deaths and injuries in the home by firstly preventing fires occurring and to ensure that when fires do occur, the occupiers are given early warning, and they know how to react quickly and safely.

Fire Brigade Operations

The Brigades have attended over 426 incidents to-date. These incidents included a number of road traffic collisions, public road hazards, domestic fires, automatic fire alarm activations, grass fires, chimney fires and ambulance assists. Freshford Fire Brigade attended a road traffic accident involving a van and an Electricity pole in Freshford Village. A major emergency Traffic Management Plan was put in place to make the scene safe.



Freshford Fire Brigade carrying out an exercise at a static storage tank in Ballyragget.

Suitability tests for new fire Fighters for Kilkenny City, Callan and Graiguenamanagh Fire Brigades took place in Kilkenny City Fire Station. These tests included Comprehension Test, Ladder Climb Test, Equipment Carry Test, Casualty Evacuation Test, Confined Space Test and a Dexterity Test.

ARTS

Literature

Broadsheet launch

The Arts Office 2022 Poetry Broadsheet launch took place on Thursday 11th August in the Parade Tower. It was officially launched by the Kilkenny Arts Festival Writer in Residence, Theo Dorgan, poet, writer and lecturer. Theo encouraged those that didn't get published this year to continue writing as each editor will respond to their poems

in a different way. The published poems have been uploaded to the Poetry Phone and anyone can FreeFone 1800272994 and select a number between 0 and 9 to listen to a beautiful selection of poems

Youth Residency Programme

The Arts Office in partnership with Ossory Youth and the Drum Youth Centre have sent a call out for suitably qualified visual artists to undertake a residency in these two City-based Youth Centres from mid-September to mid-November 2022. The objectives of this residency is to create a safe space for young people to explore their creativity, diversify and increase participation in the visual arts, enhance existing learning that they have received both in school and outside of the school setting.

Literature

National mentoring programme: Local writers, Nuala Roche and Caoileann O'Mahony have been selected by the Irish Writers Centre to receive professional literary mentoring over the next eight months from an acclaimed Irish writer of their choice. County Kilkenny Arts Office funded the literary mentorship along with the Arts Council of Ireland to guarantee that the best applicant from the County would be selected. Their support will ensure that the chosen mentee receives this potentially life-changing support free of charge. It is also an investment in the long-term literary reputation of the region.

Teacher Artist Partnership (TAP)

The TAP programme is run in partnership with the Kilkenny Education Centre and is a summer residency training programme for artists, across art forms, & teachers. The outcome is a school residency for the trained artists working with the teachers and pupils. The selected 2022 artists are Maria Mikloski Visual Arts, Mairead Kiernan Writer, Kasia Kaminsky Visual artist & Kairen Waloch Musician.

Emerging Curator Development Programme MATRIARCH

Kilkenny Arts Office's Emerging Curator Development Programme presented *MATRIARCH* for the Kilkenny Arts Festival 2022. The *MATRIARCH* programme was designed to celebrate women artists over 65 who have practiced art for much of their lives. The purpose of the programme was to place older women artists at the forefront in powerfully shaping the arts landscape in which they operate. Each event

was site specific and held in sites of symbolic significance.

Performances and talks as part of the programme included: Sara R. Phillips - '*quiescent*', poetry reading on the 4th August in Kytlers Inn. Na Cailleacha - '*Spellbound*' – was an artist's talk with Na Cailleacha on 5th August in Rothe House *Bare Bones*, performance art event with artist Pauline Cummins on 11th August in the Medieval Room, Kilkenny Castle. Finally, the programme presented the painting '*Clonmel*' by KCAT artist Lorna Corrigan. The painting was presented large-scale on an advertising billboard on the College Rd. Junction of Circular Road opposite the Kilkenny Hotel.

KNITTED TOGETHER

The Knitted Together continues to progress and go from strength to strength. We will be collecting the blankets in the coming weeks and are planning for the final exhibition and the Culture Night event on Friday 23rd September.

Our collaboration with the Kilkenny City, Graignamanagh and The Fen Men's Sheds has been hugely successful. The Men's Sheds have created sixty beautiful stools, inspired by the traditional Irish Dresser stool. We also facilitated an upholstery workshop with the Fen Men's Shed.

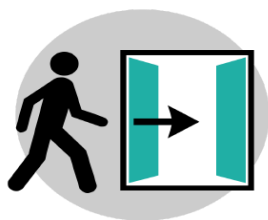


A number of participants are currently creating beautiful crocheted tops for the upholstered stools.

The ambition to foster community spirit has been further elevated in 2022 as it is the first year of the project where groups and individuals have been able to gather together to create without restriction. We have facilitated this by hosting a number of very successful Maker-Meet-Ups over the last three months. These have taken place in the City and across the County and all have resulted in the creation of beautiful collective blankets. We are also planning three more collective events for August, September and October.



40,911 Items borrowed



27,241 Visitors



2,787 Members

Ukrainian Supports



We have been developing our services to Ukrainians over the past few months, and have a number of supports in place to help people engage. We have translated a pamphlet of our services into Ukrainian to let the people know what we can offer them through their free membership. We have also invested in a collection of Ukrainian children's books, which are available in all of our libraries and on the mobile library. Our librarians have visited the St. John of God's campus and visits to the library have been facilitated to the City Library and Loughboy Library in partnership with Kilkenny Carlow ETB.

We have a selection of Ukrainian eBooks through our Borrowbox app and eNewspapers through our PressReader app. There has been an increase in titles offered as the ongoing crisis continues. Since July our language service, Transparent offers a course in English for Ukrainian speakers also.

Summer Stars



Our annual Summer Stars Reading Challenge for children took place in July and August, and we had 1,336 children signed up. Summer Stars is a National Initiative under the Right to Read Literacy Programme, and is designed to encourage children of all ages to enjoy reading for fun throughout the summer. This helps maintain reading and literacy levels throughout the break from school and reduces the 'summer slide' decline in reading habits. The challenge is to read 8 books over the Summer.

Sustainable Living



In partnership with Kilkenny County Council’s Environmental Awareness Department, we hosted Horticulturist and Environmentalist. Aoife Munn for a day of very enjoyable and informative workshops for both children and adults on Sustainable Living in Loughboy Library recently. A range of climate related topics were discussed, including ways of reducing our waste and packaging, simple ways of making our own soaps, wax wraps and biodegradable seed pots. Children enjoyed soap making with recycled packaging, and a growing workshop, where they took home potted lettuce and cornflour seeds.

Mayfair Library Update



Mayfair Exhibition Area



Adult Reading Area

- Demolitions have been completed.
- Blockwork to the extension to the west side of the building has been completed to the top of wall on the first floor.
- Works to the extension on the east side of the building have been completed to the level of the first-floor slab.
- Structural steel for the mezzanine structure has been installed

Online Services Usage



4,645 eAudiobooks borrowed



9,457 newspapers read



2,291 eBooks borrowed



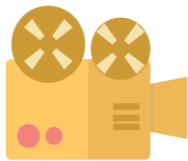
1,799 eMagazines borrowed



478 Songs accessed



421 Online Courses sessions



Digital Engagement

Our staff have prepared, recorded, edited and published 778 posts on our social media platforms in July and August.

Our video views for the two months were 8,458.

FINANCE

The expenditure by service division to the end of July is set out in table 1. Total Expenditure for the period was €54.66m compared with the annual budget of €93.9m.

Table 1	Actual YTD July 2022	Budget Full Year 2022
	€'000's	€'000's
Housing & Building	13,427	22,101
Road Transport & Safety	15,122	26,590
Water Services	4,150	7,255
Development Management	5,440	10,502
Environmental Services	6,248	12,178
Recreation & Amenity	4,150	7,175
Agriculture, Education, Health, Welfare	323	680
Miscellaneous Services	5,806	7,390
OVERALL TOTAL	54,666	93,871

Finance Update

Inflation is having a significant impact on the cost of delivering all services and on the delivery of the Capital Programme.

Energy costs for all Council buildings is expected to be €450k over budget for the year as a result of recent price increases. The impact of inflation on other goods and services is estimated to cost an additional €550k in 2022 which will have to be absorbed within existing budgets. The public sector pay agreement that was recently negotiated will result in additional payroll costs of €936k for 2022. Government did provide compensation for 80% of the additional cost arising from the pay restoration in recent years. The sector will be seeking similar compensation for the additional cost arising from the latest agreement.

The issue of recoupment of salary and overheads from the Department for the RAS scheme has still not been resolved. This will result in a shortfall for the year of €650k.

Car parking income is 10% below budget level for the year. The budget income figure was based on pre covid-19 income levels. A 10% reduction will result in the income for the year being €230k lower than budget.

The completion of social housing voids is costing significantly more than the grant available. The estimated shortfall per unit is €13k with a total projected shortfall for the year of €1.1m.

Commercial rates income is estimated to be €700k higher than budgeted which will partially offset the shortfalls outlined.

The projected net deficit could be in the region of €2m in the absence of further support from Government to deal with the impact of spiralling inflation.

The bank overdraft facility was not utilised in the seven month period to the end of July.

The audit by the Local Government Audit for 2021 has now been completed and the Audit Report along with the final AFS for 2021 is for consideration at the meeting.

Rates Revaluation

Further to Revaluation 2017, 197 customers with a total rate demand value of €4.5m appealed their new valuation to the Valuation Tribunal. To-date 191 appeals have been completed. The following is a breakdown of the appeal outcomes to date:

Decrease in Revaluation on Appeal	150 cases
Appeal Withdrawn	3 cases
Increase in Revaluation on Appeal	1 case
No change to Revaluation on Appeal	7 cases
Appeals Outstanding	6 cases

The total annual Income lost to date stands at €841k.

Targeted Rates Waiver Quarter 1, 2022

On 12th October, 2021 a targeted commercial rates waiver to support certain sectors was agreed by Government, for the final quarter of 2021. An extension of this waiver for a further period of three months, for the first quarter of 2022 was agreed by Government in December, 2021.

The extended waiver took the form of a credit in lieu of rates. The terms and conditions relating to eligibility and administration of the extended waiver remained the same as those outlined in Circular Fin 20/2021 "Targeted Commercial Rates Waiver Final Quarter 2021.

The broad categories of businesses the credit in lieu of rates applied to were as follows:

- Hospitality, including restaurants and cafes;
- Leisure;
- Miscellaneous entertainment;
- Certain tourism related categories; and
- Airports.

The value of the waiver is the equivalent value of 25% of the annual rate bill for 2022 for eligible categories of business. The waiver (Jan to March) was applied to eligible rate accounts by the Rates Section as a credit in lieu of rates in the value of €748,378 in March and eligible businesses were notified by letter.

Budget 2023

The decision by the Elected Members on the base rate adjustment on Local Property Tax will have to be decided before October 15th. This item is listed on the agenda for the September Council meeting. A separate report on the matter will be circulated to the Elected Members in advance of the meeting.

The consultation period on setting the local adjustment factor for the Local Property Tax for 2023 commenced on July 13th and closed on the 12th of August. No submissions were received. The Elected Members will be asked to maintain the same base rate adjustment that has been in place for 2020, 2021 and 2022.