

CHIEF EXECUTIVE REPORT

OCTOBER 2024 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

Age Friendly Programme Activities

Events and Activities taking place until Friday
1st November, 2024 in the Mayfair Library

Budget 2025

The proposed date for the Statutory Budget
Meeting is Friday, 6th December, 2024.

REPORT AT A
GLANCE

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MAJOR PROJECTS

N24 Waterford to Cahir Scheme

Date for Publication of the Option Selection Report is Q3 2024.

MINOR PROJECTS

N77 Ballyragget to Ballynaslee

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



N24 Carrick Road

Kilkenny County 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 20th March, 2024. An application for a Judicial Review of the decision by An Bord Pleanála was lodged with the High Court by 3 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.

TII have advised that it is in order to complete the design process and to proceed to tender in anticipation of award as soon as funding can be confirmed. Approval to award the tender is subject to TII approval.

South North Access Road - Ferrybank

The South North Access Road (*Belmont Road to Abbey Road*), Ferrybank Scheme was lodged for planning in September 2024 with final submissions by October 25th.

The scheme is c.940m in length with:

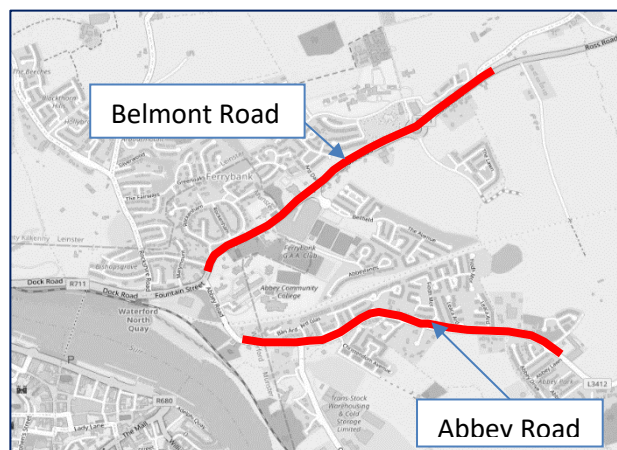
- Two signalised crossroad junctions
- Segregated pedestrian/cycle facilities
- Two zebra crossings
- Off-line bus stops
- Greenway car park (*c.172 parking bays*)
- Link to Greenway; and
- Accommodation works



Sustainable Links -Ferrybank

The appointment of a Consultant for the sustainable links, Ferrybank Scheme will be completed in October 2024 for all stages of works (*Design, Part 8, tendering for construction, Resident Engineer and handover*).

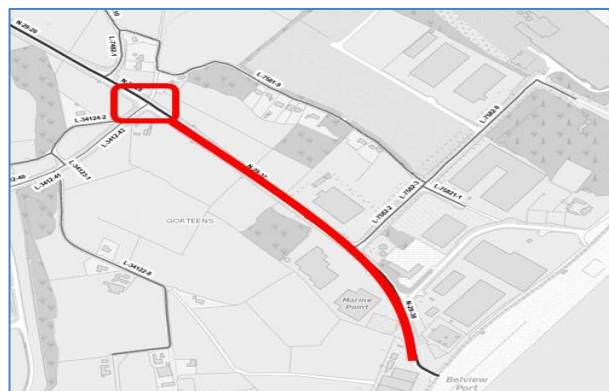
The works will include traffic calming and active travel measures over c.3km of road on Belmont Road and Abbey Road.



N29 Belview Port Road

The appointment of a Consultant for the N29 Belview Port Scheme will be completed in October/November 2024 for Design, Part 8 and tendering for construction.

This includes Traffic calming measures along c.900m of the N29 and junction improvements from the L3412 junction to the IDA Business Park south to the port access. It is intended that this will allow the reduction of the speed limit to permit access for developments onto the N29.



CBS School

Works on the road accessing the CBS School will begin along Talbotts Court/Talbotts Gate as per the Part 8 Loughmacask Link Road Phase 1(a).

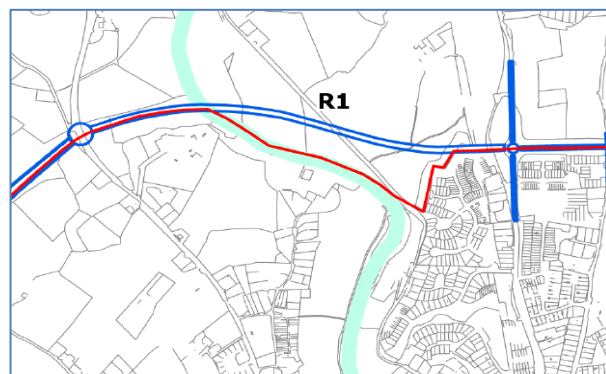
A road closure between the two estates will reduce the project timeline and see the majority of civil works between Talbotts Gate and the school completed before the year end 2024.



Kilkenny City North Transport Project

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.

A breakdown of project costs for years 2024-2027 was submitted to the Department for the required funding allocation to progress the project.

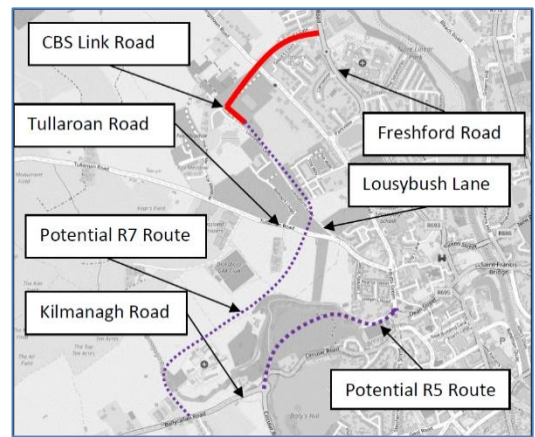


R7 & R5 Traffic Modelling

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*)

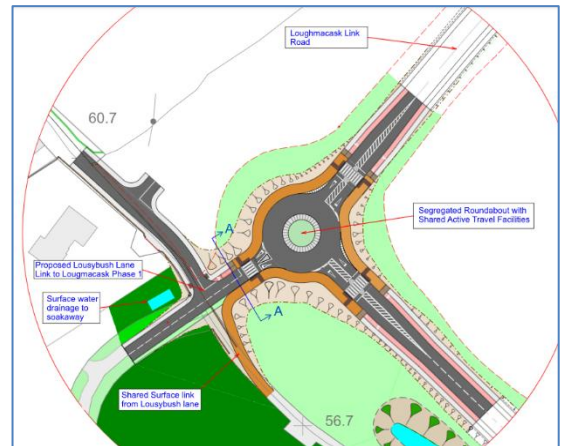
The findings of the assessment will be presented by the Consultants in November 2024.



Lousybush Lane link to CBS

The appointment of a Consultant for the Part 8 Lousybush Access Road Scheme will be completed in October/November 2024 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.



ENVIRONMENT

CLIMATE ACTION

Decarbonising Workshop

Kilkenny County Council hosted Local Authority Climate Action Teams from around the country to a full day Workshop on Decarbonising Zones: Challenges and Opportunities (*Built Environment*) on 25th September. The event, coordinated by the Climate Action Regional Office (CARO), and hosted by Kilkenny County Council, was attended by 82 Local Authority staff engaged in delivering climate action.



Attending the Decarbonising Zones and the Built Environment Workshop in Kilkenny on 25th September 2024 were staff of Kilkenny County Council Climate Action Office, CARO, the Heritage Council and KPMG.

Spotlight on Community Climate Action

The Community Climate Action Officer is continuing to visit each of the 22 communities who were awarded a total of €511,000 funding under Community Climate Action Programme. The objective of the funding is to support and empower communities to take climate action. Here's a snapshot of four communities as they prepare to start work on their projects. To see all the communities who received funding under the Community Climate Action Fund see our [Story Map](#).



Castlecomer Enterprise Centre

The Enterprise Centre Castlecomer is making their building more energy efficient and comfortable by insulating their ceiling and upgrading their heating and lighting.



Happe House & Millennium Court, Kilkenny City

Happe House & Millennium Court Group are installing a new polytunnel and raised beds to sow vegetables all year round. They are installing composters to recycle their garden and kitchen waste and sowing an edible native hedge which will become a bee friendly corridor and help store carbon.

Stoneyford Community Hall



Stoneyford Development Group are making the Community Hall more energy efficient and comfortable by upgrading the lighting, insulating the walls, installing thermal window blinds and upgrading the external doors.

They are also installing a bike rack and bike repair station and planting pollinator friendly plants in the garden.



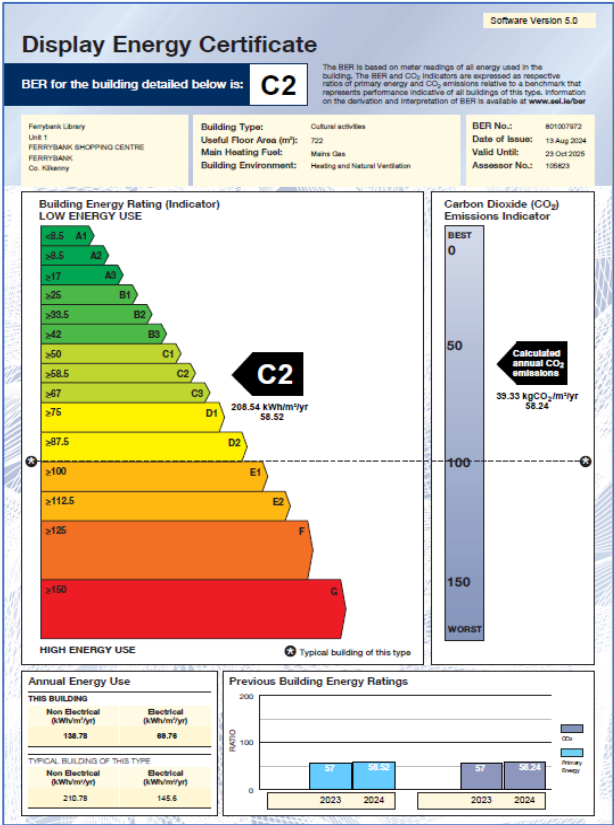
Piltown AFC

Piltown AFC are installing a bike rack to encourage people to cycle to the grounds and planting a native hedge on the perimeter of their new soccer pitch to help store carbon.

Energy Certs for Council Buildings

Display Energy Certs (DEC's) were completed for 7 Council buildings. A DEC is an annual assessment of the energy performance and carbon emissions of the building over a 12-month period. It includes recommendations on actions to reduce energy and emissions and must be displayed in a prominent position in the building to raise awareness.

Building	Rating
County Hall	D1
City Hall	E1
Johns Green House	C2
Ferrybank Library	C2
Loughboy Library	B1
The Watershed Leisure Centre	C2
Graiguenamanagh Library	B1



Energy Audits

Energy Audits were completed for 3 Council Buildings including the Road Design Office (No. 1 Dean Street), KRSP Office (No. 5 Dean Street) and the Carnegie Library. The audits examine the building fabric, heating systems, internal lighting and energy cost and consumption for a 12-month period and make recommendations on actions to reduce energy and emissions.

The findings of the Energy Audits are used to develop a list of priority projects for the Council which when implemented will help us to achieve our statutory emissions and energy reductions targets.

ENVIRONMENTAL AWARENESS

WEEE Ireland Electrical Recycling Days

WEEE Ireland APPROVED RECYCLING SCHEME

FREE ELECTRICAL RECYCLING DAYS

PILTOWN
Sat 17th Aug 2024
10am - 4pm
Piltown Community Centre Car Park, Kildalton, Piltown, Co. Kilkenny E32 P276

BALLYRAGGET
Tue 20th Aug 2024
10am - 1pm
St Patricks GAA Club, Ballyragget, Co. Kilkenny R95 PD92

CASTLECOMER
Tue 20th Aug 2024
4pm - 7pm
Tirlan CountryLife, Ballyhimmin, Castlecomer, Co. Kilkenny R95 KD35

KILKENNY
Fri 23rd Aug 2024
10am - 4pm
Cillin Hill Mart, Dublin Road, Cillin Hill, Co. Kilkenny R95 A4VP

JOHNSTOWN
Sat 24th Aug 2024
10am - 4pm
St Kierans Church Car Park, Foulkscourt, Johnstown, Co. Kilkenny E41 CP40

Any household waste electrical items, batteries or energy saving lightbulbs accepted, large or small! From fridges to phones, laptops to lawnmowers, toys to power tools, and everything in-between, **WEEE recycle anything with a plug, battery or cable!** Waste electrical, battery and lighting can also be recycled for free at Local Authority Recycling Centres and participating retailers, visit weeireland.ie

In Partnership with
Comhairle Chontae Chill Chainnigh
Kilkenny County Council

LET'S TEAM UP TO CLEAN UP!
Together for Kilkenny

WEEE Ireland APPROVED RECYCLING SCHEME

FREE ELECTRICAL RECYCLING DAYS

THOMASTOWN
Sat 10th Aug 2024
10am - 4pm
Thomastown United Football Club, Smithstown Lower, Thomastown, Co. Kilkenny R95 CX78

PAULSTOWN
Tue 13th Aug 2024
10am - 1pm
Scoll Bhride, Kellymount, Paulstown, Co. Kilkenny R95 E170

GOWRAN
Tue 13th Aug 2024
4pm - 7pm
Gowran National School, Chapel Road, Gowran, Co. Kilkenny R95 ND27

SLIEVERUE
Thur 15th Aug 2024
10am - 1pm
Slieverue GAA Club, Airmount Road, Slieverue, Co. Kilkenny X91 W421

MOONCOIN
Thur 15th Aug 2024
4pm - 7pm
Mooncoin Community Centre Car Park, Caritas, Polorone Road, Mooncoin, Co. Kilkenny X91 YY36

Any household waste electrical items, batteries or energy saving lightbulbs accepted, large or small! From fridges to phones, laptops to lawnmowers, toys to power tools, and everything in-between, **WEEE recycle anything with a plug, battery or cable!** Waste electrical, battery and lighting can also be recycled for free at Local Authority Recycling Centres and participating retailers, visit weeireland.ie

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A series of Free Electrical Recycling Days took place throughout the Month of August in Kilkenny. This was a collaborative program between the Environment Department of Kilkenny County Council and WEEE Ireland as well as our local community and Tidy Towns organisations. Any household waste electrical items, batteries or energy saving lightbulbs were accepted. From fridges to phones, laptops to lawnmowers, toys to power tools and everything in-between.

Team Up to Clean Up-Together for Kilkenny



This year's "Team Up to Clean Up" took place from the **20th to 22nd September, 2024** led by Kilkenny County Council in a collaborative effort to promote environmental stewardship, leading sponsors including Dawn Meats, Tirlán/Glanbia Plc, Panda, PRL and the John O'Shea Trust joined forces to support this essential community initiative.

Over the course of the weekend, over 120 registered groups participated with an estimated 4,000 enthusiastic volunteers engaged in litter picking across the County reinforcing the community's commitment to maintaining a clean and vibrant environment. This included 35 schools across the City and County. Volunteers not only contributed to a cleaner environment but also became ambassadors for sustainable practices that mitigate littering in the long term.



Composting & Recycling for Schools Programme *August 2024*



As part of the “Team Up to Clean Up-Together for Kilkenny” Campaign for 2024, **20 primary and secondary schools** involved in the Green Schools Programme have registered to participate in the award-winning Composting and Recycling for Schools Programme.

The aim of the programme is to help schools prevent waste, improve recycling and set up, start or improve on-site composting systems to reduce waste, save money and combat climate change. The programme also helps schools improve their gardening efforts and increase biodiversity around their schools. All of these activities assist schools with attaining their Green School Flags and reaching their Sustainable Development Goals. In addition, the programme gives teachers access to a wide variety of fun, participatory and interactive activities for school children to learn about waste prevention, recycling, composting and gardening. These activities support children’s understanding of the underlying principles of ecology, biology and biodiversity that underpin all life on our planet.

Each participating school will receive a €250 voucher to spend on in-school collection caddies, indoor recycling bins, instructional signs, a variety of composting systems, including composting bins, leaf mould cages and wormeries, and composting tools, including secateurs, pitch forks, compost aerators, watering cans, thermometers and anything that supports their respective action plans.

WASTE

Bring Banks Usage

The Council provides and manages 46 Bring Centers across the City and County. A total of **1550 tonnes** of recyclables were collected from our Bring Centers to date in 2024. This represents a 1% from the same period in 2023. Loughboy Shopping Centre - Kilkenny City (*14 tonnes collected*), Aldi - Kilkenny City (*13 tonnes collected*), Lidl - Johnswell, Kilkenny City (*8 tonnes collected*) and are the busiest locations in the City. Aldi - Ferrybank (*9 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.

AIR NOISE WATER

Water Quality – Farm Inspections

186 farm inspections have now been completed, leaving 55 to be completed by the end of the year. This is on track to meet the target of 241 farm inspections by the end of 2024.

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.

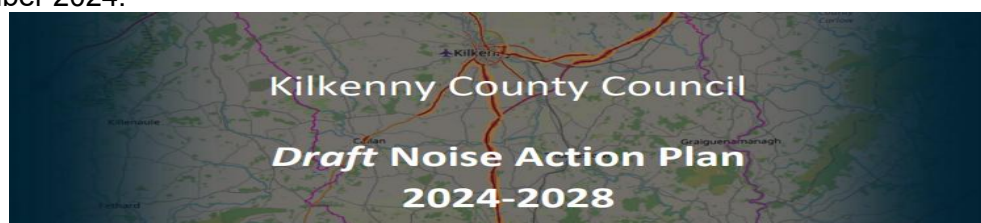
Environment Complaints

All Environmental complaints received are logged on the CRM (*Customer Relations Management*) System. The number of complaints that have been received and logged for September 2024 is 89 compared to 96 for the same period last year. The number of complaints received in the nine months to the end of September 2024 is up 9% when compared to the same nine-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 30th October and 11th of November 2024 with submissions being accepted until 25th November 2024. The final plan is on target to be submitted to the EPA in December 2024.



PARKS & SPECIAL PROJECTS

South East Greenway

Glas Civil Engineering Ltd. commenced works in November last on Lot 5A of the Greenway, a 5.5km section, from Ferrybank to Curraghmore. Over the past few weeks there was a big push to carryout pavement surfacing works in advance of the winter months, with circa. 4.95km overlaid with a bound material. Fencing works along the Greenway continues and the installation of the timber screen fencing along Lot 2 Ferrybank also commenced recently.

The installation of the safety fence in the permanent Greenway carpark at Ballyverneen, Glenmore is expected this month along with the completion of the public lighting. Once both of these work items are completed a Road 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.





Various images along Lot 5A – showing finished greenway surface and an at-grade agricultural crossings

Lacken Boardwalk Enhancement Scheme

Works continue to progress on the Lacken Boardwalk with circa. 75% of the works now completed. Unfortunately, the wet summer and subsequent poor ground conditions has delayed the completion date by a number of weeks. However, we are confident that this new bespoke piece of amenity infrastructure will be opened in time for the Christmas break. The cross-section width of the new boardwalk is 3.6m compared to 1.2m wide of the original structure and is being constructed using 100% recycled plastic components. The works are being carried out to a very high standard and will see an investment of c.€800,000, funded in part under the Outdoor Recreational Infrastructure Scheme and the Council's own funds.



Lacken Boardwalk - Recent images of ongoing works

Sports Capital and Equipment Programme (SCEP)

Funding was recently secured under the SCEP for the following two projects:

▪ **Kilkenny Countryside Park**

Provision of spectator fencing and access gates to the perimeter of ball wall area. Provision of a portable container and development of a compound area to store maintenance equipment for the upkeep of the Park.

▪ **Garringreen Recreational Amenity Area Refurbishment**

The upgrade of the existing Multi Use Games Area (MUGA) along with enhancements to the grass soccer pitch.

Clover Centre Ferrybank

In late 2023 Kilkenny County Council took possession of circa. 9.5 acres of land, which includes sports pitches and a clubhouse from the trustees of Clover Meats in Christendom, Ferrybank, South Kilkenny. A condition attached to this land transfer was that same could only be used for the recreational use of the community.

The Council has identified the need to engage the services of a multidisciplinary landscape architecture & engineering led design team to prepare a masterplan for the future development of a high quality, community centred and multifunctional local park on this site. To this end, a tender for the above services was advertised on e-tenders in September and the deadline for tender submissions is set for the 23rd October 2024.



The development of the Masterplan will be undertaken in a collaborative approach with the local community through extensive public consultation to identify local community needs, priorities and desires. The overall objective of this initiative is to develop a high-quality parkland that will attract not just locals but visitors from the wider urban and rural catchment. It is our desire that the Park, when complete, will support the role of Ferrybank to achieve a more balanced Waterford City on both sides of the River Suir creating a space that offers quality of life improvements in terms of physical and mental health wellbeing and returning this area once again to a hub for social interaction.

Playgrounds

Ongoing maintenance continues around the County in our playgrounds and parks to maintain them to a high standard. This month the focus was on the replacement of parts of old or worn play equipment and re-mulching. In Ferrybank Neighbourhood Park footpath rehabilitation works were progressed with same expected to be completed in mid-October.

In collaboration with the Community Section, along with the support of the Kilmacow Sports Complex and St. Senan's National School, funding was secured earlier in the year under the DCEDIY Capital Grant Funding Scheme for Play and Recreation to install new play components in Kilmacow playground. This grant provided for the installation of a wheelchair accessible roundabout and communications board. The latter will assist individuals with autism to communicate more effectively, enabling them to express their thoughts and feelings in a non-verbal way.



New wheelchair accessible roundabout

Amenity Grants

In 2024, 175 applicants under the Amenity Grant scheme were awarded funding totalling €140,000. This funding enabled groups across the County to maintain their own outdoor recreational spaces. The range of works typically involve tree planting, grass cutting, planting flowers and many other amenity type projects. Successful applicants were required to submit documentation (*receipts in respect of expenses incurred and photographs of completed projects*) to claim their grants by 27th September, 2024. Grants are currently being processed.

Tree Surgery

Our annual Tree Surgery Works Programme recently recommenced. The focus will be on crown reductions and the removal of branches where there is a particular safety concern of where such interventions will help to prolong the life of a tree. In certain circumstances the removal of trees can't unfortunately be avoided, however, it is proposed that compensatory planting will be undertaken later on in the year within the Kilkenny Countryside Park, Woodstock, Ferrybank Playground, and Slieverue Linear Park.

2023 Local Biodiversity Action Fund

Over the next month, major work will be carried out in Woodstock to remove invasive species such as Cherry Laurel, Rhododendron Ponticum, and Himalayan Honeysuckle at the Waterfall Trail and between the Noble Fir and Monkey Puzzle avenues within the gardens. This project, along with removal of Himalayan Balsam earlier in the year in Sliaire Wood, Graiguenamanagh is being funded under the Local Biodiversity Action Fund.

Woodstock Gardens and Arboretum

Our new autumn campaign for Woodstock Gardens and Arboretum was launched in September with the tagline "*Wander Through the Seasons.*" This campaign will market the gardens and woodlands, showcasing the fantastic walks and trails where visitors can enjoy the stunning autumn colours of the trees in Woodstock.

PLANNING

Development Management

Planning Summary	Total at End September	
	2023	2024
Planning Applications Received	657	582
Planning Applications Granted	454	495
Planning Applications Refused	94	41
Complaints Received	72	103
Warning Letters Issued	69	48
Enforcements Notices Issued	35	29
Cases Closed	109	48

FORWARD PLANNING

Variation 2 to the City and County Development Plan[CCDP] 2021

Proposed Variation 2 to the CCDP, Small Towns and Villages, to change the terminology of the settlement hierarchy, commenced public display on 12th September. Submissions are invited until Thursday 10th October. The Chief Executive's Report on this variation will be presented to Elected Members at the October Council meeting.

MASTERPLANS

Ballyragget/Paulstown/Kilmacow

The Paulstown Masterplan was adopted at the Castlecomer Municipal District meeting in September. A Director of Services Report is prepared on the submissions to the Ballyragget Masterplan and this will go before the Castlecomer Municipal District Elected Members at their October meeting for approval.

The draft Masterplan for Kilmacow was on public display for a period of 7 weeks from Friday 12th July to Friday 30th August. A Walk-in Public Meeting was held also in Kilmacow Community Hall during the public display on Wednesday 7th August, which had in excess of 60 attendees. A Director of Services Report is currently being finalised and will be presented to the Piltown Municipal District Elected Members at their November meeting, seeking the Masterplans adoption.

LOCAL AREA PLANS

Ferrybank/Belview Local Area Plan

An issues paper was published for the Ferrybank/Belview Local Area Plan and a public consultation event took place in the Abbey Community College, Ferrybank on Wednesday 19th June. More than 100 attended the sessions. Submissions are now being taken up to 5.00 p.m. on the 12th July. A Chief Executive's Report will be prepared on the process and presented in early September. The drafting of the LAP document and associated Environmental Reports will continue

over the coming weeks with a view to publication of a draft Plan in early November.

Castlecomer Plan Review Process

An Issues Paper for the review of the Castlecomer Local Area Plan was published in July and submissions were sought, and a Health Check survey was available until 23rd August. An Information Evening was held on 23rd July in Castlecomer Library. An excellent response was received to the Pre-Draft stage, with 17 submissions and 123 responses to the survey. There will be significant collaboration between the Community and Planning Sections in this process as the Castlecomer Town Team has recently been established. The Chief Executive's Report on the pre-draft consultation process is 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 in late October to discuss the document and its concepts, with a view to progressing to a draft document for discussion in late Q4 2024.

Taking in Charge

The following estates were initiated and have been advertised should anyone wish to make a submission on the proposed Taking in Charge:

- TC158 Moneenroe, Castlecomer, Co Kilkenny
- TC172 Orchard Close, New Orchard Road.
- TC177 Weir View Gardens, Kilkenny
- TC186 Ladyswell, Thomastown, Co Kilkenny

The following estates have now been taken in charge by Kilkenny County Council:

- TC175 Harrowville, Leggettsrath West.
- TC190 Tobar Brid, Graiguenamanagh.

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 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 31st 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 landowners made appeals to An Bord Pleanála and 2 decisions from the Bord, upholding the Council's determinations, have been received to-date. 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, Historical, Archaeological, Artistic, Cultural, Scientific, Technical and Social.

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 nearing completion. Final inspections are underway by the Conservation Officer.

Historic Structures Fund 2024: Conservation grant funded projects are nearing completion. 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.

Built Heritage Investment Scheme 2025: The Built Heritage Investment Scheme 2025 deadline for applications has now closed. Thirty-seven applications have been received: these will be assessed, with site inspections arranged for the coming weeks.

Conservation input into the following Council Project Deliveries is continuing:

- Thrive funding application for John's Quay/John Street Urban Design Strategy
- Nos. 19 and 21 Parliament Street Community Monuments Fund
- Kenny's Well Access and Interpretation Plan

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

▪ Planning Referrals	9
▪ Further Information Requests	3
▪ Clarification of Further Information Requests	0
▪ Section 57 Declarations	1
▪ Post planning	2
▪ Part VIII	1

Building Control

Valid Commencement Notices Received:

September 2024	260
September 2023	245
September 2022	266
September 2021	368

Disability Access Applications Received:

September 2024	46
September 2023	50
September 2022	58
September 2021	44

TOWN REGENERATION OFFICE

Town Centre First

Training around governance, planning and funding was delivered to Town Teams at Mooncoin, Castlecomer and Callan in September.

Vacant Property Refurbishment Grant

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

Number of Applications Submitted to date	217
Number of Approvals/	
Approvals in Principle to date	146
Grant Drawdown to-date	13
Number of queries during month of September	45

Derelict Sites

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

- Fr. Hayden Road, Kilkenny –An Bord Pleanála has granted consent to this CPO
- Canal Road, Johnstown (Site A) – CPO for inspection period up to 30th October, 2024

THRIVE

Public Consultation Workshops were held in Carnegie on 16th September to gather public opinion, suggestions and input regarding the development of the Urban Design Strategy for John's Quay/John Street area. There was a good response to the survey which closed on the 26th September with 131 responses received. The next event on the 14th October will be focused on presenting findings of the survey and consultations and a Draft Strategy.

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 a Feasibility Study Grant.
- 6 Technical Assistance for Micro Exporter grants awarded to support businesses in exploring new export market opportunities.
- 18 Businesses have commenced LEAN one to one consultancy programmes to investigate possible resource efficiencies and process improvements their businesses.
- 9 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.
- 31 business have been approved a Trading Online Voucher totalling €62,674 to support the enhancement of their online trading capacity.
- 12 Green for Business grants awarded with two 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.
- 922 people participated on focused small business training, including 57 people participating on the Starting Your Business Programme.
- 417 businesses have availed of specialised business specific mentoring on a variety of topics including finance, marketing, social media marketing and HR.

Local Enterprise Village at the National Ploughing Championships 2024

A Kilkenny business, Biddy's Good Luck Horse Shoes, exhibited their business to in excess of 250,000 people at the National Ploughing Championships as part of the Local Enterprise Village.

Biddy's Good Luck Horse Shoes, supported by Local Enterprise Office Kilkenny, make pieces of Irish good luck from genuine horse shoes once worn by an Irish sports horse, a little piece of Irish heritage, history and tradition.

'Boost Your Business' - Green Efficiency Competition in partnership with Carlow County Council and KCLR

Ongoing during September was the Boost Your Business competition in conjunction with Local Enterprise Office Carlow and KCLR. Each eligible finalist will receive personalised consultancy, which could pave the way for a €7,500 grant to further invest in green initiatives. This financial support is intended to help businesses implement the changes identified during the consultation, ensuring they can continue to grow sustainably.



Future Focus – Management Development Series

During September 20 Entrepreneurs from Carlow and Kilkenny commenced the Future Focus Management Development series. The course will be delivered over six master class sessions with session one led out by Margaret Valette O'Connor who will address leadership mindset. Other topics addressed will be finance, digitalisation, sales and exit strategies. During the course sessions are complimented by mentoring provided to each client.



#SHOPKilkenny

The shopkilkenny retail campaign has run throughout the summer months with focus on celebrating inter-generational businesses in Kilkenny, the Castle Yard and other features. Up to date photography and videography content created over the course of the summer has complemented articles and features published. The most recent initiative focused on retail along

the route of Ireland's Medieval Mile with almost 60 retailers filmed in their businesses over the course of two days.

A condensed version of the output will feature in the coming weeks in a piece dedicated to retail in Kilkenny on independent.ie online.



Engineers' Building Feasibility Study

Kilkenny County Council was recently awarded a €50,000 grant through Enterprise Ireland Smart Regions Stream 4 Funding to conduct a Feasibility Study on the Engineers' Building in the Abbey Quarter. The Feasibility Study will assess the opportunities that the building presents through engagement with business and community stakeholders. KPMG has been appointed to conduct the study and it is expected that the Feasibility Study will be completed by the end of 2024.

Broadband/ Digital Update

Kilkenny County Council is developing a three-year Digital Strategy for the County covering the period 2024–2026. The first phase of the public consultation comprised a short online survey which opened until Friday 19th July with 15 completed responses. The second phase invited citizens and businesses to attend in-person public consultation sessions which took place on 17th July in the Kilkenny Mayfair Library 'Maker Space', facilitated by Digital Strategy Consultants Ltd. The Digital Strategy is due to be available in draft during Autumn 2024.



Our Kids Code

OurKidsCode offers six 2-hour Taster Workshops for parents and children on STEM activities. After successful programmes were delivered at the Mayfair Library over the summer the next 'OurKidsCode' commenced on 18th September in Muckalee Community Centre and runs throughout September and October.

Kilkenny City Night Time Economy

The fourth meeting of Kilkenny Night Time Economy Forum was held on 18th September. A Progress Report was provided under each pillar of the Night Time Economy Action Plan, placemaking, safety and security, evening and night time activity and marketing. Ignacio Peregrina was elected Chair of the Forum for the remainder of the pilot period. The next meeting is scheduled to take place on 4th December.

Tourism

Nationally, the season this year has been less positive than was hoped for, with many external factors challenging performance including sustained periods of unpredictable weather, reports of lower levels of domestic holiday demand, limited accommodation stock and variety of stock, and airline strikes earlier in the summer. Kilkenny County Council continues in its support for the sector locally and are currently working and planning for the shoulder season and the cooler months.

Kilkenny Tourism and visitkilkenny.ie



Kilkenny Tourism CLG hosted its 2024 AGM on 11th September at the Parade Tower in Kilkenny. The event saw partners in the Tourism and Hospitality Sector come together to both review the previous years activity and to also look towards the end of this year, the off season and further into next season for planning and activation measures.

Gareth Alcorn agreed to remain in the role of Chairperson of Kilkenny Tourism with two new Directors, Francis Nesbitt and Bart Pawlukojo.

Kilkenny Tourism CLG acknowledged the support of Kilkenny County Council towards its activities and in meeting its objectives and is looking forward to maintaining and growing this partnership into the future.

Irish Tourism Industry Confederation

Kilkenny County Council's Tourism Team attended ITICs 2024 Conference at the Royal Convention Centre in Dublin. Exploring the theme of Responsible Ambition, the event provided stimulating and insightful discussions, thought provoking conversations, challenging perspectives and inspiring new ideas. Minister Catherine Martin was present and conveyed her ongoing support for the sector as a whole going forward.

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's 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 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. Further details are available on 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 SEPTEMBER 2024	
Homeless Presentations	46
Homeless Assessment Outcomes	
Prevention & Interventions	33
Emergency Service	7
Not eligible / Did not avail of service	6
HAP Place Finder Service	
No of Homeless HAP tenancies @ 1 st day of month	153
No of Homeless HAP tenancies created during month	0
No of Homeless HAP tenancies in place @ last day of month	153
Number of Homeless HAP tenancy breakdowns	6
Other Social Housing Tenancies supported /created during month	9
Households in Temporary Emergency Supported Accommodation @ September 30th	31
Households in Temporary Emergency B&B accommodation	11
Households in Temporary Emergency B&B Accommodation that are families	4
Households (singles/couples) in Transition Emergency Accommodation (Own Front Door)	43
Households (Families) in Transition Emergency Accommodation (OFD)	16

SOCIAL HOUSING ASSESSMENT

SOCIAL HOUSING SUPPORT APPLICATION SUMMARY SEPTEMBER 2024	
Number awaiting Social Housing Support at September 30 th (<i>Gross Need</i>)	1,519
Number awaiting Social Housing Support at September 30 th (<i>Net Need</i>)	742
Number of Social Housing Applications received in September	72
Number of applications incomplete / awaiting further information/clarification	58
Number of applications validated and ready for assessment during the month	21
Number of applications assessed during September	47
Number of applications awaiting assessment as @ September 30 th	50

HAP Summary Year to date 2024	
Total active HAP tenancies	472
New HAP tenancies set up	45
HAP allocated Social Housing	106
Closed HAP tenancies	119
HAP Rent Review amendments	194
HAP Other tenancy amendments	353

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 April and to date this year:

LA/RAS/Leasing allocations in September (offers made): **0**
 LA/RAS/Leasing allocations to September (offers made): **49**
 Tenant Liaison Officer cases in September: **42**
Maintenance Calls for September: 617
Maintenance Calls year to date: 5,019

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 its draft Traveller Accommodation Programme 2025–2029 on Friday the 27th 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. Submissions for the Draft Traveller Accommodation Programme are invited and should be forwarded in writing to:

- 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 22nd November 2024 and the Programme is to be adopted by 31st 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 27th September, 2024

Scheme	Number	Amount
HGD - Housing Adaptation Grant	155	€1,697,515
MAG - Mobility Aid Grant	10	€32,912
HOP - Housing Aid for Older Persons	252	€1,271,479
Total	417	€3,001,906

Grants Paid out to 27th September, 2024

Scheme	Number	Amount
HGD - Housing Adaptation Grant	59	€581,306
MAG - Mobility Aid Grant	6	€22,492
HOP - Housing Aid for Older Persons	129	€607,033
Total	194	€1,210,831

HOUSING LOANS

The Tenant (*Incremental*) Purchase Scheme 2016, which allows local authority tenants to buy their homes is being revised as of from 29th 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 1st January - 30th September, 2024

Loan Type	Received	Approved	Amount Approved	Number Paid	Amount Paid
Local Authority Home Loan	24	7	€900,900	10	€1,467,326
Caravan Loan	0	0	€0.00	0	€0
Total	24	7	€900,900	10	€1,467,326

VOIDS

At the end of September 2024 there were **47 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



Turnkey Housing Project - 22 Social Housing Units under construction on the Callan Road / Circular Road Junction. Estate to be known as "Marnellsmeadows" to reflect the history of the townland. 4 x 2 bed units, 9 x 1 bed and 9 x 3 bed.



*Direct Build Housing Project progressing on site –
88 units + Community Centre at Crokers Hill, Kennyswell Road, Kilkenny City*



*Direct Build Housing Project -2 age friendly units on the site of former
Community Centre Loughboy almost complete. Designed in-house by KCC Architects.*



Turnkey Housing Project – 18 units on site at Ardreagh, Lumper Lane Urlingford.

Commencement of 42 unit mixed tenure scheme at Abbeyhill, Thomastown

Construction works are due to commence shortly on a new mixed tenure 42-unit housing scheme Abbeyhill, Ladywell Street, Thomastown. Located in front of the new Primary Care Centre, within walking distance of Thomastown Town Centre this development will transform a 1.24-hectare disused site into a vibrant community, providing 42 social and affordable housing units. The housing units at Abbeyhill will feature a mix of 1, 2, 3, and 4-bedroom units, catering to a variety of housing needs. Ormonde Construction Ltd, based in Kilkenny City has been appointed as the contractor for this significant project under a Design Build Contract, with Brian Dunlop Architects acting for Ormonde Construction. A completion date of early 2026 is expected.



Seated: Gemma O'Rourke (*van Dijk Architects*), Eimear Cody (*Kilkenny County Council*), John Holohan (*Ormonde Construction*), Brian Dunlop (*Brian Dunlop Architects*),
Middle Row (L to R): Michelle McKeever (*McGahon Surveyors*), Niall Patterson (*Hayes Higgins Partnership*), Fiona Muldowney (*Brian Dunlop Architects*), Paddy Tyrrell (*Ormonde Construction*), Corwun O'Brien (*Malone O'Regan*)
Back Row (L to R): Paddy Crotty, Tom Doherty (*Kilkenny County Council*), Richard Cleere (*Ormonde Construction*), Philip O'Morchoe (*Brian Dunlop Architects*)

COMMUNITY

The Table below outlines in summary ongoing projects and schemes in the Community Department:

Town & Village Scheme			
Community Group	Project Description	Grant	Status
Glenmore CLG Project Development Measure 2022	Develop plans for a building purchased under Building Acquisition Measure. The building will be used as a community shop/café and meeting facility	€49,950	A number of surveys are underway. Planning permission granted.
Callan 2023	Restoration and clean up of the King's River to enable the community to use it for activities fishing, swimming & canoeing and kayaking	€247,500	Planning of project commenced.
Dunnamaggin Local Community Group 2023	The Transformation of a community green space into and events amenity for all the community knows as Madge's Garden	€247,500	Planning permission granted. Design brief to commence.
Urlingford Town Team 2023	Refurbishment of Community Hall. Phase 2	€500,000	Project manager engaged, tender process to commence
Callan Project Development Measure 2024	Develop plans to establish an outdoor classroom community space in Abbey Field and examine the re-development of a derelict cottage in Moate Field and complete biodiversity studies on both sites	€49,950	Brief for consultant to be prepared
Paulstown Community Group Project Development Measure	Complete feasibility and design studies for the creation of a centre point in the village, consisting of an open public green space with seating and leisure facilities. This will redevelop the village centre and provide accessibility between the main street and residential areas	€49,950	Brief to be prepared

Rural Regeneration Development Fund			
Community Group	Project Description	Grant	Status
Piltown	Phase 1 of the project comprises of main street urban renewal enhancement, parking bays, EV charging points, and bicycle bays x2	€1,744,745	The Tender is drafted and will be advertised in October 2024.
Glenmore	Develop the South East Greenway Connectivity Link and Pink Rock Cycle Loop & Amenity Trail	€2,356,423	Part 8 approved. Design to commence.
Thomastown	Thomastown Library and upgrade to Community Centre	€4,013,115	Work in progress

Community & Cultural Facilities Capital Scheme			
Community Group	Project Description	Grant	Status
Johnstown Sports Field 2022	Contribution to development of walkway around complex	€40,000	Delays due to funding, the group have received Sports Capital funding for other elements of the walkway. Project due to commence.
1 st Kilkenny Scout Group 2022	Upgrade of lighting to LED lighting, improve installation in attic, upgrade boiler and installation of solar panels	€15,000	Work in Progress
Carrigeen GAA Club 2022	Replacement of side panels on AstroTurf pitch	€25,000	Work in Progress
The Rock Youth Centre Kilkenny Christian Centre 2023	Upgrade of Centre Facilities	€35,000	Works Completed
Dunnamaggin GAA Club 2023	Lighting of the Dunnamaggin walkway	€30,000	Works Completed
Kilfane Handball Club 2023	Construction of gym	€25,000	Work in Progress
Mooncoin Celtic AFC 2023	LED Floodlighting for extra training area	€20,000	Work in Progress
John Lockes GAA Club 2023	Walkway improvements, CCTV, Sensory activity outdoor wall panels/litter bins/walkway benches & security gate	€11,000	Partially Completed
Graiguenamanagh Hall 2023	Installation of new stage lighting/screen & projector	€9,000	Partially Completed
Gowran MUGA 2023	Additional play equipment for MUGA	€45,000	Project Complete. <i>Grant being processed</i>
Windgap Handball Club 2024	Replace glass back wall, installation of ventilation and upgrade of heating system and lights, upgrade Shower and Bathroom facilities, painting and decorating of handball alley	€25,000	Partially Completed
Cois Nore 2024	Develop and Refurbishment of Community Space	€40,000	Tender Process Commenced
Piltown AFC 2024	Walkway, Lighting and Security Fencing	€36,000	Tender Process Commenced
Callan United AFC 2024	Upgrade of Dressing Rooms and Storage facilities	€35,000	Work in Progress
Inistioge Community Council 2024	Bi folding doors to increase space for large functions	€14,000	Tender Process Commenced
Danesfort GAA Club 2024	Extension of floodlit walkway	€15,000	Work in Progress

Mullinavat Community Group 2024	Installation of CCTV and fob entry system	€9,000	Tender Process Commenced
Ballyhale Shamrocks 2024	Upgrade of toilets / disability access	€9,000	Due to Commence
Gowran Community Complex 2024	Contribution towards the refurbishment of a community hub	€27,000	Tender Process Commenced
Johnstown Community Hall 2024	Refurbishment of balcony area	€15,000	Project in Progress
Conahay Shamrocks GAA 2024	Upgrade to lighting around walk way	€25,000	Tender Process Commenced

CLAR 2023			
Community Group	Project Description	Grant	Status
Tullagher Rosbercon GAA Club	Provision of tarmacadam car park, passing bay and emergency access road to new playing field.	€50,000	Planning Permission Submitted
Muckalee Football Club	Provision of completed carpark at the grounds	€50,000	Procurement in Progress
Kilmoganny GAA	Upgrade car park and walkway	€30,150	Procurement in Progress
St Martins GAA	Lighting, nets, railing and gates	€44,766	Works due to commence Shortly
Kilkenny County Council Supported by Coolagh Community Group	Upgrade works outside community hall	€45,000	Works due to commence shortly
Kilkenny County Council Muckalee Public Lighting (Phase 2)	Upgrade of public lighting	€24,750	Works due to commence shortly
Galmoy Community Hall	Provision of a MUGA	€30,015	Works due to commence shortly
Windgap Tidy Towns	Provide tarmac surface at Windgap Lake car park.	€20,788	Works due to commence shortly
Skeoughvosteen Community Centre & GAA	Provision of outdoor public and wheelchair accessible public toilets	€50,000	Procurement in Progress

Recently Completed Projects

Town & Village - Piltown Garda Station

Kilkenny County Council received funding to carry out works on the Garda Station in Piltown to include a Community Working Hub. Works are now complete. Kilkenny County Council are working in collaboration with Piltown Community Enterprise on this project.



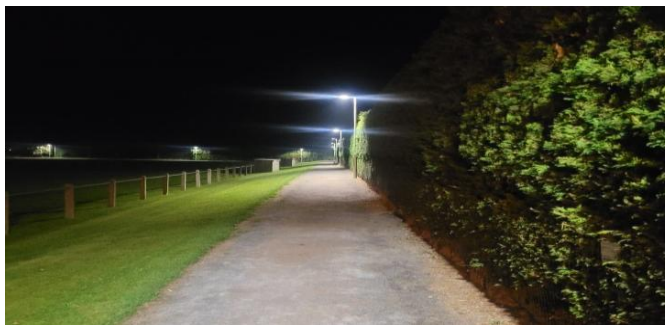
Piltown Garda Station

Community & Cultural Facilities Capital Scheme - Christian Rock Youth Centre

Christian Rock Youth Centre were awarded €35,000 under this scheme in 2023 to carry out renovation on the Light House Project. This project consists of developing the first floor of the premises in Dean Street to offices, a Youth Zone, and a Multi-Purpose Meeting Space. The overall project aims to provide a community space for all.

Community & Cultural Facilities Capital Scheme - Dunnamaggin GAA

Kilkenny County Council awarded €30,000 to Dunnamaggin GAA for lighting and walkway around the pitch. The project is now complete.



Walkway and lighting around Dunnamaggin GAA pitch

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 have teamed up to develop a Programme of Events and Activities over 8 weeks. These events are free of charge and commenced on Friday, 6th September, 2024 and will run until Friday 1st November, 2024 from 11.00 a.m. to 1.00 p.m. Located in the new Mayfair Library, the events provide an opportunity for older people to find out about how to keep healthy and active as well as providing the opportunity to chat and meet with people.

The events have been very well received with up to 70 people attending each week at the Mayfair Library. The programme has so far included Ageing Well in the Community, Dementia Awareness, What does being physically active mean?, Age Friendly Strategy Consultation and Age Friendly Healthy Homes presentation. The remaining event topics are Assisted Decision Making and Safeguarding, Minding Your Wellbeing Self Care Workshop and Community Safety Talk.



What does being physically active mean? session with Seamus Nugent – Kilkenny Recreational Sports Partnership



Age Friendly Homes Presentation by Linda Kirwan – Kilkenny Age Friendly Homes Coordinator

Healthy Ireland

A Social Farming open day took place at Éiru Farm, Jerpoint, Thomastown on 24th September, 2024. Social Farming Projects in Kilkenny are supported by the Local Community Development Committee (LCDC) through the Healthy Ireland Fund. These projects provide individuals with additional needs the opportunity to spend time on a family farm in a welcoming, supportive, and inclusive environment. Participants can engage in a variety of activities that interest them, such as gardening, animal care, or indoor tasks like baking bread or making jam.

Activities are tailored to suit each person's abilities and preferences, ensuring a safe and encouraging atmosphere. The focus is on helping participants build confidence, develop social connections, and form meaningful relationships. While the farm is a typical working farm, not a treatment facility, it offers a non-clinical space where individuals can benefit from the positive experiences of farm life.

ARTS

In Bloom - Future Sounds of Kilkenny

The Arts Office in collaboration with Cleere's Bar music series 'In Bloom – Futures Sounds of Kilkenny' for young and emerging bands and musicians finished on 22nd September, 2024. The line-up of musicians in the series included Seafall, Joycult, Jack Doheny, Charlotte Mackay, Aoife Rhatigan, Organic Produce, the Quincavelles and The Donnys. The events which commenced in July 2024 provided a platform for emerging artists, amplifying young voices and giving these musicians an opportunity to connect with audiences, build a following, and energise the City with their creativity and passion.



Quincavelles at Cleere's Bar

Rhyme Rag

Rhyme Rag, the poetry programme, is back in schools this September and October with poets Jessica Traynor and Anna Jordan delivering workshops in Colaiste Abhainn Rí and Loreto Secondary School. Seamus Cashman is the resident editor for the Autumn with poems to be selected and published in mid-November.

Art of Change

Art of Change is returning this Autumn with a longer series of Workshops offered to young people at Foróige The Drum and Ossory Youth. The Workshops are co-ordinated by artist Thomas Duffy who will lead the group through the programme focusing them on the theme of the Workshops creating opportunities to explore environmental issues through art. To-date the group of 16 young people have completed Workshops with artists Sinead Curran, Maeve Stone and Carrie Lynam and have a further six Workshops which will run until the end of November 2024. As part of the Autumn Art of Change Programme, Workshops delivered by The Rediscovery Centre were offered to three secondary schools on the topic of sustainable fashion.



Art of Change Brainstorming Session

Artist CPD - For Artists working with Early Years Children

Artist Órla Kelly, of Early Childhood Creativity led an experiential Workshop which shared her practice of the arts for very young children. The Workshop included discussions on transforming spaces for the early year's child for a creative experience, consider how the young child engages with the arts, how to create and unfold elements of Workshops, how to incorporate a narrative or use visual storytelling. Tips shared on materials and techniques of use, and ways artists can transpose their own work to share with young children. The Workshop also touched on elements that can be used for children with additional needs.



Skill sharing workshop for artist working with early years children

Culture Night Kilkenny

Culture Night took place on Friday 20th September 2024 all around the country. It was a great success in Kilkenny with over 20 events taking place around the County. Culture Night was supported by the Nighttime Economy this year and so was able to support more events to take part.

A full list of event listings can be viewed on the Culture Night website at:
www.culturenight.ie/events.



Songlines Concert at Rothe House for Culture Night with Susie Lamb & Kate Powell

Creative Kilkenny

Living Artfully

The launch of the Creative Health and Wellbeing project 'Living Artfully' was held in Carlow Town Hall Chamber on Wednesday, 25th September 2024. The project is a collaboration between Kilkenny County Council & Carlow County Council and along with various support services, including Traveller Support, Dementia Friendly, Mental Health, Cancer Support, Integration Teams, Social Prescribing, and the HSE.

The Programme promotes creative, healthy habits encouraging participation across all ages. The initiative uses singing, music, and creativity to enhance self-expression, build confidence, affirm identity, and celebrate both existing and new skills. The artist Trish O'Reilly performed on the day.



Living Artfully Launch

Live Music Events in Retirement Homes

The Live Music Events in Kilkenny's retirement homes wrapped up in September marking the end of performances in five local facilities. Staff, residents and family members thoroughly enjoyed and welcomed the Programme. The positive

feedback from the evaluation process highlighted the profound impact of the events on everyone involved. There is strong support for the programme to continue into the future.



John Spillane, Gerald Peregrine & Lynda O'Connor performing at Live Music Events in Retirement Homes

Targeted Pop-Up Projects

Led by Creative Kilkenny and in collaboration with various departments and communities this month's partnership with the Integration Team brought together members of the Ukrainian community and local Irish residents to create headwear at Upper Court Manor, Freshford. Participants joined a workshop to craft traditional headpieces with milliner Gwen Walsh from Kells Craft Centre. The project has already shown a positive impact on everyone involved.

HERITAGE

Kilkenny Witch Trials Launch

The Kilkenny Witch Trials programme and website for Kilkenny's Toil & Trouble was successfully launched on 13th September, 2024 at St. Canice's Cathedral. Marking the 700th anniversary of these events the festival offers a blend of historical education and entertainment for everyone. More information about all the upcoming events can be found at www.kilkenny.ie/toilandtrouble.



Toil & Trouble Launch at St. Canice's Cathedral

The Kilkenny Mass Paths & Holy Wells Workshops

Pat Reid from Wicklow Willow and Marion Sutton from Shanarc Archaeology held two Workshops on the Mass Paths & Holy Wells surveys in Castlecomer and Glenmore. The purpose of the workshops was to gather information about missing Mass Paths & Holy Wells and to provide information about the projects and to demonstrate how to record local heritage to the public. There was great engagement from the communities on foot of both workshops.



Workshop at Glenmore Community Centre

Kilkenny Audit of Oral Heritage Recordings Survey

The Heritage Office announced Phase Two Audit of oral heritage recordings in County Kilkenny. The project aims to identify recorded collections of oral heritage and folklore that have been undertaken over the decades, in both private and public bodies, as well as by individuals. Mac Conmara Heritage Consulting, leading experts in the fields of heritage and oral history, as well as the delivery of large-scale cultural audits, have been appointed to lead the project. Members of the public are invited to contribute any information they have of spoken word collections via the Kilkenny Heritage website by taking part in the survey.

CIVIL DEFENCE

September was a busy month for the volunteers in Kilkenny Civil Defence. Several duties took place including the Medieval Marathon where medical cover was provided to over 1,500 participants.

Volunteers participated in “Team up to Clean up” collecting over 8 bags of rubbish from the River Nore by boat. Kilkenny Civil Defence attended the National Ploughing Championships both providing

information about Civil Defence and locating Missing Persons.

National Services Day was held in the Castle Park where all Emergency Services both statutory and voluntary got to meet the public and display their vehicles, equipment and skills. It was a hugely successful event with thousands of people turning out. A special display took place where the Fire Service cut up an old car and members of the National Ambulance service “treated” the patients on board to give the public an up-close experience of what happens at road traffic accidents.

Kilkenny Civil Defence took ownership of a new Ford Ranger part funded by the Department of Defence. The vehicle runs completely on HVO (Hydrotreated vegetable oil) making a reduction of 90% in carbon emissions.

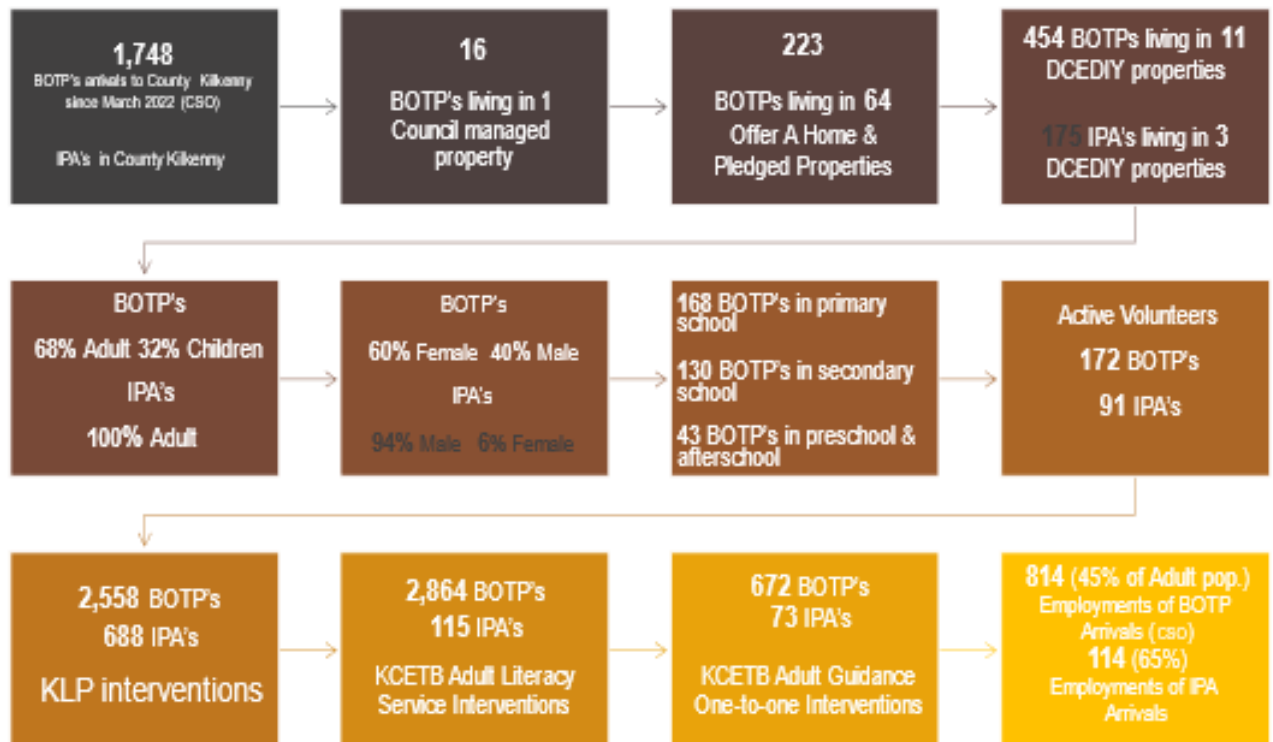


Volunteers at Medieval Mile Marathon



National Services Day at Kilkenny Castle Park

Community Integration Monitor to 14.10.24



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 LAITs aim to link people in any of the above groups with local service providers appropriate to the need of the person. They act as the direct point of contact to advocate, provide information, guidance and advice to queries, as they arise.

In September, the LAITs have worked with 60 International Protection Applicants in relation to 142 queries across health access, education including English language, Traineeships, employment access, Department of Social Protection supports, community engagement, bank account setup, independent living, youth support, transport, accommodation, and legal/immigration. They worked with 108 Ukrainians across 30 individual meetings and 6 group sessions addressing queries such as health access, education, employment, Department of Social Protection, independent living, relocations and legal/immigration.

Intercultural workshop took place with Ukrainian and Irish women making traditional Irish Box Hats which will feature in an intercultural event in Q4. This arose from funding secured by Creative Ireland as the women in Uppercourt Manor had expressed an interest in participating in some form of crafts. The integration focus encouraged the Ukrainian women to do this with Irish women, for the intercultural exchange opportunity. There are 3 workshops of 7 women being held to complete 2 hats each and the women will showcase their final wears.

FIRE SERVICES

Fire Safety Certificate Applications

79 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.

Fire Services Acts 1981 and 2003

Fire Prevention staff made targeted inspections of premises both to provide advice and to enforce legislation during 2023.

57 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.

82 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 756 callouts to-date in 2024. These incidents included a number of road traffic collisions, commercial and house fires, ambulance assists, car fires, chimney fires and automatic fire alarm activations.

Recruitment of Retained Firefighters

Another recruitment campaign has commenced to recruit Firefighters in Castlecomer, Freshford, Urlingford, Thomastown and Graiguenamanagh. The closing date is the 14th October, 2024. 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 (7) Fire Stations throughout the County.

There are a variety of different types of appliances in operation i.e. Standard Class B Pumping Fire Appliance (*normal fire appliance*), Emergency Tenders, Combined Aerial and Pumping Appliances, Water Tankers, Incident Command vehicle and 4-Wheel Drive Vehicles with off road capabilities.

Kilkenny County Council Fire and 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. The Road Safety Authority carried out an inspection on our fleet. Feedback from the inspector's visit was positive.

Community Fire Safety Programme

Kilkenny Fire and Rescue Service continue to deliver the National Directorate Fire and 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 Fire-fighters 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 & 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 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.

An Emergency First Responder Refresher course was held in Castlecomer Fire Station from the 17th to 19th September. This course is 3 days in duration and is a pre-hospital Emergency Care Council approved course. 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 provide emergency first aid.

We have 6 firefighters on a 2 week Breathing Apparatus Course (QQI) in Hacketstown 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.

We have also provided our own in-house instructors to national training courses in areas such as compartment fire behaviour, Breathing Apparatus and Managing Incidents.



LIBRARY



Kilkenny's Toil and Trouble Festival

Kilkenny County Council Library Service is commemorating the 700th Anniversary of the Kilkenny Witch Trials by offering a wide-ranging programme of events as part of the Toil and Trouble Festival.

This programme of events has something for all ages including author visits, children's art workshops, candle making sessions, primary schools history workshops, plant lore workshops, walking tours, oral history sessions and a free educational schools activity pack for every primary school child in Kilkenny.

A full programme of events can be found [here](#).



National Public Library Open Day 2024

National Public Library Open Day took place on 28th September and our Library Branches used this opportunity to demonstrate that the Library really does have something for everyone. We held story times and creation stations and invited the public to take a closer look and visit their local Library.

We also used the opportunity to promote the work of the Library on our social media platforms and engage with public Libraries all over the country.

SDG Week 2024

Ireland's third Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) Week took place from 23rd to 29th September and Kilkenny Libraries offered a diverse, eclectic and practical mix of events to celebrate. Libraries support the implementation of the SDGs by providing free access to information, support for literacy and ICT skills and access to community space.

Events included:

- Waking the Seeds – an interactive art session for families in the Mayfair Library
- Zero Food Waste demo sessions in Thomastown and Loughboy Libraries
- An information session with a food nutritionist in Graig Library
- A bee-themed storytime and craft in Castlecomer Library
- An eco nature-art mandala making workshop in Urlingford Library
- A stress management workshop with life coach Deirdre Lindy in Ferrybank Library



Launch of Community Energy Hub

The South East Energy Agency has partnered with Libraries across the Southeast to launch the Community Energy Hub, a free resource that helps people improve their energy efficiency and save money.

Loughboy Library was one of four Libraries selected to pilot this programme and it was launched on 9th September with hopes to expand the service following the pilot phase.

This adds to existing supports in our libraries including accessibility to CODEMA home energy kits for library members.

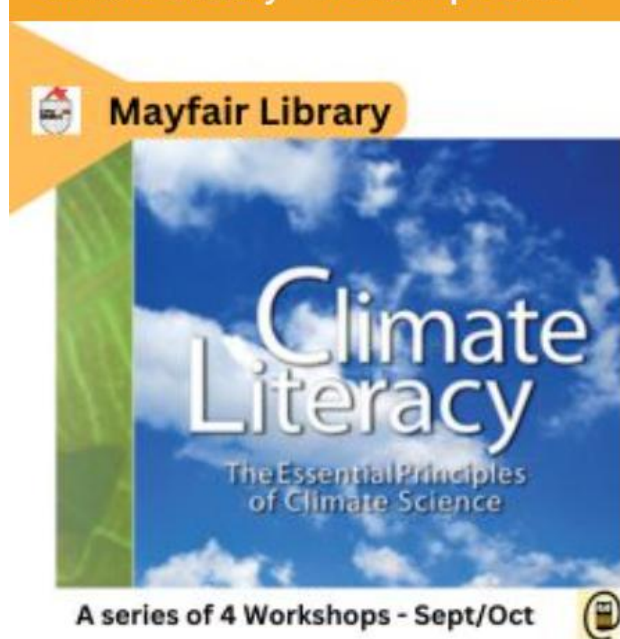


Climate Literacy Programme

As part of the ALL (*Adult Literacy for Life*) Strategy and in conjunction with our partners in KCETB, Kilkenny Library Service are delighted to announce a series of four workshops which commenced on 17th September and will introduce people to the concepts of climate literacy in a clear and practical way.

This series of workshops is taking place in the Mayfair Library and topics covered include clothes upcycling, biodiversity, waste minimisation and a trip to Dunmore Civic Amenity Site.

Climate Literacy - Workshop Series

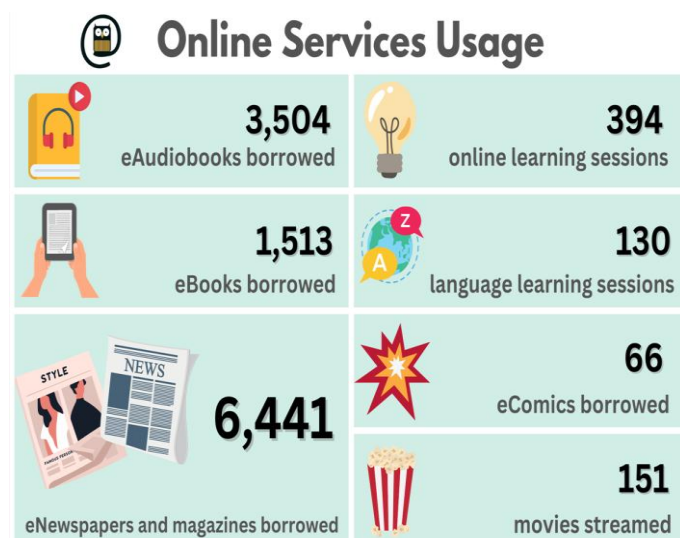


Climate Literacy for All

A series of 4 workshops for adults that are a mixture of theory and practical elements covering four different climate change issues.

The theory will include an Introduction to...

Online Services Usage



Digital Engagement

Library staff prepared, recorded, edited and published 282 posts and videos on our social media platforms in September. Our engagements for the month were 5,657 and our videos and reels had 5,252 views. Our virtual newsletter was sent to 7,655 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 September:

SDG 3: Good Health & Wellbeing

The Mayfair Library held a series of Age Friendly workshops aimed at equipping our older people with the information and skills they need to stay healthy and active as they age. Topics covered included community safety, dementia awareness and self-care.



SDG 11: Sustainable cities and communities

Castlecomer Library staff digitised and exhibited written accounts of schoolchildren from 4 local primary schools which were originally recorded in 2004. The topics of these accounts are wide-ranging including sport, school, family, shopping and technology and these rich records of life in Castlecomer and surrounding communities are now preserved for generations to come.



FINANCE

The expenditure by service division to the end of September is set out in table 1. Total Expenditure for the period was €92.8m compared with the annual budget of €111m.

Table 1	Actual YTD September 2024	Budget Full Year 2024
	€'000's	€'000's
Housing & Building	21,358	26,258
Road Transport & Safety	24,067	29,958
Water Services	5,599	7,699
Development Management	13,090	14,720
Environmental Services	12,475	16,899
Recreation & Amenity	5,753	8,759
Agriculture, Education, Health, Welfare	456	690
Miscellaneous Services	7,715	6,331
CMC for distribution	2,319	
OVERALL TOTAL	92,833	111,134

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 30th September 2024 with a total value of €4,308,010. The scheme closed for applications and further information requests on 27th September 2024.

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 cases
No change to Revaluation on Appeal	9 cases
Appeals Outstanding	4 cases

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

Finance Update

Inflation is having a significant impact on the cost of delivering all services and on the delivery of the Capital Programme. The issue is being kept under review.

The bank overdraft facility was not utilised in the nine month period to the end of September.

Budget 2025

Work has commenced on the preparation of the Council Budget for 2025. Workshops will be held with Elected Members over the coming weeks to discuss the issues arising. The proposed date for the Statutory Budget Meeting is Friday, 6th December, 2024.