



Comhairle Chontae Chill Chainnigh  
Kilkenny County Council

# CHIEF EXECUTIVE REPORT

## NOVEMBER 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 DIARY

- Team Up to Clean Up-Together for Kilkenny will commence the week commencing the 25<sup>th</sup> November. This is a targeted campaign to help eliminate roadside litter at source.

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# ROADS

## MAJOR PROJECTS

### N24 Waterford to Cahir Scheme

Date for Publication of the Option Selection Report is due by Q4 2024.

## MINOR PROJECTS

### N77 Ballyragget to Ballynaslee

Construction of the scheme commenced on Tuesday 6<sup>th</sup> February 2024 with an expected 12-month time frame. Works are progressing well and are on schedule.



### N24 Carrick Road

Kilkenny Council has received formal notification that An Bord Pleanála has approved the 177AE planning application subject to conditions and has confirmed the CPO without modifications as of the 20<sup>th</sup> March 2024. An application for a Judicial review of the decision by An Bord Pleanála was lodged with the High Court by 3 no applicants in May 2024. Based on current information available the timeline for the Judicial Review process will extend into 2025.

## PAVEMENT SCHEMES

### N76 Callan Bypass Pavement Scheme and associated works

TII have advised that it is order to complete the design process and to proceed to tender.

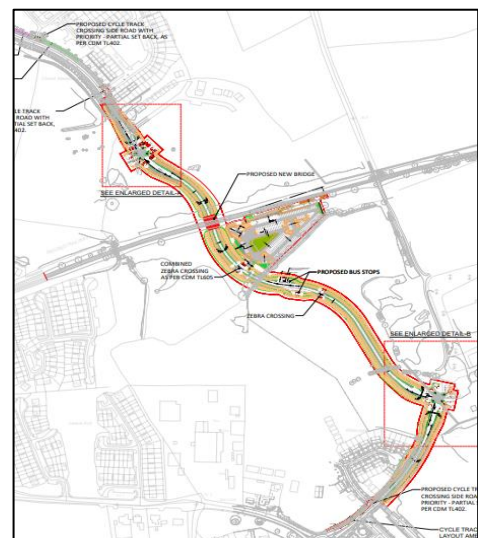
## CAPITAL & URDF PROJECTS

### South North Access Road - Ferrybank

The closing date for submissions on the Part 8 application was the 24<sup>th</sup> October. The submissions are currently being reviewed and the final Part 8 report prepared.

The scheme is c.940m in length with

- Two signalised crossroad junctions,
- Segregated pedestrian/cycle facilities,
- Two zebra crossings
- Off-line bus stops
- Greenway car park (c.172 parking bays);
- Link to Greenway; and
- Accommodation works



Consultants are appointed for the sustainable links, Ferrybank scheme for all stages of works (Design, Part 8, tendering for construction, Resident Engineer and handover).

Consultants are appointed for the N29 Belview Port scheme for Design, Part 8 and tendering for construction.

Works on the road accessing the CBS are continuing along Talbots Court/Talbots Gate as per the Part 8 Loughmacask Link Road Phase 1(a).

A full package of Gateway 1 appraisal documents was submitted to the Department of Transport at the beginning of August 2024. This was submitted following consultation with the Department on the necessary documents for the submission.

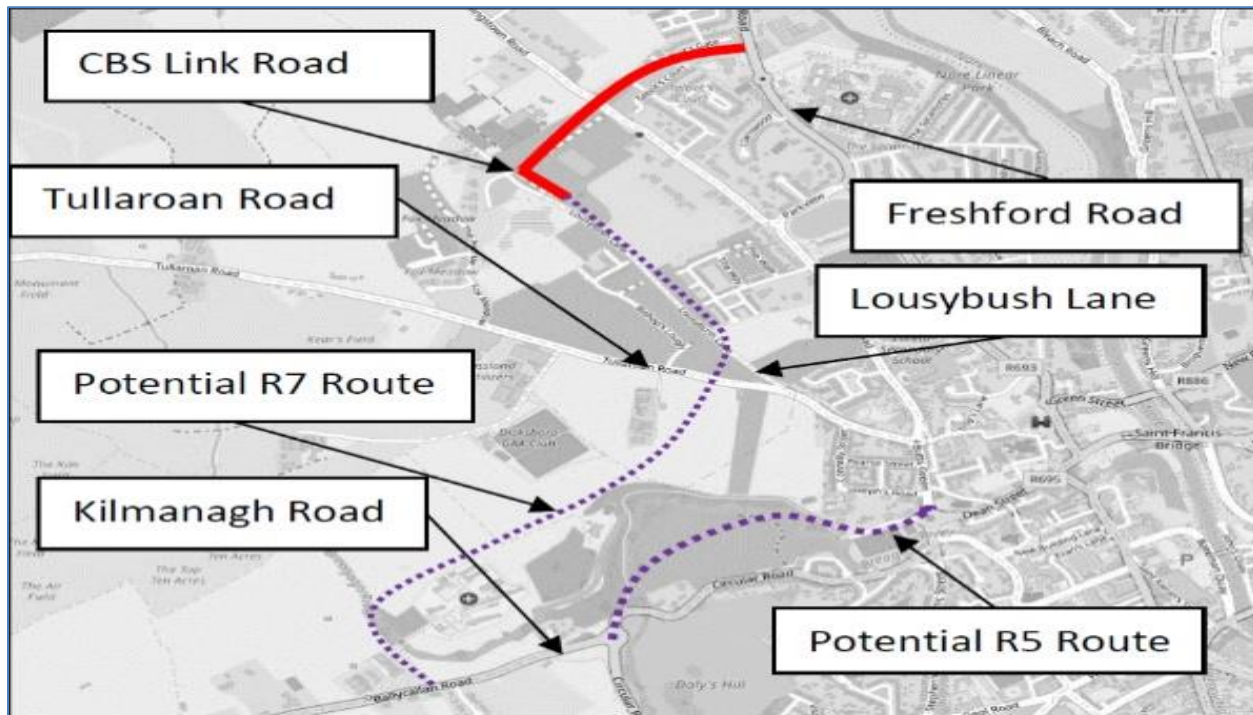


## R7 & R5 Traffic Modelling

The Department of Transport provided a specific improvement grant in 2024 for Kilkenny City traffic analysis (*Butts Green junctions*).

The grant was used to appoint Consultants to conduct traffic modeling assessment of the R7 (*Kilmanagh Road to CBS school*) and the R5 (*Kilmanagh Road to Dean Street*).

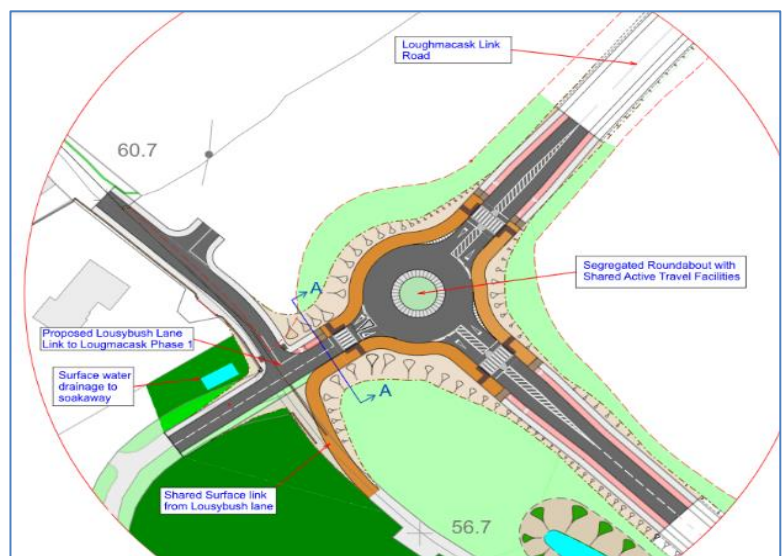
The findings of the assessment will be presented by the Consultants in November 2024.



## Lousybush Lane link to CBS

Consultants are appointed for the Part 8 Lousybush Access Road Scheme for Detail Design and tendering for construction.

The scheme will link the houses to the northern extents of Lousybush Lane to the CBS link road which will in turn allow the existing Lousybush lane to be repurposed as a shared use facility for cyclists and pedestrians as per the Loughmacask masterplan.



# PLANNING

## DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT

Planning Summary	Total October 2023	Total October 2024
Planning Applications Received	724	645
Planning Applications Granted	510	545
Planning Applications Refused	101	47
Complaints Received	76	125
Warning Letters Issued	75	67
Enforcements Notices Issued	36	39
Cases Closed	109	87

## FORWARD PLANNING

### Variation 2 to the City & County Development Plan 2021

Variation 2 to the City & County Development Plan, Small Towns and Villages, was adopted at the Council meeting on the 21<sup>st</sup> October. The adopted Variation is now available on the Council's website.

### Variation 3 to the City & County Development Plan 2021

This Variation seeks to rezone a small portion of green space in Loughboy to residential, for the purpose of a small number of Age Friendly and Disability Accessible houses. Work on this variation has commenced with the necessary environmental bodies, adjoining Local Authorities and the OPR being notified of this proposed Variation. It is estimated that the Variation will be placed on public display in the first week of December 2024.

## MASTERPLANS

### Ballyragget/Paulstown/Kilmacow

The Paulstown Masterplan was adopted at the Castlecomer Municipal District Meeting in September. A Director of Services Report on the submissions to the Ballyragget Masterplan was presented to the Castlecomer Municipal District Elected Members at their October meeting and approval of the Plan will be sought at their November meeting.

The Kilmacow Masterplan was adopted by the Piltown Municipal District Elected Members at their November Meeting.

Once all Masterplans are finalised, major objectives from all above Plans as well as the Urlingford Masterplan will be put forward as a Variation to the Kilkenny City and County Development Plan 2021 – 2027, in Q1 of 2025.

## LOCAL AREA PLANS

### Ferrybank / Belview Local Area Plan

A draft Local Area Plan document was received from the consultants appointed to carry out the Plan and this has been assessed and returned for further amendments. It is estimated that a Draft Plan will be published in late November 2024.

### Castlecomer Plan Review Process

The Plan preparation process continues, with ongoing collaboration between the Community and Planning Sections in the production of the Castlecomer Health Check, to be published shortly. This will outline the baseline information for the Plan. The Draft Settlement Plan will be accompanied by various assessments, including an Infrastructural Assessment and Environmental Assessments. An excellent response was received to the pre-draft stage, with 17 submissions, and 123 responses to the survey. The Report on the pre-draft consultation process is also now being prepared.

## **Cluster Housing Design Guidelines for Co. Kilkenny**

Consultants, Place +Urbanism Ltd, were appointed in February to carry out Cluster Housing Design Guidelines for County Kilkenny. The process initially involved several weeks of gathering data, site inspection and review and a pre-draft document presented to the planners and road engineers for discussion, with an associated workshop held in September. Further work is required following initial concepts on addressing the challenges facing all settlements within the County. A further workshop will be held late November along with staff from the Councils Roads section, Area Engineers and Environment section to further discuss the document and its concepts, with a view to progressing to a draft document for discussion in Q1 2025.

## **Taking in Charge**

The following estate was initiated at the October meeting and has been advertised should anyone wish to make a submission on the proposed taking in charge:

- TC140 An Choill Rua, Paulstown, Co Kilkenny

The following estates were taken in charge by Kilkenny County Council:

- TIC38 Clonkill, Callan, Co Kilkenny
- TIC176 Beechwood, Richview, Castlecomer Road, Co Kilkenny
- TIC182 Village Gardens/Smithsland North, Kilkenny

## **Active Land Management**

There are 18 Vacant Sites on the Vacant Sites Register, and the number of cancelled entries due to site activation or improvement is 29. The Vacant Site levy (VSL) will be replaced by the RZLT from 2025, but any outstanding VSL's will remain due to the Council. For 2024 to date, a total of €142,200 has been received in levies, bringing the total income from developers to €667,200. The CPO of Vacant Site Ref. VSR21-7, on Father Hayden Road by the Council, is progressing.

A Draft Annual Map of lands in scope for the new Residential Zoned Land Tax (RZLT) was published on the 31<sup>st</sup> January 2024. The settlements currently liable are Kilkenny City, Rosbercon, Callan and Thomastown. Submissions were received, and determinations on these submissions were notified to the landowners. Four landowner made appeals to An Bord Pleanála, and all 4 appeals have now been determined, upholding the Council's determinations. The recent Budget announced a further opportunity for farmers to seek to have their land rezoned.

## **Conservation**

The Conservation Office manages all protected structures in Kilkenny County and City. These structures are recognised for the following special interest:

- |                   |                      |
|-------------------|----------------------|
| ▪ Architectural,  | ▪ Cultural,          |
| ▪ Historical,     | ▪ Scientific,        |
| ▪ Archaeological, | ▪ Technical, Social. |
| ▪ Artistic        |                      |

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

## **Built Heritage Investment Scheme 2024:**

Conservation grant funded projects are completed. Final inspections are underway by the Conservation Officer.

## **Historic Structures Fund 2024:**

Conservation grant funded projects are completed. Final inspections are underway by the Conservation Officer.

### **Architectural Conservation Area Trails 2024:**

On site meetings with local communities in Freshford and Castlecomer have taken place. A number of community and school workshops were completed in September.

### **Built Heritage Stocktake 2024:**

A local conservation accredited consultant has been appointed to deliver a stocktake for the following settlements: Callan, Gowran, Inistioge, Johnstown, Thomastown. The stocktake will focus on the structures listed on the RPS and NIAH.

For the month of October, the Conservation Officer has completed reports on the following:

▪ Planning Referrals.....	3
▪ Further Information requests .....	1
▪ Clarification of Further Information requests.....	0
▪ Section 57 Declarations.....	0
▪ Post planning .....	1
▪ Part VIII .....	0

## **BUILDING CONTROL**

### **Valid Commencement Notices Received:**

October 2024.....	297
October 2023.....	272
October 2022.....	298
October 2021.....	391

### **Disability Access Applications Received:**

October 2024.....	48
October 2023.....	54
October 2022.....	62
October 2021.....	47

## **TOWN REGENERATION OFFICE**

### **Vacant Property Refurbishment Grant**

The following are the full statistics up to end of October, 2024:

▪ Number of Applications Submitted to-date.....	233
▪ Number of Approvals/ Approvals in Principle to-date .....	154
▪ Grant Drawdown to-date.....	13
▪ Number of Queries during the month of <b>October</b> .....	48

### **Derelict Sites**

The TRO has 2 CPO's in progress. The following is the up to date position:

- *Fr. Hayden Road, Kilkenny:* Following consent from An Bord Pleanála the Council have progressed this CPO to Vesting Order.
- *Canal Road, Johnstown (Site A):* CPO for inspection period up to 30<sup>th</sup> October, 2024

## **THRIVE**

The second Public Consultation Workshop was held in Carnegie on 14<sup>th</sup> October to review suggestions and input regarding the development of the Urban Design Strategy for John's Quay/John Street area obtained at earlier consultation event in September. The event was well attended and the Consultants presented findings and a Draft Strategy. The Consultants are now developing final draft based on the outcome of the feedback received from stakeholders and the public.



# ENVIRONMENT

## CLIMATE ACTION

### International Day of Climate Action, Oct 24<sup>th</sup>

To celebrate International Day of Climate Action (24<sup>th</sup> Oct) the Climate Action Office provided hints and tips for the public on how to take climate action in their homes, schools, businesses and community. Further details of all the advice will also be published in the forthcoming Council's "Connecting Kilkenny" newsletter.

We invited the public to join our "Kilkenny Going Green" Network to follow our climate action journey. To join, email us at [climateaction@kilkennycoco.ie](mailto:climateaction@kilkennycoco.ie)



**Kilkenny Businesses Going Green:** To coincide with International Day of Climate Action and to highlight and support Kilkenny businesses the Local Enterprise Office created and launched 4 videos showcasing the efforts, successes and challenges of four local businesses taking climate and sustainability action. See <https://www.youtube.com/user/kilkennycoco> or contact the [Local Enterprise Office](#).

### You're having a laugh!

Comedian Colm O'Regan (The Climate Worrier) hosted a Climate Action Breakfast (25<sup>th</sup> Oct) at the Savour Kilkenny Festival, with support from the Kilkenny County Council Climate Action Office. Participants enjoyed a sustainable, zero waste breakfast while listening to thought-provoking discussions on how businesses and individuals can combat climate change. Tim Butler and Fiona Deegan gave presentations on behalf of the Council.



### Spotlight on Local Climate Action

Here's a snap shot of four of the 22 communities undertaking climate action projects Co. Kilkenny, supported by the Climate Action Office, under the Community Climate Action Programme. For more details of all the communities and projects click [here](#)



**Lisdowney Community Centre & GAA Club** are making the Community Hall more energy efficient by upgrading the lighting and replacing the doors and windows, installing a water refill station and a bike rack to encourage people to be more sustainable and planting pollinator friendly plants. (Photo by Dylan Vaughan)



**Graigenamanagh:** The Abbey Hall committee are taking climate action, have introduced renewable energy to the hall by installing solar panels and an electric car charging point. This will reduce their electricity bills and reliance on fossil fuels, and support the use of electric vehicles in the community. (Photo by Dylan Vaughan)



**Inistioge** Tidy Towns have installed a water refill station in the village to discourage people from using single use plastic bottles and thereby reduce litter and lead to a cleaner environment. The water station is located in the village and is close to the sports pitch and popular walking routes and is available for everyone to use. *(Photo by Dylan Vaughan)*



**Kilmacow** Community Centre committee are making the centre more energy efficient and comfortable by installing solar panels and upgrading the heating system to reduce their reliance on fossil fuels. *(Photo by Dylan Vaughan)*

## ENVIRONMENTAL AWARENESS

### Anti-Litter and Anti-Graffiti Fund

This grant scheme helps community groups to carry out anti-litter and anti-graffiti awareness campaigns in their local area. It has a particular focus on voluntary initiatives, and on involving schools and young people in anti-litter and anti-graffiti activities.

- Examples of the kinds of initiatives supported by the grant scheme can include:
- Providing anti-littering campaign materials, like anti-litter posters and stickers
- Organising poster design competitions
- Arranging interactive talks or plays involving schools and young people in anti-litter activities
- Encouraging responsible dog owners to clean up after their pet in public places.

€28,550 in grant aid and programme costs was allocated under the Anti-Litter and Anti-Graffiti scheme for 2024. This included 4 community led murals in Graiguenamanagh, Mooncoin, The Butts and Stoneyford.





### **Team Up to Clean Up-Together for Kilkenny**

The commencement of a Roadside Litter campaign as part of the “Team Up to Clean Up-Together for Kilkenny” brand will commence the week commencing the **25<sup>th</sup> November**. This is a targeted campaign to help eliminate roadside litter at source.

Many of our local and regional roads are heavily littered and are far too dangerous to litter pick with its heavy traffic volumes, dangerous bends and the absence of a hard shoulder. Like many other roads around the County, roadside litter is accumulating.

### **Anti-Dumping Initiative 2024**

As part of the Anti-Dumping Initiative, Kilkenny County Council funded the development of a mural in Francis McManus Square which has become a blackspot for rubbish and dumping in recent years. The project was co-led by Keep Kilkenny Beautiful and Ossory Youth and is demonstrative of what can be achieved by good will, teamwork and environmental stewardship.



### **Savour Kilkenny Food Festival- Waste Baseline and Characterisation**

Savour Kilkenny has been working on sustainability measures for almost half of its 16 year history. Waste related plans for 2024 included eliminating disposable cups through 2gocup, provision of a refill water point, and demonstrating use of mygug composting.

Through the Anti Dumping Initiative 2024, the Environmental Department procured consultants to undertake waste compositional analysis and an observational assessment of the Festival with a view to creating a report of recommendations identifying key waste prevention and management goals and policies for the development of the festival and an overall strategy with an incremental approach across many actions.

### **Kilkenny Groups Excel at Tidy Towns Awards 2024**

The remarkable commitment and efforts of community organizations in Kilkenny have been celebrated at this year's Tidy Towns awards. These annual accolades honour communities dedicated to enhancing their local surroundings, showcasing the remarkable contributions of various groups throughout the County.

Inistioge Tidy Towns was honoured with both a Gold Medal and 1<sup>st</sup> Place in the County Awards category, while Coan Tidy Towns secured the Endeavour Award for the biggest improvement by an entrant in each County from the previous year.

Keep Kilkenny Beautiful continued its success by retaining its Gold Medal and finishing in 2<sup>nd</sup> place in the County Awards.

Tullahought Tidy Towns was awarded “Highly Commended” for their work under the National Pollinator Programme during the ceremony held at Croagh Park on November 1<sup>st</sup>, 2024. Their unwavering dedication to cleanliness, improving green spaces, and promoting community pride has distinguished them in this competitive field.

This year Kilkenny had two new entrants under the National Competition with Graiguenamanagh, and Owing demonstrating their exceptional efforts and work for their respective communities. All of whom scored strongly for their first time around.



## Green Teams National Programme 2024

Green Teams in public sector organisations are essential for driving sustainability initiatives, reducing resource consumption, and fostering a culture of environmental responsibility across the workplace.

Over 60 organisations have already participated in the Green Teams National Programme, designed to empower workplace environmental champions and green team members in Ireland. It includes three interactive online sessions covering sustainability, resource efficiency, green team management, and staff engagement.

Led by the EAO in conjunction with the Climate Action Team, 8 staff members of Kilkenny County Council are participating in this EPA developed programme for Q4 of 2024.

This EPA Green Enterprise scheme, equips participants with the practical knowledge and tools to make sustainable practices happen on the ground. Participants will gain technical skills, access peer support, and receive resources to enhance their green initiatives. [GTNP-Online-Programme-Summary 2022.pdf.aspx \(caro.ie\)](#)

## WASTE

### Bring Banks Usage

The Council provides and manages 47 Bring Centers across the City and County. A total of **1703 tonnes** of recyclables were collected from our Bring Centers to date in 2024. This represents a 1% decrease from the same period in 2023. Aldi - Kilkenny City (15 tonnes collected), Loughboy shopping centre (11 tonnes collected) Lidl - Johnswell, Kilkenny City (10 tonnes collected) and are the busiest locations in the City. Aldi - Ferrybank (11 tonnes collected), Lidl - Thomastown (7 tonnes collected) and Graigue-managh (6 tonnes collected) 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.

### Dunmore Civic Amenity Site (CAS)

The annual Bulk Waste week at Dunmore ran for the first week of October 2024. This is an Ant-Dumping Initiative (ADI) which sets out to encourage the public to clean up their unwanted bulk waste and furniture in the correct manner at an authorised facility. Domestic loads of any size could be disposed of at Dunmore for a set fee of €5 for the duration of the Bulk Waste week. This resulted in almost 12 tonnes of bulky fabric covered furniture and almost 38 tonnes of timber deposited at the site. The month of October also saw 114 tonnes of Municipal Solid Waste, 86 tonnes of Municipal Dry Waste and 33 tonnes of green garden waste.

The various other recycling streams deposited at the Dunmore facility during the month of October and their respective tonnages can be seen in Table 1 below.

TABLE 1

Recycling Stream	Quantity (Tonnes)
Cardboard	9.2
Plastic	5.9
Paper	10.4
Green Waste	33
Food Waste	1.0
Mattresses	3.0
Metal	11.1
Timber	37.7
Textiles	2.5
Tetra-pac	0.3
Waste Oil	1.1
WEEE	14.1

As part of the Landfill Aftercare the landfill gas flare continues to run 24hrs per day seven days per week extracting and burning approximately 35m<sup>3</sup> of landfill gas per hour.

### Water Quality – Farm Inspections

Farm inspections are still ongoing and are on track to reach 241 inspections by the end of the year.

### Septic tank Inspections

The Environment office has completed 61 inspections which is 10 more than the target of 51. We will be also closing out the remaining historical open advisory notices dating back to 2013 and this process is already in motion with people contacting us hoping to have them closed out after contact was made with letters. Septic tank grant approvals are currently ongoing. Upgrade works and work approvals are being carried out with various applicants who are applying for the grant. The Environment Office are still dealing with a large volume of queries in relation to the criteria for eligibility for the grant.

### Section 4 Discharge Licences

The Environment office will be closing out all 25 section 4 discharge licenses in Q4.

### Misconnections

The Council is currently in the process of investigating a serious misconnection in Thomastown. Investigation has been completed through review of cameras at local businesses. Review identified a truck pouring waste water into a manhole which is discharging into a river. The license plate of the truck has not yet been identified and more investigation will be required. Samples were taken and tested from the river showing very poor results.

### Environment Complaints

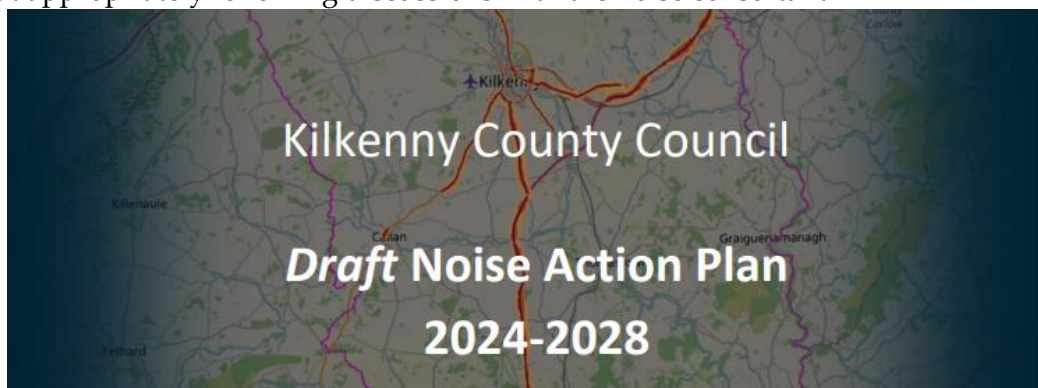
All Environmental complaints received are logged on the CRM (Customer Relations Management) System. The number of complaints that have been received and logged for October 2024 is 85 compared to 82 for the same period last year. The number of complaints received in the ten months to the end of October 2024 is up 8% when compared to the same ten-month period in 2023. The nature of these complaints included littering, illegal dumping, burning of waste and abandoned cars. The majority continue to be related to littering and illegal dumping. Whilst every effort is made to bring unacceptable environmental practice into compliance, Environment Enforcement staff continue to manage significant enforcement cases progressing through prosecution cases.

### Noise

Kilkenny County Council with support of Noise Consultants Limited have completed the draft Noise Action Plan 2024-2028. The *draft* Noise Action Plan is aimed at strategic long-term management of environmental noise from major roads. It does not apply to noise from domestic activities, neighbourhood noise, noise at workplaces or noise inside means of transport or due to military activities in military areas.

The plan is now at the public consultation stage between 30<sup>th</sup> October and 11<sup>th</sup> of November 2024 with submissions being accepted until 25<sup>th</sup> November 2024. The final plan is on target to be submitted to the EPA in December 2024.

During the month of November 2 submissions have been received. These will be reviewed and closed out appropriately following discussions with the noise consultant



## PARKS & SPECIAL PROJECTS

### South East Greenway

Works are progressing well on Lot 5A of the Greenway, the surfacing works along this 5.5km section, from Ferrybank to Curraghmore, are now substantially completed. Fencing works and the installation of the timber screen fencing along Lot 2, Ferrybank, are also substantially completed. Works at the permanent greenway carpark at Ballyverneen, Glenmore, are also expected to be concluded this month thereafter a safety audit will be undertaken prior to the full opening of the 39 bay carpark. The programme remains on track for the works contract to be completed by the end of the year, thereafter, this section of Greenway will be subject to a safety audit and minor finishing out works to facilitate the opening of same to the public in Q1 2025.



The installation of the public lights within Lots 1 & 3, Roberson to Raheen, is programmed for mid-November and to facilitate these works this section of the Greenway will be closed to the public from Monday 11<sup>th</sup> to 15<sup>th</sup> November from 8.00 a.m. to 5.00 p.m. and from Monday the 18<sup>th</sup> to 20<sup>th</sup> November from 8.00 a.m. to 5.00 p.m.

Topographical survey works were also recently completed on Lot 4a Redbridge & Mountelliott, Lot 7 Aylwardstown and Lot 8a Rosbercon trailhead carpark.

A survey carried out on Phase One, the 6km opened section from Rosbercon to Glenmore, found that 41,260 trips were undertaken on the Greenway for the 12 month period from September 2023 to August 2024. This data is very encouraging and bodes well for the future Greenway when the full 24km scheme is opened to public and the associated marketing and promotion campaign is activated for same. *(Images along Lot 5A –showing finished greenway surface).*

### Woodstock to South East Greenway Link

Following the preparation and submission of the Phase 0 Project Outline Document (POD), the Council has received formal approval from Transport Infrastructure Ireland (TII), to progress to Phase 1, Concept and Feasibility stage for the above scheme. This phase, which is programmed to take 3 to 4 months will develop and investigate in further detail the feasibility of the project and implement the project management structure. A Project Execution Plan (PEP) and a Feasibility Report will be produced at the end of this phase and presented to TII for approval to advance to Phase 2 Option Selection.

### Outdoor Recreation Infrastructure Scheme

The Minister for Rural and Community Development, Heather Humphreys TD, recently launched the 2024/2025 Outdoor Recreation Infrastructure Scheme. An indicative budget of €20 million is available for successful projects nationally under the Scheme. Similar to other Schemes, funding will be provided under four different categories of project Measures based on the size of the investment requirement. A list of eligible activities is detailed below:-



		
<b>Land-Based</b>	<b>Water-Based</b>	<b>Air-Based</b>
Walking	Canoeing/Kayaking	Paragliding
Hillwalking/Hiking	Rowing	Hang-gliding
Leisure cycling	Wild swimming	
Mountain biking	Surfing	
Horse riding	Coasteering	
Running	Wind surfing/Kite surfing	
Orienteering	Sailing	
Bouldering, Scrambling, Rockclimbing, Mountaineering	Diving	
Caving	Angling	
Play in nature	Stand Up Paddleboarding	
<b>Passive enjoyment of the outdoors</b>		

Under the Scheme, Local Authorities can submit a maximum of applications under the following Measures:

- 6 (max) Measure 1, value €40k per application (*increased from €30k in previous years*);
- 3 (max) Measure 2, maximum value €200k per application;
- 1 (max) Measure 3, maximum value €500k;
- 2 (max) Project Development, maximum value €50K.
- Under the scheme applicants are required to provide a minimum of 10% match funding of the allocated grant.

The closing date for applications is as follows:

- Measure 1 & Project Development – 14<sup>th</sup> February 2025
- Measures 2 & 3 – 28<sup>th</sup> March 2025.

Elected Members are invited to contact the Capital Delivery Office & Parks Department with any Expressions of Interest they or their constituents would like to have considered as part of the application preparation process.

### Tree Maintenance Programme

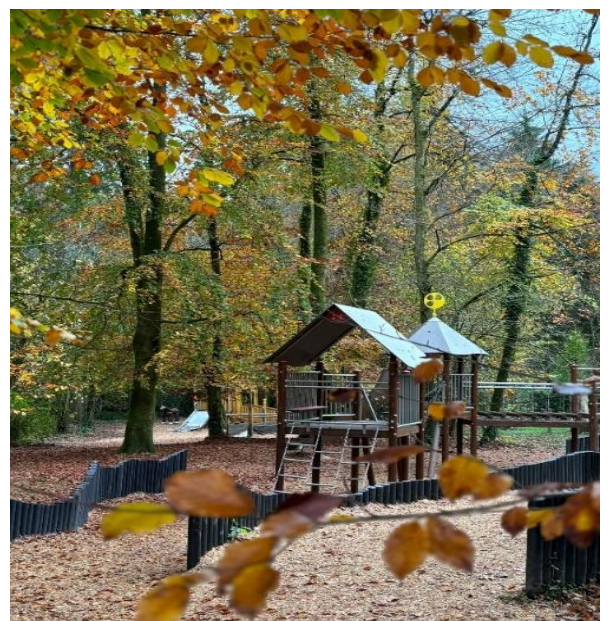
Each year, our office receives numerous inquiries from both Elected Members and the public regarding tree maintenance. This prompts an assessment of each tree's health and condition to determine the necessary maintenance, if any. The dormant period of trees is the optimal time for such work. Currently, we are committed to tree maintenance in Inistoige, Cuffsgrange, Paulstown, Ballyragget, Kilkenny City, and Thomastown. Our tree maintenance programme commenced in earnest at the beginning of November. The works are divided into geographical lots and the tendering process to engage the services of specialist tree surgeons is ongoing.

### Woodstock Gardens & Arboretum

Autumn has marked the commencement of our key seasonal tasks. The wildflower meadow has been cut and gathered. Extensive pruning and mulching has been carried out in the playground area, including pruning of the willow tunnel and crown lifting of trees to allow more light into the playground. The woodland arboretum is also receiving a tidy-up around the base of the trees.

Planned renovation works will take place in the walled garden over the winter months, rejuvenating the fruit bushes and espalier fruit trees. Additionally, extensive weeding and mulching of the herbaceous border will ensure it looks its best for the coming year.

Season tickets for the 2025 season, costing just €50 for 12 months access, will be promoted as ideal Christmas gifts over the coming weeks.





### Historic Structures Fund -Woodstock House

Works are continuing to secure the rear elevation of the house, fronting onto the Winter Garden, which entails the stabilisation of the window opens with steel frames and tie bars, as required. This work is programmed to be completed mid-November, but is weather dependant. The next phase provides for tree surgeons to recommence with the clearance of trees inside the house, which can now be accessed from the scaffolding, a mature beach tree adjacent to the house will also be removed. These works are in addition to the clearance of sapling trees and extensive vegetation to the rear of the house carried out earlier in the year.



### Playgrounds



Ongoing maintenance continues around the County in our playgrounds and parks to maintain them to a high standard. This month, in our playgrounds, the focus was on the replacement of old or worn parts of play equipment and the re-mulching of soft play areas. In Ferrybank Neighbourhood Park footpath rehabilitation works were completed. In Goresbridge works were undertaken to redefine the walking trail which compliments the painting of the play equipment which was carried out earlier this year.

Key enhancements between now and the end of the year include the installation of a new accessible roundabout, associated pathways and a communication panel in both Graiguenamanagh and Thomastown playgrounds. In the latter safety surfacing and 2 rockers will also be installation.

In Coon playground, a new accessible roundabout and communication panel will be installed while in Castlecomer playground a new multi-use play-unit, communication panel and safety surfacing will be provided.

The above works, allows for the removal of old equipment that is no longer fit for purpose and will see an investment of circa. €127,000 in these four playgrounds this year over and above general maintenance works.

*Recent works in Ferrybank and Goresbridge*



## LEO/ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

### Summary of 2024 Awards to Businesses

- €434,156 in direct financial assistance has been approved for 17 manufacture/export service businesses located throughout the County.
- €342,014 awarded in Business Expansion Grant assistance and €30,000 in GradStart assistance.
- €32,480 awarded in start-up/priming assistance.
- €29,662 awarded in feasibility study grant assistance.
- 6 Technical Assistance for Micro Exporter grants awarded to support businesses in exploring new export market opportunities.
- 21 businesses have commenced LEAN one to one consultancy programmes to investigate possible resource efficiencies and process improvements their businesses.
- 10 Businesses are availing of the Digital Start programme to prepare and implement a plan for the adoption of digital tools and techniques across the enterprise.
- 33 business have been approved a Trading Online Voucher totalling €67,000 to support the enhancement of their online trading capacity.
- 19 Green for Business grants awarded with 3 businesses awarded an Energy Efficiency Grant. These schemes support businesses to becoming greener and environmentally friendly.
- 5 applicants have been supported to make loan applications to the Micro Finance Ireland loan fund.
- 993 participants on focused small business training, including 57 people participating on the Starting Your Business Programme.
- 434 businesses have availed of specialised business specific mentoring on a variety of topics including finance, marketing, social media marketing and HR.

### National Women's Enterprise Day 2024

130 female entrepreneurs took part in the Kilkenny and Carlow National Women's Enterprise Day event which took place on Thursday 17<sup>th</sup> October in The Woodford Dolmen Hotel. Shonagh Lyons was the event MC and she interviewed Ambassador Irene Frisby from FQS and keynote speaker Sinead O'Brien of Vacious Shapeware and this was followed by a guest panel discussion. Both speakers shared their entrepreneurial journeys, the challenges they have faced and their optimistic outlooks, and the business wisdom they have picked up along the way.



### New Medieval Mile Video launched as part of Shopkilkenny Campaign



Kilkenny retailers joined forces with Kilkenny County Council to create an eye-catching video to drive footfall and showcase the City's retail offering and visitor attractions along the route of Ireland's Medieval Mile.

The video and related article outlining the reasons why Kilkenny is the ideal location for shoppers went live on Independent.ie on October 24<sup>th</sup> and can be seen through the below link:

*Kilkenny: Five reasons why Ireland's Medieval Mile is the ideal location for shoppers | Irish Independent*



### **Green Case Studies launched as part of International Climate Action Day**

The official launch of a series of Green Case Study videos took place in County Hall on 24<sup>th</sup> October to celebrate International Day of Climate Action 2024. The initiative was undertaken to highlight the challenges faced by business in the sustainability journey, and also to showcase the fantastic progress that has been made to date by business in the County.

Four businesses of varied types and sizes participated in this initiative, and the video output demonstrates the success that can be achieved in the green transformation through small steps in the right direction and ongoing commitment to change.

The four participating businesses were:

- Connolly's Red Mills, Goresbridge;
- Murphy Jewellers, High Street;
- Peter Walsh & Sons, Three Castles, and
- Nicholas Mosse, Bennettsbridge.

The videos are available now on the County Council YouTube Channel [kilkennycoco - YouTube](#)



### **Broadband/ Digital Update**

The 'OurKidsCode' Programme continues to be rolled out in the Kilkenny Mayfair Library throughout November with three sessions taking place on 19<sup>th</sup>, 21<sup>st</sup> and 26<sup>th</sup> November. This is a fun and engaging way for parents and kids to explore STEM and coding together.

### **NIGHT TIME ECONOMY**

#### **Kilkenny City Night Time Economy Diversification Fund**

A number of events took place in October that have been funded under this scheme. They included:

- Uptown Band at Ryans
- Kilkenny Access for All Disability & Awareness Training for NTE Businesses
- Wild Wednesday Nights at The Reptile Zoo
- Kilkenny Game Fest at The Club House Hotel
- Red Book of Ossory Talks at St. Canices
- Spoken Word Events at Butler Gallery
- Autumn Pottery Nights at The Happy Pottery
- Cult Collective Night of Short Films at The Watergate Theatre

## Taste Kilkenny Night Market and Abbaesque at The Castle



In collaboration with the Savour Festival, Taste Kilkenny and the Night Time Economy funded the first night market (*extended until 9.00 p.m. on Saturday 26<sup>th</sup> October*) and the Abbaesque Concert at Kilkenny Castle. The free concert was fully booked out and there was a wonderful atmosphere around the City.

Many of the attendees also visited the extended night market before and after the concert which demonstrated the demand for future initiatives



## Night Time Economy & NTA Night Transport Campaign

As part of the Night Time Economy Action Plan, a marketing campaign is underway to encourage people to use public transport after 6.00p.m.

The two-week campaign targeted those who were attending the Savour Festival and focused on radio, media and social media advertising to create greater awareness around the availability of transport at night.

## KILKENNY TOURISM



Kilkenny Tourism working in partnership with Kilkenny County Council continues in its marketing and PR campaigns for Kilkenny throughout the Autumn season. Focus of the campaign included promotion of Kilkenny as a getaway location for families at midterm. "Feasts and Beasts" included a food competition that attracted many additional followers to visit Kilkenny's website.



## FOOD COMPETITION



**Prize:** Overnight stay in the Manor House at Mount Juliet Estate, 8-course meal at Lady Helen and a selection of treats on departure prepared by Chef John Kelly.

Launched Sunday 25th August & will run until 31st October.

*As of 3rd September*

**6,128**  
WEB FORM  
ENTRIES



**2,166**  
WEB FORM  
ENTRIES

**3,962**  
META AD  
ENTRIES

**4,398**  
NEWSLETTER  
SIGN-UPS

71% conversion rate

Compared to shopping competition  
August 1st - October 31st 2023

**17,344**  
TOTAL ENTRIES

**11,027**  
NEWSLETTER SIGN-UPS



## Festivals and Events

Kilkenny County Council continues to support the year-round calendar of events with October welcoming the Savour Kilkenny Food Festival from 25<sup>th</sup> to 28<sup>th</sup> October, 2024.

One of Ireland's favourite Food Festivals, Savour Kilkenny marks the end of autumn and is held in the stunning setting of Kilkenny's Medieval City. Kilkenny is home to some of Ireland and Europe's best food.

Savour Kilkenny 2024 brought 67,000 to the area over the weekend.



## Taste Kilkenny



October saw Taste Kilkenny continue in its support of our local food producers and local hotels and restaurants and worked to cross promote all the wonderful Savour Activity through its social media platforms.

Taste Kilkenny supported the Savour festival and showcased all our local food producers at the Savour event:

## AVEA Conference hosted in Kilkenny

October saw Kilkenny welcome AVEA, the national representative association for the Visitor Experience and Attractions (VEA) industry in Ireland for its annual conference. This conference is particularly relevant for Kilkenny. AVEA provides advocacy and a forum for its members to network. Kilkenny County Council Tourism budget supported the conference and encouraged use of all local business in the delivery of its programme.



## 2024 Travel Award for Kilkenny



Kilkenny has been honoured with the title of "Cultural Destination" at the 2024 World Luxury Travel Awards. This accolade recognises Kilkenny's exceptional commitment to providing unparalleled luxury experiences to travellers from around the globe.

The application was made by Kilkenny County Council as a testament to the hard work and passion of everyone involved in making Kilkenny a world class tourism destination. Valerie O'Sullivan, who collected the award at the awards ceremony hosted at Galgorm, Co. Antrim on 19<sup>th</sup> October, was delighted to accept the award on behalf of the Tourism and Hospitality Sector in Kilkenny.



# HOUSING

The Directorate of Housing incorporates a wide range of services for applicants and tenants to facilitate and support the provision of independent and supported accommodation. The following information gives the up to date progress for 2024 under the various support services.

## AFFORDABLE HOMES

Kilkenny County Council continue to work in partnership with developers Whitebox, Cairn Homes & Glenveagh in delivering Affordable Homes across Kilkenny City and Ferrybank.

There are a limited number of homes available in all 3 developments. Under the Affordable Purchase Scheme successful applicants will be able to avail of a reduction on the full market price, of between up to 20% & 25%, depending on the price of the property and the applicant's own financial circumstances.

Applications can only be made online via the dedicated application portal accessible via the council website as follows:

<https://affordablehousing.kilkennycoco.ie/abbeymeadows>

<https://kilkennycoco.ie/nyne-park>

<https://kilkennycoco.ie/cluain-glasan>

Application portals remain open for all 3 developments.



House Type	Floor Area Sq M	Market Value	Minimum Affordable Purchase Price	Maximum Affordable Purchase Price	Gross Income Threshold*	Max % Discount
4 bed Semi-Detached	123	€349,000	€274,000	€331,550	€74,599	21%
3 bed End Terrace	103	€325,000	€250,000	€308,750	€69,469	23%
3 bed Mid Terrace	100	€315,000	€240,000	€299,250	€67,331	24%

*\*Indicative figures – income assessed by Kilkenny County Council*



House Type	Floor Area Sq M	Market Value	Minimum Affordable Purchase Price	Maximum Affordable Purchase Price	Gross Income Threshold*	Max % Discount
3 bed Mid Terrace	117.25	€345,000	€255,000	€327,750	€73,744	25%
3 bed End Terrace	117	€360,000	€270,000	€342,000	€76,950	25%

*\*Indicative figures – income assessed by Kilkenny County Council*

**CLUAIN**

**Glenveagh**



House Type	Floor Area Sq M	Market Value	Minimum Affordable Purchase Price	Maximum Affordable Purchase Price	Gross Income Threshold*	Max % Discount
Semi-Detached	96.40	€365,000	€290,000	€346,750	€78,019	20%

*\*Indicative figures – income assessed by Kilkenny County Council*

The Affordable Homes are generally targeted at first-time buyers (*exceptions apply*) who need assistance bridging the gap between their own available funds (*including the Help to Buy Scheme*), the mortgage that they can obtain and the cost of the new home. Under the Affordable Purchase Scheme eligible buyers will be able to purchase their own new home by availing of this shared equity scheme. Kilkenny County Council will retain an equity share and successful applicants have the option of buying out this share over time. Equity shares are calculated on an individual basis and are linked to an applicant's income, their savings and their mortgage capacity.

It is important that potential applicants familiarise themselves with the eligibility criteria and compile the requisite documents to complete their applications subject to them meeting the qualifying criteria. Full information is available at <https://kilkennycoco.ie/affordable-homes>

It is strongly recommended applicants have Mortgage Approval in principle prior to applying for this scheme, as applicants will be required to demonstrate their capacity to purchase. Only valid applications (*i.e. applications with all required documentation submitted*) will go forward for assessment. Applications which are incomplete or those not accompanied by the required documentation will be deemed invalid.

Any queries in relation to any of the above to [affordablehousing@kilkennycoco.ie](mailto:affordablehousing@kilkennycoco.ie) and a member of the team will revert back.

## HOMELESS SERVICES

### Homeless Prevention Measures

The Government have put in place a number of measures to prevent homelessness arising from the reactivation of notices of termination of tenancies in June 2023.

We are currently providing advice and directing Tenants to the appropriate services required to prevent homelessness. Where a household is in receipt of a valid notice to quit and requires assistance in establishing what options are available to them to avoid potential homelessness they are advised to contact the Housing Office at its dedicated email address [NTQEnquiries@kilkennycoco.ie](mailto:NTQEnquiries@kilkennycoco.ie) Further details are available on [www.kilkennycoco.ie](http://www.kilkennycoco.ie).

Any tenants who may have received a notice of termination or a landlord who has issued a notice of termination to their tenants or who may wish to in the coming months should direct any queries to the dedicated email provided and all queries will be responded to in a timely manner.

HOMELESS SERVICES SUMMARY OCTOBER 2024	
<b>Homeless Presentations</b>	63
<b>Homeless Assessment Outcomes</b>	
Prevention & Interventions	44
Emergency Service	13
Not eligible / Did not avail of service	4
<b>HAP Place Finder Service</b>	
No of Homeless HAP tenancies at 1 <sup>st</sup> day of month	152
No of Homeless HAP tenancies created during month	2
No of Homeless HAP tenancies in place at last day of month	154
Number of Homeless HAP tenancy breakdowns	2
Other Social Housing Tenancies supported/created during month	4
<b>Households in Temporary Emergency Supported Accommodation at 31<sup>st</sup> October</b>	32
<b>Households in Temporary Emergency B&amp;B accommodation</b>	12
<b>Households in Temporary Emergency B&amp;B Accommodation that are families</b>	7
<b>Households (singles/couples) in Transition Emergency Accommodation (Own Front Door)</b>	19
<b>Households (Families) in Transition Emergency Accommodation (OFD)</b>	7

## SOCIAL HOUSING ASSESSMENT

SOCIAL HOUSING SUPPORT APPLICATION SUMMARY OCTOBER 2024	
Number awaiting Social Housing Support at 31 <sup>st</sup> October ( <i>Gross Need</i> )	<b>1,419</b>
Number awaiting Social Housing Support at 31 <sup>st</sup> October ( <i>Net Need</i> )	<b>646</b>
Number of Social Housing Applications received in October	<b>80</b>
Number of applications incomplete/awaiting further information/clarification	<b>31</b>
Number of applications validated and ready for assessment during the month	<b>19</b>
Number of applications assessed during October	<b>25</b>
Number of applications awaiting assessment as at 31 <sup>st</sup> October	<b>90</b>

HAP SUMMARY YEAR TO DATE 2024	
Total active HAP tenancies	460
New HAP tenancies set up	47
HAP allocated Social Housing	113
Closed HAP tenancies	131
HAP Rent Reviews	226
HAP Other tenancy amendments	368

### TENANCY MANAGEMENT

The Tenancy Management Team deal with allocations, maintenance and anti-social behaviour complaints in relation to our tenants. Below is a summary of activity in October and to date this year:

LA/RAS/Leasing allocations in October (offers made): .....	<b>6</b>
LA/RAS/Leasing allocations to October (offers made): .....	<b>114</b>
Tenant Liaison Officer cases in October: .....	<b>60</b>
<b>Maintenance Calls for October: .....</b>	<b>679</b>
<b>Maintenance Calls year to date: .....</b>	<b>5,698</b>

Where anti-social behaviour is ongoing, tenancy notifications and warning notices continue to be served and monitored. Where tenants engage in anti-social behaviour relating to offences under the Misuse of Drugs Act or violence and intimidation resulting in criminal charges the local authority will take enforcement action to terminate the tenancy and alternative social housing supports will not be provided.

### Traveller Accommodation Programme 2025–2029

Kilkenny County Council published it's draft Traveller Accommodation Programme 2025– 2029 on Friday the 27<sup>th</sup> September. A copy of the Draft Traveller Accommodation Programme 2025– 2029 is available for inspection at County Hall, John Street, Kilkenny and the following Branch Libraries during normal business hours:

- Mayfair Library, Parliament Street, Kilkenny, R95 N23R
- Ferrybank Library, Ferrybank Shopping Centre, Ferrybank, via Waterford, X91 D211
- Castlecomer Library, Kilkenny Street, Castlecomer, Co Kilkenny, R95AH33
- Graiguenamanagh Library, Convent Road, Graiguenamanagh, Co Kilkenny, R95 V342

It is also available on the Kilkenny County Council website at [www.kilkennycoco.ie](http://www.kilkennycoco.ie)

Submissions for the Draft Traveller Accommodation Programme are invited and should be forwarded in writing to:

- [travelleraccommodation@kilkennycoco.ie](mailto:travelleraccommodation@kilkennycoco.ie)
- Traveller Accommodation Programme, Housing Section, Kilkenny County Council, John's Green House, John's Green, Kilkenny, R95 CX92.

The latest date for submission is 22<sup>nd</sup> November 2024 and the Programme is to be adopted by 31<sup>st</sup> of December 2024.



## PRIVATE HOUSE GRANTS

The 2024 housing grants allocation has been received from the Department of Housing in the amount of **€2,161,278** comprised of €1,729,023 (80%) grant and €432,256 (20%) Kilkenny County Council contribution. This allocation exceeds the amount included in the budget for 2024 and reflects the departments confidence in the grants section to meet and exceed its targets for 2024.

### GRANTS APPROVED & COMMITTED TO 31<sup>ST</sup> OCTOBER, 2024

SCHEME	NUMBER	AMOUNT
HGD - Housing Adaptation Grant	167	€1,807,260
MAG - Mobility Aid Grant	11	€35,911
HOP - Housing Aid for Older Persons	276	€1,395,144
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>454</b>	<b>€3,238,315</b>

### GRANTS PAID OUT TO 31<sup>ST</sup> OCTOBER, 2024

SCHEME	NUMBER	AMOUNT
HGD - Housing Adaptation Grant	64	€623,876
MAG - Mobility Aid Grant	6	€22,492
HOP - Housing Aid for Older Persons	159	€728,227
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>229</b>	<b>€1,374,595</b>

## HOUSING LOANS

The Tenant (*Incremental*) Purchase Scheme 2016, which allows local authority tenants to buy their homes is being revised as of from 29<sup>th</sup> January, 2024. Changes to the scheme are as follows:

- **Minimum Income Requirements:** The minimum income required for an applicant to be eligible to apply under the scheme has been revised from €12,500 to €11,000 per annum. (At least 50% of which must come from a reckonable primary source of income).
- **Primary Sources of Income:** In addition to employment and the State Pension (Contributory and Non-Contributory) being considered as primary sources of income, the Widow's, Widower's, Surviving Civil Partner's (Contributory and Non-Contributory Pension), Blind Pension, Invalidity Pension and Disability Allowance are now also considered primary sources of income.
- **Time Receiving Social Housing Supports:** The period of time tenants will be required to be in receipt of social housing support to be considered eligible under the scheme remains at 10 consecutive years. However, in the case of joint tenancies only one tenant is now required to have been in receipt of social housing supports for 10 years.
- **Income Included/Not Included as a Secondary Income For Assessment:** Changes have been made to income that can be considered and not considered as secondary income when assessing for discount.

### HOUSING LOAN ACTIVITY 1<sup>ST</sup> JANUARY - 31<sup>ST</sup> OCTOBER, 2024

Loan Type	Received	Approved	Amount Approved	Number Paid	Amount Paid
Local Authority Home Loan	36	8	€1,102,700	10	€1,467,326
Caravan Loan	0	0	€0.00	0	€0
<b>Total</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>€1,102,700</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>€1,467,326</b>

## VOIDS

At the end of October 2024 there were **42 vacant units** of Local Authority accommodation awaiting refurbishment or remediation works. Works are ongoing on this voids maintenance programme and its envisaged that a minimum of 75 units will be complete under this programme during 2024.

## HOUSING CAPITAL DELIVERY

### Social Housing Currently On Site - 17 projects - 272 homes

	Scheme	Project Name	Approved Housing Body	Completion Year	Total Units Expected
1	SHIP Construction Single Stage	HS 133 - Old Fire Station, Thomastown		2024	1
2	AHB Calf Turnkey + Part V	Cluain Glasson, Granges Road, Kilkenny City	Clúid	2024	8
3	CALF Part V	Friary Walk, Callan, Co Kilkenny	Clúid	2024	3
4	SHIP Construction	HS 110 Crokers Hill, Kennyswell Road		2024	88
5	SHIP Construction Turnkey + Part V	HS 196 - Castleoaks Kilkenny City Phase 1		2024	30
6	CAS Construction Turnkey	70-71 Patrick Street, Kilkenny	Clanmil	2025	4
7	SHIP Construction Single Stage	HS 163 - Old Community Centre Loughboy, Kilkenny		2025	2
8	CAS Construction	8/9 Kilkenny Street, Castlecomer	Good Shepherd Services Ltd	2025	3
9	SHIP Construction Turnkey + Part V	HS 179 - Marnellsmeadows, Callan Road, Kilkenny		2025	22
10	SHIP Construction Turnkey	HS 178 - Abbeymeadows, Abbeygate, Ferrybank		2025	18
11	LA Part V	HS 214 College Park Crescent, Wetland, Kilkenny City		2025	10
12	CAS Construction	"Red Barn" Patrick Street, Ballyragget	Good Shepherd Services Ltd	2025	11
13	SHIP Single Stage Renewal	Hs 187 - Main Street Gowran Co Kilkenny R95F4E1		2025	1
14	SHIP Single Stage Renewal	HS 198 - 6 Maudlin Street, Thomastown		2025	1
15	SHIP Construction Turnkey + Part V	Hs 206 - Castleoaks Phase 2 Breagagh Valley Kilkenny City		2025	20
16	SHIP Construction Turnkey + Part V	HS 208 - 18 Units at Ardreagh Lumper Lane Urlingford Co Kilkenny		2025	15
17	SHIP Construction Design & Build	HS 150 - Abbey Hill, Newtown, Thomastown		2025	28
<b>Grand Total</b>					<b>272</b>



*Works ongoing at Crokers Hill Kilkenny – 88 units + Community Centre – picture shows community centre facing Kennyswell Road*

## COMMUNITY

### Gowran MUGA

Kilkenny County Council received Town & Village funding and allocated a grant through the Community & Cultural Capital Facilities Scheme to develop a multi-use games area and play park in Gowran. Works on the MUGA and play park are now complete. The Council will also be completing car parking and the disability access for this project. The MUGA has been shortlisted for the Chambers Ireland Excellence in Local Government Awards under the Inclusion and Diversity category to be held in November.



*Multi-use games area and play park in Gowran*

### Age Friendly

Kilkenny County Council Age Friendly Programme, The Older People's Council, Kilkenny Recreation and Sports Partnership, HSE, An Garda and Kilkenny Library Service teamed up to develop a programme of events and activities. These events were free of charge and ran for 8 weeks from Friday, 6<sup>th</sup> September, 2024 until Friday, 1<sup>st</sup> November, 2024. Located in the new Mayfair Library, the events provided an opportunity for older people to receive useful information as well as providing the opportunity to chat and meet with people.

The events had very positive feedback with up to 70 people attending each week. The programme topics included Ageing Well in the Community, Dementia Awareness, Physical Activity for older people, Age Friendly Strategy Consultation, Age Friendly Healthy Homes presentation, Assisted Decision Making and Safeguarding, Minding Your Wellbeing Self Care workshop and Community Safety Talk.



*Age Friendly Dementia Awareness Talk at Mayfair Library*

Kilkenny County Council are currently developing a new Age Friendly Strategy. The new strategy aims to build on the progress of the Age Friendly Programme in recent years and to continue to make Kilkenny a more inclusive and age friendly place to live and visit. Community Consultations have taken place across the County in Thomastown, Castlecomer, Mullinavat, and in Kilkenny City. There was good attendance and engagement at each of the consultations contributing to the new strategy.



## INTEGRATION

The Local Authority Integration Team (LAIT) provides on-going integration supports to people categorised in any of the following groups living in the City and County of Kilkenny.

- International Protection (IP) Applicants,
- Programme Refugees,
- Beneficiaries of Temporary Protection (BOTP),
- Those with Refugee, Subsidiary Protection, or Permission to Remain status.

The LAIT's aim to link people in any of these groups with local service providers appropriate to the need of the person. We act as the direct point of contact to advocate, provide information, guidance and advice to queries, as they arise.

Currently, there are 177 International Protection Applicants (*164 Male, 12 female and 1 baby girl*), and 693 BOTP's in County Kilkenny. 65% IP's and 45% BOTP's are employed.

In October, the LAITs have worked with 48 International Protection Applicants, with 119 queries across health access; education including English language; traineeships; employment access; DSP supports; community engagement; bank account setup; independent living; youth support; transport; accommodation; legal/immigration.

Two group sessions, were held, with 27 attendees, covering topics on IPAS house rules and new residents connecting with partner organisations – KLP and KCETB.

We, also, worked with 49 BOTPs across 20 individual meetings and 2 group sessions addressing queries/topics such as health access; education; employment; DSP; independent living; evictions; legal/immigration, road safety and resettlement.

## **FIRE SERVICES**

### **Fire Safety Certificate Applications**

81 applications for Fire Safety Certificates were received to date.

- A Fire Safety Certificate is a Certificate issued by the Building Control Authority which states that the works or building to which the application relates will, if constructed in accordance with the plans and specifications submitted, comply with the requirements of Part B of the Second Schedule to the Building Regulations 1997.
- A large number of risk premises throughout Kilkenny City and County have been subject to review and fire safety certification applications to ensure minimum standards.

### **Fire Services Acts 1981 and 2003**

- Fire Prevention staff made targeted inspections of premises both to provide advice and to enforce legislation during 2023.
- 58 Licence Applications were processed under Section 24 of the Fire Services Acts 1981 and 2003.
- 7 licence applications under the Dangerous Substances legislation were assessed to date.
- 91 Fire Safety Inspections of premises have taken place in 2024.

### **Fire Brigade Operations**

The existence of a professional Fire & Rescue Service is fundamental to public and personal safety. The Fire Service plays a crucial role in making our communities safer, whether it be preventing and protecting people from fire and other risks or responding swiftly and effectively to the incidents and emergencies that occur 24 hours per day/7 days per week/365 days per year. The Brigades have attended 862 callouts to date in 2024. These incidents included a number of road traffic collisions, house fires, ambulance assists, car fires, chimney fires and automatic fire alarm activations. We received 6 calls on Halloween night and only one of those callouts were Halloween related.

### **Recruitment of Retained Firefighters**

Our second in 2024 recruitment campaign has commenced to recruit Firefighters in Castlecomer, Freshford, Urlingford, Thomastown and Graiguenamanagh. Applications have been received and we are in the process of shortlisting. All new recruits will undergo extensive initial training to equip them with the skills to be a Retained Firefighter. As well as responding to emergency calls and undertaking community fire safety initiatives, Retained Firefighters attend weekly training nights to maintain competency levels and undertake routine checks on their equipment. Freshford and Callan have held an open night/day in their fire stations.

Retained Firefighters are men and women who are on call to respond to a range of emergencies. Many Retained Firefighters have other full or part-time jobs but when the call comes they are ready to drop whatever they are doing and become part of a team, ready to face any emergency. Although part-time, Retained Firefighters are fully trained and capable of saving life and property.

### **Fire Appliances**

Kilkenny County Council's Fire and Rescue Service maintain fire appliances in all seven Fire Stations throughout the County.

Kilkenny County Council Fire & Rescue Service have a Command and Control vehicle, 2 seater electrical fire vehicle and a Class B fire engine being built at present. We will continue with a Replacement Programme and Refurbishment Programme as capital funding is made available.

### **Community Fire Safety Programme**

Kilkenny Fire & Rescue Service continue to deliver the National Directorate Fire & Emergency Management Primary Schools Programme. It is targeted at all Third Class Primary School children. The Fire Authority has delivered this Programme from inception in 2006 and every year subsequently (*except during the recent pandemic*). Over 20,000 pupils have participated in the Primary School's Programme to date.

The Fire Authority has provided training and refresher training for a number of Firefighters in each brigade to assist them to deliver this Programme to all school children in Third Classes in Kilkenny City and County where the school management accept our invitation to visit their schools.

## Training

Kilkenny County Council's Fire & Rescue Service are obliged under the Fire Services Acts 1981 and 2003 and the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act 2005 to ensure that our Firefighters and Officers are adequately trained and competent to deal with tasks and varying roles they may encounter in the performance of their duties.

All personnel responding to Fire & Rescue Service incidents require a minimum level of training to meet core requirements. In addition, many personnel also require further training for specialist or supervisory roles. Furthermore, a number of Fire and Rescue Service personnel have completed Instructor Courses in order that they in turn can instruct and direct delivery of training sessions/courses. Personnel also require appropriate refresher training in all of the above throughout their careers, generally delivered either through on-station training or through specific refresher courses.

Training has traditionally been delivered at varying levels (*e.g. Local Station, Fire Authority, Region, National and International*) and through a variety of arrangements.

A Compressed Air Foam System course was held in Castlecomer Fire Station. Instructors on the course are in-house. This course provides practical training on the knowledge and skills that are required to enable firefighters to safely operate a compressed air foam system on a fire engine.



We delivered Emergency Services Driving refresher courses to a number of our drivers. We also carried out Emergency Traffic Management training to 18 Firefighters.





6 Firefighters recently completed a two week Breathing Apparatus Course (QQI) in Hackettstown Fire Station. This course provides practical training on the knowledge and skills that are required to enable recruit firefighters to safely work as BA wearers at operational incidents, within the incident command structure and BA procedural norms.



Two Firefighters are attending a three week Firefighting skills course in Bandon Co. Cork. We have also commenced training in Water Awareness. This course is being held in Graiguenamanagh Fire Station.

This course provides practical training on the knowledge and skills that are required to enable firefighters to work safely and effectively on the fireground.



## LIBRARY



### Bookville 2024

The 8<sup>th</sup> Annual Bookville Festival took place from 10<sup>th</sup> to 16<sup>th</sup> October with over 70 events taking place to celebrate all aspects of storytelling including creative writing, history, comedy, music, illustration, Gaeilge, drama, music, storytelling and poetry. The programme featured 27 of the best children's authors and illustrators from across Ireland and the UK including Chris Haughton, Robin Stevens and Leona Forde with 3,596 people in attendance. There was a range of opportunities to engage with Bookville including events specifically aimed at schools and family resource centres, public events, virtual events, "The Adventures of Pinocchio" Bookville exhibition and our ever-popular Bookville activity book which was delivered to every primary school in the County.



### Kilkenny's Toil & Trouble Schools Activities Packs

On 23<sup>rd</sup> October, Kilkenny County Council Library Service were delighted to launch our "Kilkenny's Toil & Trouble" schools activities packs. The activity book, designed for 5 to 12 year olds, was delivered to over 13,000 primary school children around the County in time for Halloween and includes information, activity sheets, crosswords, word searches, a witch wreath craft, fact sheets, puzzles and lots of other fun activities suitable for primary school children. This pack was developed by staff working in the Local Studies Department and was funded by Kilkenny County Council. A limited number of copies are available in our library branches and it can also be borrowed as an eBook on BorrowBox.





## Fadó Fadó – Sparking Memories

Kilkenny County Council Library Service (*in collaboration with Kilkenny Archaeological Society and Rothe House Trust*) were delighted to launch “Fadó Fadó - Sparking Memories - Kilkenny Young Researchers Primary School Competition” in the Mayfair Library on October 16<sup>th</sup>. This competition invites students to become young researchers as they dig deep into history to learn more about their local heritage. Topics can range from an old building or ruin to local folk tales and stories, presenting an ideal opportunity for teachers to complement the history curriculum.

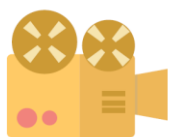
The winners will each receive a €100 Voucher and a perpetual trophy while the class of the winning entrant will enjoy an educational visitor experience at Rothe House and Gardens. Winning entries will be displayed in their local library and will be digitised for online viewing on the [Kilkenny Library Digital Archive](#).

## Mayfair Library Hits 100,000 Visits

In October the Mayfair Library hit an exciting milestone with over 100,000 visitors entering the doors since its opening in April. They have also registered over 6,500 members and loaned over 54,000 items. It continues to be an extremely popular service point with many events, workshops and meetings taking place every week, a number of exhibitions held and members of the public availing of the PCs, study spaces, WiFi and printing and photocopying services.



## Online Services Usage



## Digital Engagement

Library staff prepared, recorded, edited and published **265** posts and videos on our social media platforms in October. Our engagements for the month were **11,211** and our videos and reels had **3,747** views. Our virtual newsletter was sent to **7,643** email accounts.

## Alignment with the Sustainable Development Goals

Here are 2 ways in which Kilkenny County Council Library Service helped to further the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals in October:

### SDG 12: Responsible consumption and production

The Mayfair Library held a “Get the Most out of your Pumpkin” workshop with Denise Walsh to teach attendees how to get the best out of pumpkin flesh and seeds after Halloween was over.

### SDG 11: Sustainable cities and communities

Local historian Fin Dwyer held a number of workshops in our library branches to commemorate and teach primary school children about a pivotal event in our City’s history – the witch trial of Alice Kyteler.



## ARTS

### Community Climate Action – Repair to Care

On International Repair Day, 19<sup>th</sup> October, 2024 the Arts Office hosted an exciting and hands-on Textile and Clothing Mending and Repair Day. This fun and interactive event was all about inspiring positive changes that benefit both ourselves and the planet. The Arts Office explored the world of repair, reuse, and creativity, while learning how our everyday choices can help tackle climate change. The day was a rich and rewarding one on so many levels and the best way to illustrate its success is through some of the wonderful feedback received.



*Repair to Care Day at St. Canice's Community Hall*

### Artists Professional Development – Performing Arts

The Arts Office have forged a new partnership with the Irish Theatre Institute by way of a bursary which will support a local theatre-maker to join their 'Six in the Attic' Professional Development Programme. This year long programme provides playwrights and theatre makers with the space and resources to develop their practice and build a community of peers.



*Skill sharing workshop for artists working with early years children with Artist Orla Kelly*

### Public Art

Kilkenny County Council have embarked on a new phase in its Public Art Programme and put a call out for a series of commissions to commence in 2024 / 2025. The focus of these commissions will be on collaborations with communities in County Kilkenny. There were five artist-led projects sought which should seek to challenge, engage and innovate, through meaningful dialogue, research and engagement with communities. Kilkenny County Council accepted proposals from any recognised art form, from individuals or teams, who seek to devise and complete new work, developed in a collaborative setting. The response to the brief was very strong with eighty-four applications received from Ireland, the USA, Poland and the UK.

### **The Adventures of Pinocchio Exhibition**

The Adventures of Pinocchio Exhibition presented the beauty and artistry found in a collection of illustrated editions of Pinocchio. The exhibition ran from 12<sup>th</sup> to 25<sup>th</sup> October in the Mayfair Library receiving 1,217 visitors made up of school's groups, their teachers and the general public. Each morning, schools availed of a guided tour and activity sheet with the opportunity to spend time in the interactive areas where they explored shadow puppetry in the belly of the whale as well as hosting their own marionette puppet show.



*Children interacting with the 'The Adventures of Pinocchio' exhibition at the Mayfair Library*

### **Bookville Festival**

The Bookville Festival, funded by Creative Ireland and Kilkenny County Council had a total audience engagement of 22, 400 people. There were 13,000 books distributed to every primary school child in count Kilkenny, developing widespread awareness of Bookville. There were 66 live workshops held in the 8 County Kilkenny Library Branches and Family Resource Centres introducing children to their local library and exposure to authors and illustrators with an attendance of 1590 participants at the workshops. There were 5 virtual workshops held to increase accessibility and allow for unlimited audiences with total of 2,200 participants. Family Shows included comedy and theatre shows making the festival accessible to families with an audience of 200 people. The festival included online videos for increasing diversity. There was an Irish Sign Language video, Ukrainian Culture video and a video for children on the autism spectrum.

### **Rhyme Rag**

Jessica Traynor and Anna Jordan delivered workshops in Colaiste Abhainn Rí and Loreto Secondary School. Poems have been submitted to the Rhyme Rag editor Seamus Cashman and selected poems will soon be published on the Rhyme Rag Instagram and website.

### **School Bus Subsidy 2024**

A school bus subsidy was awarded to 12 primary schools to assist in attending the Barnstorm Theatre production 'The Play'. The subsidy supported a total of 874 children to attend.

### **Your Voice Matters Programme: Positive Intelligence for Writers**

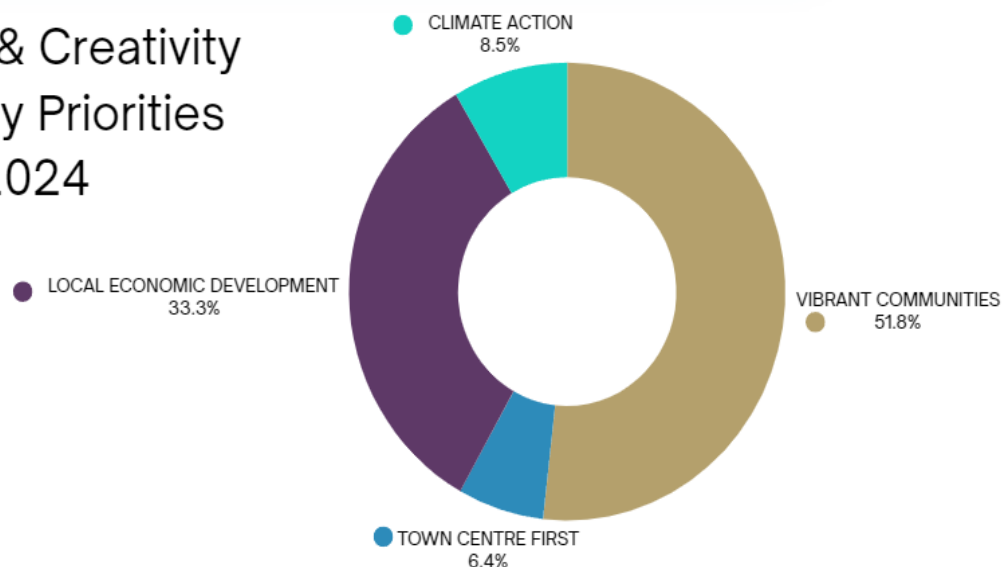
Creative writing coach and Your Voice Matters coordinator Anne Tannam facilitated a workshop on 'Positive Intelligence for Writers' on 30<sup>th</sup> October 2024 at St. Canice's Neighbourhood Hall. The workshop taught participants the foundations of Positive Intelligence and how to counteract self-sabotaging beliefs around their work. A total of 14 writers attended the workshop.



### Creative Ireland Visit

The Creative Kilkenny team made up of Council staff from various departments hosted a visit from Creative Ireland and an external evaluator as part of a longitudinal study extending until 2026. The Creative Kilkenny Team presented comprehensive case studies that demonstrated the significant impact of the funding across various departments. The evaluation highlighted the evident deep and integrated connection within the broader team.

## Culture & Creativity Strategy Priorities 2024



*Pie chart of Culture & Creativity Strategy Priorities*

### Living Artfully

Creative Health and Wellbeing project 'Living Artfully' is actively engaging groups across Carlow and Kilkenny. The work encompasses initial supports for artists including ongoing reflective practice, team meetings, outreach, weekly check ins and online specific training.

Groups targeting service users include:

- Memory Clinics for Early Onset Dementia in Carlow and Kilkenny
- Involvement Centres in Carlow and Kilkenny
- Cois Nore Cancer Service
- KLP Migrant Group
- Forward Steps in Carlow working with 3 traveller groups including young men, women and middle-aged
- Delta Centre Group in Carlow
- Targeted community group at St. Canice's Neighbourhood Hall.



## HERITAGE

### Kilkenny Heritage Forum

The first meeting of the new Kilkenny Heritage Forum was held at the Pembroke Hotel, Kilkenny on 25<sup>th</sup> October 2024. The Heritage Forum is a non-statutory advisory group established by Kilkenny County Council to provide advice on the preparation, implementation and evaluation of the next County Heritage Plan. Membership of the Heritage Forum is drawn from representatives of bodies and groups with an interest in, or responsibility for, the care and protection of heritage in Kilkenny. The meeting marked the start of the process to develop a new County Heritage Strategy which will set out the overall vision and goals for the management and protection of natural, built and cultural heritage in the County.

At the end of our meeting, the Heritage Office were delighted to welcome Malcolm Noonan, Minister of State for Nature, Heritage & Electoral Reform; Virginia Teehan, CEO of the Heritage Council; Coilín O'Reilly, Chair of the CCMA Rural Development, Community, Culture and Heritage (RCCH) Committee; and Tim Butler, Director of Service to announce that almost €1m in funding is being made available in 2025 for the recruitment of new heritage professionals in local authorities aimed at strengthening the protection of heritage assets across the country. This will include an Archivist for Kilkenny County Council.



*The County Kilkenny Heritage Forum pictured with Malcolm Noonan, Minister of State for Nature, Heritage & Electoral Reform; Virginia Teehan, CEO of the Heritage Council; Coilín O'Reilly, Chair of the CCMA Rural Development, Community, Culture and Heritage (RCCH) Committee; and Tim Butler, Director of Service, Kilkenny County Council.*

### Kilkenny Witch Trials Anniversary featured in *The Walled Town Crier*

Kilkenny's Toil and Trouble Festival was featured in the October edition of *The Walled Town Crier*, the publication of the Heritage Council's Irish Walled Towns Network. The ezine, which is circulated nationally and internationally features details of Kilkenny's newest festival and a short synopsis of the story of the Kilkenny Witch Trials, 1324. The article can be viewed on [www.irishwalledtownsnetwork.ie](http://www.irishwalledtownsnetwork.ie).

### Phase 2 of the County Kilkenny Holy Wells Survey and Mass Path Survey Complete

Phase 2 of the Kilkenny Holy Wells and Mass Paths surveys is now complete. The survey of Kilkenny's holy wells was carried out by Shanarc Archaeology Ltd. for the Heritage Office. The survey provides a comprehensive report and map detailing all of the holy wells in the County, this information will enable to better protect these important heritage features in our landscape.

Phase 2 of the Kilkenny Mass Paths survey was carried out by Pat Reid, Heritage Consultant who recorded mass paths in ten parishes across the County providing us with valuable information on this previously unrecorded and valuable aspect of our cultural heritage which is highly at risk of loss. Both of these projects included four workshops across County Kilkenny training local communities in recording local heritage features. These projects were co-funded by the Heritage Council and Kilkenny County Council, under the County Heritage Plan Programme.



*Stile at the end of Mass Path leading to St Catherine's Medieval Church, Rathbeagh*

## BIODIVERSITY

### Kilkenny Swift Project

Swifts are a migratory bird and spend their summers in Ireland. Preferring to nest in cracks and crevices unfortunately their numbers are in decline due to the loss of nesting sites. Three sets of swift nest boxes were installed under the supervision of BirdWatch Ireland at the Council's Thomastown Area Office in October thanks to the support of area engineer Declan Murphy. A caller system was also installed to encourage the swifts to investigate these potential nesting sites when they return to Ireland next May.



*Installation of Swift Nest Boxes at Thomastown Area Office*

This project was a recommendation out of the County Swift Survey and the installation was funded by the National Parks and Wildlife Service under the Local Biodiversity Action Fund. Various council properties across the County have been examined for their suitability and the plan is to have more installations in the future. The Biodiversity Officer is also collaborating with other agencies to identify suitable sites to encourage swift box installation as a positive biodiversity action.

### Southeast Nightjar Project

BirdWatch Ireland promoted the results of the Nightjar Survey which took place over the summer in Wexford and Kilkenny. The mysterious and elusive Nightjar is a summer visitor, it can be incredibly difficult to spot, only revealing its presence after dark, when the male engages in its hypnotic 'churring' song.



Nightjars were once more common and widespread in Ireland. However, the numbers completing the journey to Ireland from African wintering grounds each May have diminished dramatically. This is thought to be related to habitat loss and a decrease in large insects due to the use of pesticides.

The aim of the survey was to confirm whether Nightjar still remain in Ireland and to learn more about this enigmatic species to help inform its conservation. The Nightjar survey concentrated on some of the most suitable remaining areas for Nightjar in counties Kilkenny and Wexford.

The survey revealed two sites with nightjar's present. Subsequent monitoring of these sites provided confirmation that one of these pairs bred successfully. The survey was completed by BirdWatch Ireland, supported and promoted by the Biodiversity Officer and funded by the Local Biodiversity Action Fund from the National Parks and Wildlife Service.

## FINANCE

The expenditure by service division to the end of October is set out in table 1. Total Expenditure for the period was €103.9m compared with the annual budget of €111m.

Table 1	Actual YTD October 2024	Budget Full Year 2024
	€'000's	€'000's
Housing & Building	24,733	26,258
Road Transport & Safety	26,898	29,958
Water Services	6,278	7,699
Development Management	14,454	14,720
Environmental Services	13,604	16,899
Recreation & Amenity	6,545	8,759
Agriculture, Education, Health, Welfare	521	690
Miscellaneous Services	8,604	6,331
Central Management Charges for Allocation	2,231	
<b>OVERALL TOTAL</b>	<b>103,869</b>	<b>111,134</b>

### Increased Cost of Business (ICOB) Grant Scheme

As part of Budget 2024, the Government signed off on a package of €257m for the Increased Cost of Business (ICOB) Grant as a vital measure for small and medium Enterprises. This rollout was managed through the local authorities and funded by the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment (DETE). Eligible businesses will receive a once-off grant which will be based on the value of their Commercial Rates bill in 2023.

A total of 2,450 grants were paid out up to 31<sup>st</sup> October 2024 with a value of €4,394,000. The scheme closed on 27<sup>th</sup> September 2024 and the online portal closed on 25<sup>th</sup> October.

### Power Up Grant

As part of Budget 2025, the Government has announced a new €4,000 grant called Power Up, to assist businesses in hospitality, retail and beauty sectors. This rollout will be managed through the local authorities and funded by the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment (DETE). The main eligibility criteria are the same as for the Increased Cost of Business Scheme:

- The business must be a commercially trading entity currently operating from a property that is commercial rateable.
- The business must be trading at the time of submission and intend to continue trading for at least three months from the date of your submission.
- The rates account must be up to date. Businesses on payment plans may be deemed compliant.
- Your business must be tax compliant and possess a valid Tax Registration Number.

To date 573 businesses have applied for the grant

### 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.....149 cases  
 Appeal Withdrawn.....33 cases  
 Increase in Revaluation on Appeal ..... 1 case  
 No change to Revaluation on Appeal.....9 cases  
 Appeals outstanding.....2 cases

The total annual Income lost to date stands at €853k.

### Finance Update

The bank overdraft facility was not utilised in the ten month period to the end of October.

### Budget 2025

The Statutory budget meeting is scheduled for Friday December 6<sup>th</sup>. Workshops have taken place with Elected Members to discuss the budget issues in detail. The draft Budget Book will issue to Elected Members on 22<sup>nd</sup> November.