

CHIEF EXECUTIVE REPORT

SEPTEMBER 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

Energy Efficiency and Emissions Reduction Training and Financial Supports Available for Businesses:

A FREE 1-hour webinar from the SEAI, on 2nd October 2024 at 11am-12pm. Open to Everyone

REPORT AT A GLANCE

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ROADS

MAJOR PROJECTS

N24 Waterford to Cahir Scheme
Date for Publication of the Option Selection Report is Q3 2024.
To date no funding has been provided in 2024 to extend the project beyond Phase 2.

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 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 no applicants in May 2024. Timelines for the Judicial review are not currently available.

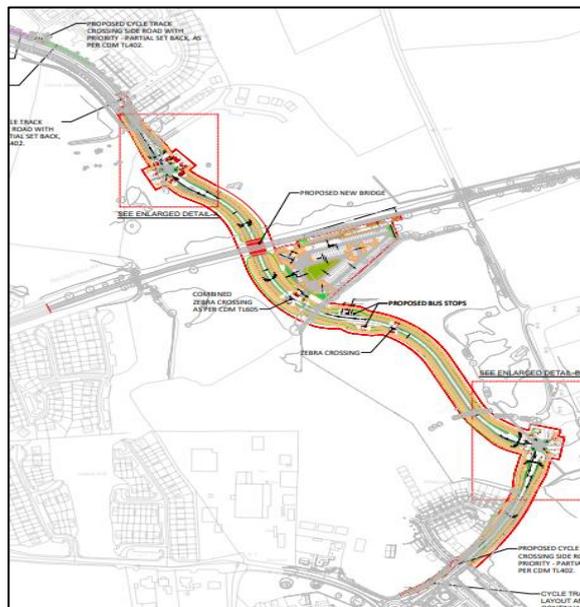
OTHER

Pavement Schemes.
The design work is ongoing in respect of the N76 Callan By Pass Pavement Scheme.

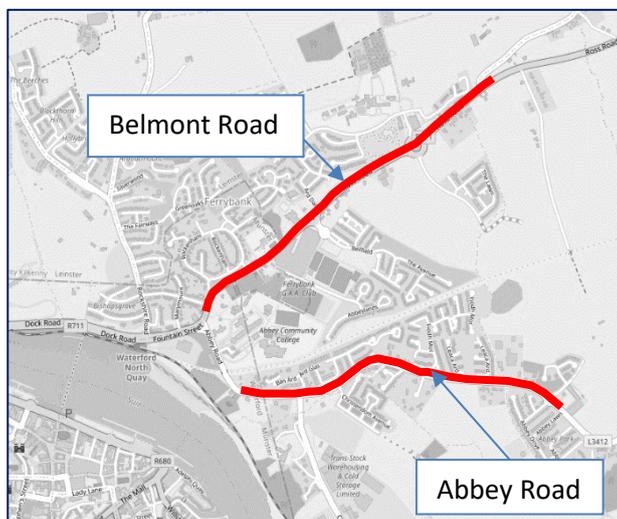
URDF

South North Access Road
The South North Access Road (Belmont Road to Abbey Road), Ferrybank scheme will be lodged for planning in September 2024.

- 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



The sustainable links, Ferrybank scheme is out to tender to appoint a consultant 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.

Consultants will be appointed in September 24.

ENVIRONMENT

CLIMATE ACTION

Spotlight on Community Climate Action
The Community Climate Action Officer is currently visiting each of the 22 communities who were awarded a total of €511,000 funding under Community Climate Action Programme. Here's a snap shot of five communities in the west of the County as they prepare to start work on their projects. The other communities will be featured in forthcoming Chief Executive reports.



Callan Community Energy is developing “The Solar Genny” - an innovative new mobile solar-powered generator which can be transported to festivals, schools and community events to provide clean renewable energy.



TCAT Threefold Community are installing a new polytunnel at Westcourt, Callan, as part of a Community Supported Agriculture Project, to enable them to grow organic vegetables all year round.



Tullahought Community Development are making the Community Hall more energy efficient and comfortable by insulating the roof and upgrading the windows. They are also installing a new composter for use in their fantastic flower displays.



Windgap GAA are installing solar panels on the club house, planting pollinator friendly plants around the perimeter of the pitch, installing a water refill station to discourage members from using single use plastics, and installing a bike repair station to encourage people to cycle to the grounds.

New Community Climate Action Story Map

To see which communities received funding under the Community Climate Action Fund please have a look at our new [Story Map](#) which shows the locations and gives a summary of each project.

Staff EV Trial: “The car was a dream to drive”

September will see the end of the 3-month Staff EV Trial for business travel, in partnership with the Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland and Enterprise Rent a Car. The trial was a success with staff saying “*The car was a dream to drive*” and “*Even though I had no previous experience of electric cars it was easy to understand and operate*”.

The car was used by staff for business travel on more than 50 occasions for more than 2500Km of business travel. Environment, Planning and IT were the sections who used the car most. The journeys in the EV resulted in a saving of 175kg of carbon dioxide which is equivalent to boiling a kettle 11,666 times, or the amount of CO₂ absorbed by 7 mature trees in a year!

The trial was an excellent opportunity to learn more about EV’s and how they can play their part in reducing greenhouse gas. The findings and data be will be collated by the SEAI, and will also inform future policies in Kilkenny County Council. Talks are on-going to see if the EV can be retained for a few more months to allow more staff to use it. We’ll keep you posted.



New Community Energy Hub: demystifying energy efficiency and energy grants

The [Community Energy Hub](#) is a new trusted source of all-things energy, to help households, community groups, and businesses to reduce energy use, and avail of grants. The online hub was developed by the [South East Energy Agency](#), a not for profit energy agency based in Kieran’s College Campus Kilkenny, in conjunction with POBAL, and the Library Services in Kilkenny, Carlow, Wexford & Waterford. The hub comprises an online independent source of information on energy grants,plus monthly drop in clinics in local authority libraries where people can book a consultation with a qualified energy engineer for energy advice.

The first drop in clinic is at Loughboy Library Kilkenny on Monday 9th September (11am to 1pm). Presentations & Speakers 11am to 12pm Drop in Energy Clinic 12pm to 1pm. Spaces are limited so register now for free to guarantee your [spot](https://buytickets.at/southeastenergyagency/1319363)<https://buytickets.at/southeastenergyagency/1319363>

Events/Dates for the Diary

Energy Efficiency and Emissions Reduction Training and Financial Supports Available for Businesses:

A FREE 1-hour webinar from the SEAI, on 2nd October 2024 at 11am-12pm. Open to Everyone. [Click here to register!](#)

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, Ballyhimin, 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, Foulkescourt, Johnstown, Co. Kilkenny E41 CP40

RECYCLE FOR GOOD

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 Bhríde, Kellymunt, 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, Airmont Road, Slieverue, Co. Kilkenny X91 W421

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

RECYCLE FOR GOOD

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

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" will take place on the weekend of **20th-22nd of September 2024**.



The County-Wide Clean Up initiative brought together residents, businesses, and local organizations to collaborate in a mass effort to enhance the cleanliness and sustainability of our County.

The “Team Up to Clean Up” event created a sense of community ownership and pride by engaging participants in a variety of cleanup activities, awareness campaigns, and environmental educational programs. It created a sense of ownership and focus for many communities, with significant additional interest by many groups and individuals outside of national campaigns such as the annual National Spring Clean which takes place during the month of April. All cohorts of society engaged resulting in the “Team Up to Clean Up” exemplifying best practice in the areas of social inclusion and environment. Community groups, schools and residents committees can register via our online portal- cleanup.kilkenny.ie | Team Up To Clean Up - Together for Kilkenny



Composting & Recycling for Schools Programme *August 2024*



As part of the “Team Up to Clean Up-Together for Kilkenny” campaign for 2024, there will be an opportunity for primary and secondary schools involved in the Green Schools Programme to register for an award winning composting and recycling for schools programme free of charge.

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.

Gum Litter Taskforce Visits Kilkenny

The Gum Litter Taskforce, supported by Kilkenny County Council, arrived in the City as part of its summer roadshow to tackle the scourge of gum litter pollution. The initiative aims to educate and engage the public on the importance of proper waste disposal and the impact of litter on our environment. Now in its seventeenth year, the campaign is a collaboration between Food Drink Ireland, the Department of Environment, Climate and Communications, the chewing gum industry, and local authorities. Its mission is to reduce gum litter and promote a cleaner and more sustainable environment.



WASTE

Bring Banks Usage

The Council provides and manages 46 Bring Centers across the City and County. A total of **1397 tonnes** of recyclables were collected from our Bring Centers to date in 2024. This represents no significant change from the same period in 2023. Loughboy shopping center - Kilkenny City (*14 tonnes collected*), Aldi - Kilkenny City (*12 tonnes collected*), Lidl - Johnswell, Kilkenny City (*12 tonnes collected*) and are the busiest locations in the City. Aldi - Ferrybank (*13 tonnes collected*), Lidl - Thomastown (*12 tonnes collected*) and Callan (*10 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

August 2024 was a busy month at Dunmore. There was total of 149 tonnes of Municipal Solid Waste. 105 tonnes of Municipal Dry Waste and 34 tonnes of green garden waste. An exceptionally high volume of Waste Electronic and Electrical Equipment (WEEE) was taken in at the site and sent for recycling and reclamation with 19.28 Tonnes in total. Metal and Timber waste streams were other high volumes of note possibly due to building works being more prevalent during the summer period.

The various other recycling streams deposited at the Dunmore facility during the month of August and their respective tonnages can be seen in Table 1 below. The facility was Audited by the EPA early in the month with the focus of the Audit on landfill aftercare and CAS compliance. The site was seen to be well run and having no impact on the surrounding Environment.



Table 1

Recycling Stream	Quantity (Tonnes)
Cardboard.....	6.98
Plastic.....	4.68
Paper.....	9.6
Food Waste.....	1.16
Mattresses.....	3.16
Metal.....	15.94
Timber.....	15.56
Textiles.....	2.5
Tetra-pac.....	0.46
WEEE.....	19.28

As part of the Landfill Aftercare the landfill gas flare continues to run 24hrs per day seven days per week extracting and burning approximately 35m³ of landfill gas per hour. The month of August also saw 66 Tonnes of leachate tankered off site.

AIR NOISE WATER

Water Quality – Farm Inspections

109 inspections have been carried out to date with a new block commencing now which will bring us to circa 180 NAIP inspections. 45 pass, 39 advisory and 24 warning to date.

Follow up farm inspections are ongoing. Many farmers are contacting the Environment section with regard to works carried out from inspections at the end of 2023. The Environment staff are currently working off advisory notices and following up on warning letters from 2023.

Septic Tank Inspections

The Environment office is almost at its target number of DWWTS inspections to be carried out for 2024. Once all inspections have been carried out, we will be issuing the remainder of the advisory notices which will be followed up in 2025.

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 carrying out sampling/audits of Licensed Facilities towards the end of Quarter 3 and start of Quarter 4.

Misconnections

The Council is currently in the process of investigating a serious misconnection in Thomastown and hope to start investigating some on the Breagagh river in Kilkenny City.

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 August 2024 is 67 compared to 87 for the same period last year. The number of complaints received in the eight months to the end of August 2024 is up 11% when compared to the same eight-month period in 2023. The nature of these complaints ranged from 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.

PARKS & SPECIAL PROJECTS

South East Greenway - Mainline Works

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 months, works on the permanent Greenway carpark at Ballyverneen, Glenmore have advanced and are nearing completion and when complete this carpark will have capacity for 39 vehicles. Significant progress has also been made along the main-line with some 85% of the 5.5km now ready to receive the final surface layer. Works are also progressing at all agricultural crossing locations. The Kilmurry Lane access ramp has also advanced and public lighting columns from Ferrybank to the access ramp have now been installed. The boundary screen fencing and general fencing along the Greenway corridor is nearing completion. The programme remains of 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 next year.



Figure 1 Greenway Carpark at Ballyverneen Glenmore



Various images along Lot 5A – showing public lighting plus grade-separated and at-grade agricultural crossings

Greenway Related Schemes

Woodstock (Inistioge) to South East Greenway Link: RPS Consulting Engineers Ltd., were engaged to provide technical consultancy services for the following design phases:

- (a) feasibility,
- (b) route selection and
- (c) the progression of the preferred option through planning.

The contract period to deliver the prescribed services is 49 months and they're currently working through phase (a) feasibility stage.

Greenway Link to Glenmore: Funding was secured under the Rural Regeneration Development Fund to advance this proposal to detail design, land acquisition and construction stage. This project also incorporates the provision of a new Pink Rock Cycle Loop which will offer greenway users, travelling from the New Ross end, the option of cycling back along an alternative route beside the scenic River Barrow.

Greenway Link to Slieverue: The Route Selection & Design Options Report to provide a connectivity link between Slieverue Village and the South East Greenway was completed in 2023. During this process 5 route options were considered and it was concluded that a looped route formed by a combination of two separate links, the Kilmurry Lane Route (*the Southern Connectivity Link*) and the Luffany Route (*the Northern Connectivity Link*) were the preferred options. In that this overall looped route would best accommodate active travel by locals using the Greenway and would provide the best facility to attract tourists to the village and tourism related activities in and around the locality.

It is proposed to initially seek planning consent under the Part 8 Planning process for the Southern Connectivity Link and the public consultation process for same has commenced.

Key dates pertaining to this application are:

- **Friday, 6th September, 2024 to Friday the 11th October, 2024 inclusive**
Planning documents will be available for inspection.
- **Friday, 25th October, 2024**
Submissions on the proposed Scheme will be accepted.

It is intended that the Northern Connectivity Link from Luffany will be the subject of a separate future planning process and discussions are ongoing with Transport infrastructure Ireland pertaining to same.

Outdoor Recreational Infrastructure Scheme (ORIS) – Up-date:

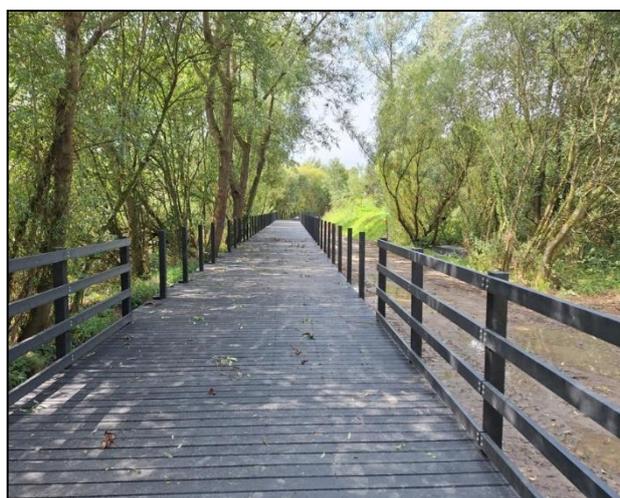
Works are progressing on the following 5 ORIS Measure 1 funded projects and all are expected to be completed by the end of the year:

- Community Walking Trail Development Scheme - in Graiguenamanagh, Kilmacow and Paulstown;
- Abbey Meadows, Callan - Trail Enhancement Scheme;
- Glencoum Wood - Walking Trail Development Scheme;
- King's River Trail, Kells, - Phase II Trail Rehabilitation;
- The Islands Walk, Urlingford - Trail Enhancement Scheme.

Design Consultants have also been appointed for the following 2 ORIS Project Development Schemes and works have commenced on same:

- Brandon Hill Summit Walk – Upland Trail Enhancement Scheme – Stage 1
- Kilkenny City to the Kilkenny Countryside Park Cycle & Pedestrian Connectivity Link -Feasibility Study, Route Selection Report & Planning

Under ORIS Measure 3 Programme, works are also progressing well on the replacement of the Lacken Boardwalk. This new bespoke piece of amenity infrastructure is being made using 100% recycled plastic components which would have otherwise gone to landfill or incineration, thus reducing carbon emissions into the atmosphere and turning what could be considered as waste into a precious resource. The cross-section width of the new boardwalk is 3.6m compared to 1.2m wide of the original structure and works are expected to be completed by the end October/early November.



Before & After - Lacken Boardwalk Replacement Scheme

Playgrounds

As a result of being allocated additional funds, collected through Planning Development Contributions for playgrounds, a significant Enhancement Programme was prepared and continues to be rolled-out this year. Under this Programme, which is over and above our general maintenance regime, to-date of our 35 playgrounds 12 have recently been painted. Tenders have also been awarded for the placement/repair of high value play components at the following locations *Castlecomer Discovery Park, Newpark, Coon, Thomastown, Ferrybank Neighbourhood Park and Graiguenamanagh*. Works at these locations is expected to commence in the coming weeks.



We were delighted to receive our newly branded van over the summer. The interior space of which has been customised to aid our hard working team with the day to day maintenance of our playgrounds and amenity spaces.

Edward Hennessy, Parks Team, pictured with the Cllr. Michael McCarthy, Cathaoirleach of Kilkenny County Council



Playing Pitches

A maintenance plan was recently completed at our Newpark and Garringreen pitches to ensure they were fit-for-purpose. The Newpark soccer pitch underwent verti-drain treatment, along with the application of sand, seed, feed and weed control. Garringreen pitch received feed and weed treatment as well. Both processes have significantly improved growth and appearance. Additionally, Garringreen has seen renovations to the paths around its playground, enhancing accessibility and overall appearance.

Meadows – Biodiversity Management

Species-rich meadows are crucial for biodiversity, supporting a wide range of wildlife. We are pleased to report that all major meadows, including Bishopsmeadow, Dukesmeadow, Glendine Wood, Melville Heights and the Peace Park in the City have been cut and vegetation gathered.

In Callan, the Abbey Meadows and the Moate Field have also been cut and gathered. This important process is vital for the long-term maintenance and care of our meadows.



Woodstock Estate

While the weather was not great over the summer Woodstock Gardens continued to attract high numbers of visitors. The marketing and promotion of the gardens was key to this success as was initiatives introduced, such as “Woodstock Wednesday”, whereby for the month of August Wednesday’s had free entry with tea and scones for €5. This proved very popular and it is hoped will lead to increased future visitor numbers through word of mouth on our fantastic gardens. For September, our Tea Rooms will return to opening weekends only.

In the gardens, over the summer months, we added over 500 plants to the herbaceous border within the walled garden, ensuring it will continue to bloom with vibrant autumnal colours. The autumn tree colours will also be a major attraction in the coming months and O’Connell Marketing will be promoting this with an autumn campaign, highlighting the wonderful colours and experiences Woodstock has to offer.

Autumn campaign and visuals for Woodstock Gardens



New Tagline
Wander Through Changing Seasons



Kilkenny Countryside Park

In conjunction with our service provider, we are excited to announce the launch of our social media platforms for the Kilkenny Countryside Park. While the park has already proven very popular this initiative will promote this fantastic amenity to a wider audience. The meadows within the park will be cut in mid-September to allow the pollen-rich species still in flower to continue to shine.

PLANNING

Development Management

Planning Summary	Total at End September	
	2023	2024
Planning Applications Received	596	524
Planning Applications Granted	397	439
Planning Applications Refused	86	38
Complaints Received	71	91
Warning Letters Issued	64	43
Enforcements Notices Issued	35	21
Cases Closed	65	47

FORWARD PLANNING

MASTERPLANS:

Ballyragget/Paulstown/Kilmacow

Masterplans have been prepared for the settlements of Ballyragget, Paulstown and Kilmacow. A Chief Executives report is being prepared on both Ballyragget and Paulstown and these will go before the Castlecomer MD Elected Members at their September meeting for approval, thus adopting both masterplans.

The draft masterplan for Kilmacow was on public display for a period of 7 weeks from Friday 12th July to Friday 30th Aug. A Walk-in public meeting was held also in Kilmacow Community Hall during the public display on Wednesday 7th Aug, which had in excess of 60 attendees. A total of 48 submissions were received during the consultation period and these are being currently assessed. A Chief Executives Report will then be prepared with the view to presenting to the Piltown MD Elected Members at their October or November meeting for adoption.

LOCAL AREA PLANS

Ferrybank/Belview Local Area Plan

An issues paper was published for the Ferrybank/Belview LAP and a public consultation event took place in the Abbey Community College, Ferrybank on Wednesday 19th of June afternoon and evening. More than 100 attended the sessions. Submissions are now being taken up to 5 pm on the 12th July. A Chiefs 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 Oct

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 August 23rd. An Information evening was held on July 23rd 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.

Amendment 1 to Callan Local Area Plan 2019-2028

Amendment 1 to the Callan LAP, to change the zoning on three sites in the Clashacollare area, was adopted at the July Council meeting.

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 31st January 2024. A total of 8 submissions were received on inclusions or exclusions to the land in scope for the tax, and determinations on these submissions were notified to the landowners during June. Three submissions were received to the second submissions period, for landowners to make requests regarding a rezoning of their land, and the determinations on these were notified to the landowners in July. Notice of 4 appeals to An Bord Pleanála have been received to date. The next step will be the publication of the 2025 Final map in January 2025.

Conservation

The Conservation Office manages all protected structures in Kilkenny County and City. These structures are recognised for the following special interest: Architectural, Historical, Archaeological, Artistic, Cultural, Scientific, Technical, Social. An advisory service on conservation matters is 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 have commenced and are progressing well, with some projects nearing completion. Supervision of these projects continues.

Historic Structures Fund 2024: Conservation grant funded projects have commenced and are progressing well, with some projects nearing completion. Supervision of these projects continues.

Built Heritage Investment Scheme 2025: The Built Heritage Investment Scheme 2025 for the repair and conservation of protected structures has been announced for the coming year. This announcement is approximately four months earlier than the traditional timeframe and, along with an increase in the value for individual grants awarded from €15,000 to €50,000, is one of several changes that have been made to the scheme for 2025 to try to make it more efficient for applicants. All information for the fund is available on the Council’s website. The closing date for submission of applications to Conservation Office is 4pm 27th September 2024.

Conservation input into the following Council project deliveries is continuing:

- Callan RRDF Steering Group
- No 19 and 21 Parliament Street Community Monuments Fund
- Naming and Commemorative Memorial Assessment Committee
- Kenny’s Well Access and Interpretation Plan
- Climate Action Steering Committee
- Ferrybank Belview 2025 – 2031 Local Area Plan
- Local liaison for the DHLGH workshop titled *TAKING ON A TRADITIONAL FARMHOUSE: The Repair and Reuse of your Vacant Traditional Building* held in Balief, Urlingford.

For the months of July and August the Conservation Officer has completed reports on the following:

- Planning Referrals – 22
- Further Information requests – 6
- Clarification of Further Information requests – 1
- Section 57 Declarations – 5
- Post planning- 2

Taking in Charge

The following estates have been taken in charge to date in 2024.

- TC 141 Ayrfield, Kilkenny
- TC170 Larchfield, Kilkenny
- TC 154 Ogenty, Gowran, Co. Kilkenny
- TC 59 The Greens, Thomastown, Kilkenny
- TC 18 Greenoaks/Fairways, Ferrybank,

The following estates are at various stages of the taking in charge process and will be progressed in Q3/Q4 of 2024:

Estates Progressing Currently

- TC175 Harrowville, Leggettsrath West, Kilkenny
- TC176 Beechwood, Richview, Castlecomer Road, Kilkenny
- TC177 Weir View Gardens, Castlecomer Road, Kilkenny
- TC182 Village Garden/Smithsland North, Waterford Road, Kilkenny
- TC184 Baun/Cnoc Baun, Ballyfoyle Rd., Kilkenny
- TC172 Orchard Close, New Orchard Road, Kilkenny
- TC180 Rathullord Phase 2
- TC181 Rathullord Phase 3
- TC15810 houses at Moneenroe
- TC140 Choill Rua Paulstown Co Kilkenny
- TC38 Clonkill, Callan
- TC183 Hillview, Bennetsbridge, Co. Kilkenny
- TC190 Tobair Brid, Graignamanagh
- TC186 Ladyswell Thomastown Co Kilkenny

Building Control

Valid Commencement Notices Received:

August 2024	217
August 2023	224
August 2022	239
August 2021	321

Disability Access Applications Received:

August 2024	37
August 2023	37
August 2022	53
August 2021	40

TOWN REGENERATION OFFICE

Town Centre First

A Town Team has been formed in Graiguenamanagh, Castlecomer and Mooncoin. Training is now being provided for the Town Teams which commenced on Monday, 2nd September. A Health Check Survey has been carried out in Castlecomer. Further Health Check Surveys will be carried out in Mooncoin, Callan and Graiguenamanagh over the coming months. Funding was awarded under the Project Development Measure for projects in Callan and Dunnamaggin.

Vacant Property Refurbishment Grant

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

Vacant Property Refurbishment Grant as at 31st August, 2024

Number of applications submitted to-date:.....	214
Number of approval/	
approvals in principle to-date	138
Grant drawdown to-date	13
Number queries during month of August	40

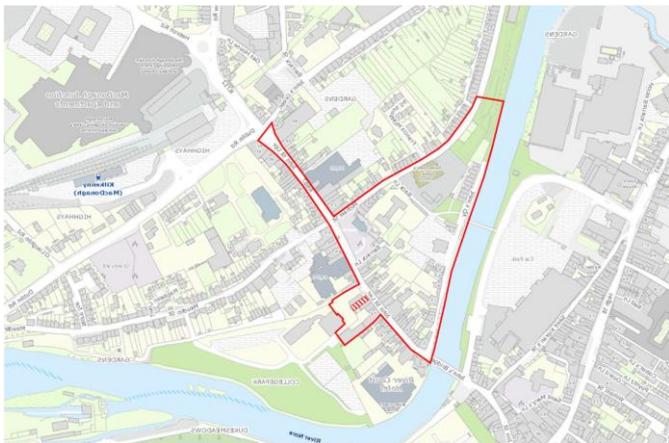
Derelict Sites

The Town Regeneration Office [TRO] has 2 CPO's in progress. The following is the up-to-date position:

- Fr. Hayden Road, Kilkenny – sent to An Bord Pleanala for consent
- Canal Road, Johnstown – Vesting Order inspection period up to 27th September, 2024

THRIVE

Mcorm Consultants were appointed in August following a competitive tendering process. An initial survey is currently being carried out and the closing date is 26th September. Survey is available by accessing QR code, below, or in paper form from County Hall. Public Consultation Workshops are scheduled for 16th September and 14th October from 6 p.m. to 8 p.m. and they will be held in Carnegie, John's Quay. The event on the 16th will be around gathering public opinion, suggestions and input. The event on the 14th will be focused on presenting findings and a Draft Strategy.



LEO/ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Summary of 2024 Awards to Businesses

- €252,768 in direct financial assistance was approved for 9 manufacture/export service businesses in located in throughout the County.
- €223,106 in Business Expansion Grant assistance
- €29,662.50 awarded in a feasibility study grant
- 4 Technical Assistance for Micro Exporter grant awarded to support them in exploring new export market opportunities.

- 16 Businesses have commenced LEAN one to one consultancy programmes to investigate possible resource efficiencies and process improvements their businesses.
- 9 Business is availing of the Digital Start programme to prepare and implement a plan for the adoption of digital tools and techniques across the enterprise
- 27 business have been approved a Trading Online Voucher totalling €54,259 to support the enhancement of their online trading capacity.
- 10 Green for Micro Grant awarded. This scheme supports businesses to becoming greener and environmentally friendly.
- 5 applicants have been supported to make loan applications to the Micro Finance Ireland loan fund.
- 820 people participated on focused small business training, including 55 people participating on the Starting Your Business programme
- 318 businesses have availed of specialised business specific mentoring on a variety of topics including finance, marketing, social media marketing and HR.

Launch of Autumn Training and Events Programme 2024

Local Enterprise Office Kilkenny has launched its online and in-person training and events programme for Autumn 2024. This Programme Schedule provides potential new entrepreneurs and small business currently operating in the County the opportunity to develop new skills and adapt to the ever-changing economic environment. All events are now available to book on www.localenterprise.ie/kilkenny.



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

Recognising the importance of sustainability, Carlow & Kilkenny Local Enterprise Offices (LEOs) in collaboration with KCLR have launched the Boost Your Business - Green Efficiency Competition. 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.

In addition to the consultancy and potential grant, the competition offers further incentives for participation. Two overall winners, one from Kilkenny and one from Carlow, will be awarded a €1,000 advertising package from KCLR and €1,000 in business marketing support from the Local Enterprise Offices. These prizes are designed to help businesses not only become more sustainable but also to reach new customers and markets.

The Boost Your Business - Green Efficiency Competition is open to businesses with 1-50 employees that are established, registered, and operating within the Carlow and Kilkenny regions. Eligible businesses must operate in the commercial sphere, with an annual turnover exceeding €30,000 and a trading history of more than six months.



Mastering Entrepreneurship Event

150 attendees gathered for a "Mastering Entrepreneurship" event hosted by Carlow and Kilkenny County Council in Arboretum during July. The event which was part of the Final Management Development series with Blaise Brosnan, was designed to ignite entrepreneurial passion and ambition amongst alumni members of the Management Development Programme. MC'd by John Purcell of KCLR, the evening was a unique opportunity for participants to learn from the best in the field and connect with like-minded individuals sharing a common vision for success. The huge crowd in attendance was a testament to Blaise Brosnan's significant contributions to Carlow and Kilkenny businesses over the past two decades.



#SHOPKilkenny

Kilkenny County Council has been working extensively with the retailers in Kilkenny this summer to celebrate the spirit and quality of Kilkenny retail through the ShopKilkenny brand. The co-ordinated media campaign has collected stories of the unique quality and variety of the retail offering in Kilkenny to a local, national and international audience. The campaign aims to enhance awareness of the rich legacy of multi-generational businesses in Kilkenny and to highlight the many reasons to plan a shopping day, mid-week break, or weekend visit to Kilkenny this summer. In conjunction with the Chamber of Commerce, a seminar on retailing is planned for Kilkenny for October 7th



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. There were 12 community representatives and 8 business representatives engaged in the consultation sessions. Kilkenny County Council staff have also engaged in one-to-one consultation meetings with Digital Strategy Consultants Ltd. The Digital Strategy is due to be completed in Autumn 2024.



Our Kids Code

The first 'OurKidsCode' programme commenced over July and August in the Kilkenny Mayfair Library with six taster sessions delivered to families. This is a fun and engaging way for parents and kids to explore STEM and coding together. OurKidsCode offers six 2-hour Taster Workshops which included make a dance mat using Scratch coding, Makey Makey and paper plates! The activities are aimed at ages 7-12, but all children are welcome to attend. The next 'OurKidsCode' programme commences on 18th September in Muckalee Community Centre and runs throughout September and October.

Kilkenny City Night Time Economy Diversification Fund



Call 1 funded events concluded on Thursday 29th August.

Under Call 2 of the Night Time Economy Diversification Fund Kilkenny County Council sought proposals from local businesses, community groups, event organisers, collaborators and individuals to develop projects that will support the growth and diversity of the night time economy in Kilkenny City between Sundays and Thursday for September, October and November. The closing date for applications

was Friday 9th August. Following evaluation of applications, 22 businesses and organisations in the City were awarded funding. The full list of successful applicants and their funding award is attached. These events are promoted through the Kilkenny App and via social media.

Awardee Name	Amount Approved
Lanigans Bar	€1,200
Smithwicks Experience	€1,100
The Dance Club	€900
Sea School	€3,000
Cult Collective	€1,730
Cleeres	€3,000
Maureen Walshe	€500
The Happy Pottery	€1,700
Ryans Bar	€3,000
Kilkenny Uileann Pipers	€2,000
Kilkenny Board Games	€2,700
Koru Wellness	€1,400
St. Canices Cathedral	€1,737
Billy Byrne's	€3,000
Hilda O Mahony & AK Events	€3,000
Kilkenny Comedy Club	€1,650
Butler Gallery	€1,200
Foroige & Music Generation	€2,000
Forigie	€750
Rollercoaster Records	€1,780
Budo Fitness	€2,150
National Reptile Zoo	€2,500

The Kilkenny App

The Kilkenny App continues to be promoted across the City and County. Since its official launch in late June, over 2,000 new users have signed up. In July, there were 837 first time



users and 39,000 screens were viewed across the app. In August, over 500 events were added and the Historic Tour of the City has been listened to nearly 700 times. A full list of weekly GAA fixtures has been added to the platform. The app can be downloaded from the Apple or Google Play stores. A marketing campaign to create greater awareness of the app for residents and visitors to Kilkenny will continue into the Autumn and Winter and align with the upcoming festivals.

Tourism

July and August have been busy months for the Tourism Team in terms of events and the promotion of Kilkenny both locally and nationally. Hotels have reported good occupancy rates for August, although visitor attractions are not seeing this reflected in their numbers.

Iverk Show 2024

Kilkenny Tourism welcomed all guests of Iverk Show to Kilkenny on 24th August. Attendance was estimated at 20,000 with Kilkennys Tourisms stand located in Enterprise Section of the site.

Feedback from our volunteers on the day was that there was great interaction from Waterford, Wexford and Tipperary visitors in particular. Numerous visitors from as far away as Westport, Mayo, Adare and Donegal.

Festival Supports



Kilkenny County Council continues to support our year-round calendar of events with August hosting our oldest and most internationally renowned Arts Festival.

This year Kilkenny County Council also supported AKA, Alternative Kilkenny Arts, a wonderful Kilkenny Arts fringe festival. AKA was back and very excited to bring a dynamic world of music, art, craft and more to the streets and venues of Kilkenny City and County.



Marketing and PR

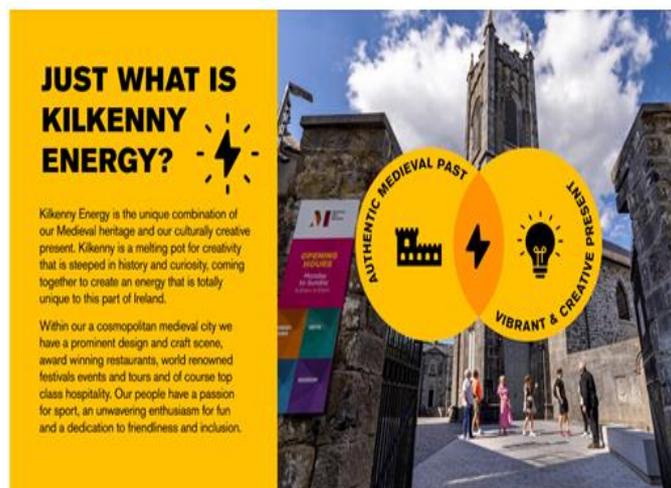
Kilkenny Tourisms autumn campaign - Feasts & Beasts went live Friday 23rd August. The autumnal theme draws on two key focuses for Kilkenny this season: a bountiful harvest and a rich history of Halloween. With a focus on craft, food and spooky stories, it weaves well into Savour Kilkenny Food Festival 2024 and the 700th anniversary of the burning of Petronella de Meath. Make sure to check out www.visitkilkenny.ie for more information.

Kilkenny Energy

Kilkenny County Council's Tourism Team, Kilkenny Tourism, Fáilte Ireland and The Innovate Room have been working throughout the summer on tools and resources for planners in the Meetings, Incentives, Conferences and Exhibitions market, as well as leisure groups. These resources are in the final stage and will be

made available in the coming weeks to encourage planners to consider Kilkenny as a destination for their next conference or event.

MICE SALES RESOURCES



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 GLASAN



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 AUGUST 2024	
Homeless Presentations	60
Homeless Assessment Outcomes	
Prevention & Interventions	48
Emergency Service	10
Not eligible / Did not avail of service	2
HAP Place Finder Service	
Number of Homeless HAP tenancies @ 1 st day of month	153
Number of Homeless HAP tenancies created during month	0
Number of Homeless HAP tenancies in place @ last day of month	153
Number of Homeless HAP tenancy breakdowns	0
Other Social Housing Tenancies supported /created during month	0
Households in Temporary Emergency Supported Accommodation at June 30th	38
Households in Temporary Emergency B&B accommodation	13
Households in Temporary Emergency B&B Accommodation that are families	4
Households (<i>singles/couples</i>) in Transition Emergency Accommodation (<i>Own Front Door</i>)	41
Households (<i>Families</i>) in Transition Emergency Accommodation (<i>OFD</i>)	14

SOCIAL HOUSING ASSESSMENT

The Summary of Social Housing Assessment (SSHA) 2024 is currently being undertaken. Approximately 420 open applicants have been contacted by post for a review to be carried out. Completed forms & documentation to be returned by 02nd September 2024.

SOCIAL HOUSING SUPPORT APPLICATION SUMMARY AUGUST 2024	
Number awaiting Social Housing Support at August 31 st (<i>Gross Need</i>)	1,534
Number awaiting Social Housing Support at August 31 st (<i>Net Need</i>)	750
Number of Social Housing Applications received in August:	56
Number of Applications awaiting validation from previous month	75
Number of invalid applications returned	37
Number of applications validated & ready for assessment during the month	19
Number of applications assessed during August	26
Number of applications awaiting assessment as @ August 31 st	65

HAP Summary Year to-date 2024	
Total active HAP tenancies	480
New HAP tenancies set up	42
HAP allocated Social Housing	96
Closed HAP tenancies	111
HAP Rent Review amendments	184
HAP Other tenancy amendments	341

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 August (offers made):	0
LA/RAS/Leasing allocations to August (offers made):	49
Tenant Liaison Officer cases in August:	52
Maintenance Calls for August:.....	479
Maintenance Calls year to date	4,402

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.

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%) KCC 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.

The funding approval also confirms that the local authority cannot exceed the maximum grant amounts under legislation and that these maximum amounts have not been revised.

Grants Approved & Committed to 31st August, 2024		
Scheme	Number	Amount
HGD - Housing Adaptation Grant	143	€1,586,525
MAG - Mobility Aid Grant	8	€32,912
HOP - Housing Aid for Older Persons	234	€1,171,131
Total	385	€2,791,568

Grants Paid out to 31st August, 2024		
Scheme	Number	Amount
HGD - Housing Adaptation Grant	53	€525,658
MAG - Mobility Aid Grant	7	€23,342
HOP - Housing Aid for Older Persons	110	€508,647
Total	170	€1,057,648

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 - 31st August, 2024					
Loan Type	Received	Approved	Amount Approved	Number Paid	Amount Paid
Local Authority Home Loan	29	6	€812,900	9	€1,265,526
Caravan Loan	0	0	€0.00	0	€0
Total	29	6	€812,900	9	€1,265,526

VOIDS

At the end of August 2024 there were 46 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

Expected Delivery for 2024

Scheme	Project Name	Approved Housing Body	Status	Total Units Expected
Ship Single Stage Renewal	Old Health Centre, Kilmacow		Completed	1
Ahb Calf Turnkey + Part V	Cluain Glasson, Granges Road, Kilkenny City	Clúid	Completed	10
Ship Single Stage Renewal	HS 168 - Cloghscregg, Thomastown		Completed	1
Ahb Calf Turnkey	Nyne Park, Callan Road, Kilkenny City	Clúid	Completed	12
La Part V	Fox Meadow, Loughmacask, Kilkenny [Clancy Homes]		Completed	8
Ahb Calf Turnkey	Barrack St, Goresbridge	Circle	Completed	4
Cas Construction Turnkey	70-71 Patrick Street, Kilkenny	Clanmil	On-site	4
Ship Construction Single Stage	HS 133 - Old Fire Station, Thomastown		On-site	1
Ship Construction	Crokers Hill, Kennyswell Road, Kilkenny		On-site	88
Ship Construction Turnkey	HS 196 - Castleoaks Kilkenny City Phase 1		On-site	30
				159

Department of Housing Target for 2024 = 153 units



30 apartments at Castleoaks, Breagh Valley, under construction



8 completed apartments at Foxmeadow, Loughmacask



Part V units at College Park Crescent, under construction

COMMUNITY & CULTURE

Pride of Place 2024

Kilkenny County Council have nominated three groups for the IPB Pride of Place Awards for 2024. The Judging took place on Thursday 29th & 30th August, 2024. The groups nominated were Ferrybank Community Group under the Community Wellbeing Category, Johnstown Community Group under the Creative Category and Inistioge Community Group for the population category. The awards will be announced on 2nd November 2024 at the awards ceremony in Monaghan.



Ferrybank Community Group



Johnstown Community Group



Inistioge Community Group

Programme of Events and Activities for Older People

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 will run from **Friday 6th September to Friday 1st November 2024, 11am – 1pm**. Located in the new Mayfair Library, these 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.

National Play Day 2024

National Play Day 2024 was organised by the Community section in conjunction with the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration & Youth was held on Saturday 13th July, 2024. The event was hosted by Kilkenny County Council and the OPW and took place in Kilkenny Castle Park. Thanks to all the families that came along and enjoyed the activities, making the event a great success. The feedback from the various workshops was hugely positive and planning for next year has already commenced for an even bigger and better event! Along with event partners Healthy Ireland and the Children and Young People's Services Committee (CYPSC), there was a focus on highlighting the importance of creating time and space for families to have fun together. Hundreds of children enjoyed the various workshops and activities, such as face painting, balloon making, storytelling, yoga, balance bikes, biodiversity workshop of exploring the mini beasts and art workshops of paper face making and cyanotype printing.

Active play packs were delivered to families across the County that target a number of harder to reach children, including children with additional needs. Kilkenny Civil Defence team supported this initiative by delivering the play packs.



National Play Day at Kilkenny Castle Park

Danesfort, Cuffesgrange & Kells Men's Shed

The official opening of Danesfort, Cuffesgrange, Kells - DGK Men's Shed took place on Wednesday 21st August, 2024. In early 2022 the group acquired a premises and erected it in the grounds of the Coursing Club. Further improvements have been made during 2023, from small beginnings the group now have 26 members who exercise weekly and meet for a cup of tea. Members of the Men's Shed enjoyed a lovely morning and lunch with live music on the day.



Members of DGK Men's Shed

Civil Defence

Fleadh Cheoil in Wexford was a big event this period which Kilkenny Civil Defence attended each day with first aid, safety, boat cover and running medical control. It was a huge undertaking with in excess of 5000 volunteer hours over the week and also assisted with the provision of equipment and vehicles.



Kilkenny Civil Defence at Fleadh Cheoil, Wexford.

A new DJI Matrice 30T drone was sourced which has capabilities of thermal imaging, longer flying time, waterproof and resistant to high wind. The drone was recently deployed to Electric Picnic to assist An Gardaí Síochaná with the traffic control. Kilkenny Civil Defence also took ownership on a new Ford Ranger. This vehicle will be the first of the Fleet to switch to HVO (Hydro-treated vegetable oil) and it is hoped to have the entire fleet emission free by the end of 2024.

Kilkenny Civil Defence undertook 19 First Aid duties, Level 2 Powerboat qualification, Pre-hospital Emergency Care council Medical Instructor recertification. On Saturday 31st August, 2024 there was an interagency exercise between

Kilkenny Civil Defence and Kilkenny Sub Aqua on the River Nore.



Interagency exercise between Kilkenny Civil Defence & Kilkenny Sub Aqua on the River Nore.

HERITAGE

National Heritage Week 2024 – Connections, Routes and Networks

National Heritage Week took place across the country from the 17th – 25th of August 2024. Kilkenny saw a record number of events take place across the County with over 70 events recorded, an increase of 20 from last year's National Heritage Week. The events were extremely well attended and feedback from the public and organisers has been overwhelmingly positive.

There were events for everyone of all ages which included; Free tours of heritage mills, Design your own Medieval Sword, Canoe & Kayaking along the Kings River for a biodiversity recording trip, a fossil heritage trail, tours of historic houses and a steam train visit to McDonagh station.



Tour of Deerpark Mill organised by the Dunphy Family

Mass Paths and Holy Wells – Heritage Week 2024

The Heritage Office continues to invite members of the public to provide them with any information they might have on Mass Paths and Holy Wells as part of phase 2 of the Kilkenny Holy Wells and Mass Paths surveys. An associated workshop was held in Mayfair Library as part of Heritage Week 2024 by the Heritage Office. The workshop was facilitated by Regina Fitzpatrick, Heritage Officer and Marion Sutton from Shanarc

Archeology. The workshop was well attended and a lot of valuable information was collected from those in attendance. The Heritage Office ran a series of awareness campaigns over the summer months, through local media adverts, workshops and interviews with local and national media.



Mass Paths & Holy Wells Workshop at the Mayfair Library 21st August 2024

Interpreting Kilkenny's City Walls - Heritage Week 2024

A gathering was organised by the Heritage Office in the Garden of Butler House during Heritage Week to showcase a new City Walls interpretation project funded by the Irish Walled Towns Network. Regina Fitzpatrick introduced the City Walls interpretation project while Conservation Architect Barry Lynch gave insights into the extant and non-extant section of the City Wall that traverses the Garden of Butler House. The Heritage office also took this opportunity to survey members of the public on their views of the City Walls and its interpretation.



Gathering in the Garden of Butler House

Kilkenny's Witch Trials Anniversary

The first of two Historic Walking Tours celebrating the 700th Year Anniversary of the Kilkenny Witch Trials took place on Friday 5th July and the 17th August, 2024. The tour organised by Kilkenny County Council Heritage Office and the Library Service was led by local historian, author and podcaster - Fin Dwyer. The first stop was at Kells Priory, followed by St. Saint Canice's Cathedral and Round Tower, Kytelers Inn, Medieval Mile Museum and finishing at Kilkenny Castle. Both events were booked out. Historian and author Maeve Callan gave a fascinating talk on the Kilkenny Witch Trials at the Mayfair Library on 2nd July – 700 years to the day of the start of the Witch Trials. The talk outlined the evidence that remains of the case and the role of Kilkenny people in trying to stop the trials proceeding. A new podcast produced and presented by Fin Dwyer was also published as part of our programme of commemorative events. *Ireland's First Witch Trial* is available to download at <https://www.irishhistorypodcast.ie/interviews-1>



Historic Walking Tours of Kell's Priory & St Mary's Church during the Witch Trials Walking Tour

Biodiversity

Kilkenny Biodiversity Activities

The Biodiversity Working Group workshop was held in July to identify additional local stakeholders and to set a vision for the group. The draft Biodiversity Action Plan is under development and will be going on public consultation this autumn.

Nightjar Survey

In June and July this year, BirdWatch Ireland was active in Kilkenny to determine the presence of Nightjar, with the support of Kilkenny County Council and the National Parks and Wildlife Service through the Local Biodiversity Action Fund. Nightjar are a very rare and elusive bird that are found on low-lying hills, where there is young or cleared forest plantation, open areas and bog. They arrive from Africa to spend the summer months here in Ireland but in very low numbers. They have a quite bizarre and distinctive, hypnotic 'churring' song sang at night time. To assist with

the project, the Biodiversity Officer organised a week's radio campaign on KCLR to highlight the nightjar's unique song, to raise awareness of this vulnerable species and asked the public's assistance to contact BirdWatch Ireland if the nightjar birdsong was heard in their area. The field survey deployed innovative technology to capture audio of night time sounds, and dawn and dusk chorus's and specially designed software is currently analysing hundreds of hours of recordings to determine the presence of Nightjar and it will also build a species listing of other bird species on the recorded audio.



Nightjar

Bugs, Bats and Bee's Citizen Science Project

Under the Local Biodiversity Action Fund, Kilkenny County Council was allocated funds to run a series of events throughout the year to inform the public, encourage and train individuals to participate in national biodiversity surveys. In partnership with the National Biodiversity Data Centre, a Damsel and Dragonfly Identification training was held in the Castlecomer Discovery Park during the month of June.



Attendees of dragonfly Identification training at Castlecomer Discovery Park

In July, as part of National Play Day event, the Biodiversity Officer funded a nature activity as part of the Bugs, Bats and Bee programme. This activity involved Wildways Adventures representatives encouraged children to go on bug hunts on the Kilkenny Castle grounds with

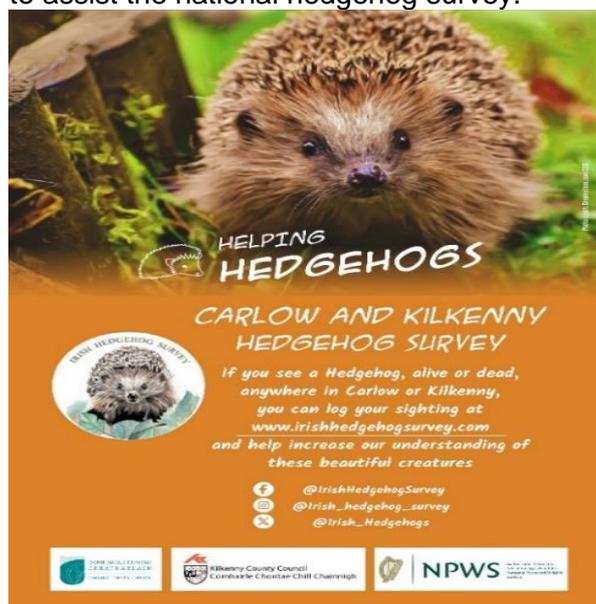
magnification jars to see bugs up close and a variety of sweep nets to experience the diversity of bugs present in the bushes and trees of the Castle Park.

In August, Dr. Jan-Robert Baars of UCD presented an online national webinar to outline a project to complete a two-year red listing exercise to determine the current conservation status of all mayfly species in Ireland. This project is part funded by Kilkenny County Council along with other County Councils, the National Parks and Wildlife Service and the Local Authority Waters Programme. Dr. Baars and his team of researchers have completed field studies in Kilkenny over the summer and will complete an outreach programme next year to involve local authority staff and local angling clubs to assist in the collection of mayfly specimens.

In August as part of Heritage Week and as a continuation to build a species listing of Dunmore Countryside Park, a specialist set up a moth trap to determine the variety of moth species which are associated with the park. This was the second event over the summer to have a complete seasonal list of moths present in the park. The public were invited to view the moths before their release to see the diversity of our nocturnal pollinator species which are often forgotten.

Summer Biodiversity Awareness

Over the summer, Kilkenny County Council partnered up with Carlow County Council to highlight the national hedgehog survey, to encourage people to participate in the national survey, by recording their sighting of hedgehogs to assist the national hedgehog survey.



Over the summer, the Biodiversity Officer ran a campaign in local papers highlighting the importance of Kilkenny City's meadows with particular focus on the Bishopmeadows. The meadows were cut earlier in the season due to operation requirements, and the opportunity was taken to inform the public why the cutting was

taking place earlier and how citizens can help conserve the meadows and the biodiversity that it supports. Education and awareness was provided on invasive species and the negative effects of illegal dumping of green waste.

A social media campaign was completed over the summer, highlighting observations of nature witnessed throughout the City. Images of the orchids on the ring road were popular and the presence of orchids in Dunmore were also highlighted, as it proved a more accessible place for the public to go see these beautiful native wild flowers. Positive actions for biodiversity taken by third parties were also highlighted, for example the meadow area on the Lidl site at Johnswell Road where a bee orchid was spotted.



Lidl site Johnswell Rd



The 13 selected poets, Martina Evans, Mary Butler & Deirdre Southey at the Poetry Broadsheet Launch

In Bloom – Future Sounds of Kilkenny

The Arts Office in collaboration with Cleeres Bar commenced our new music series for young and emerging band and musicians in Kilkenny. These events will provide 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. The line-up In Bloom- Future Sounds of Kilkenny includes, Seafall, Joycult, Jack Doheny, Charlotte Mackay, Aoife Rhatigan, Organic Produce, the Quincavelles and The Donnys.

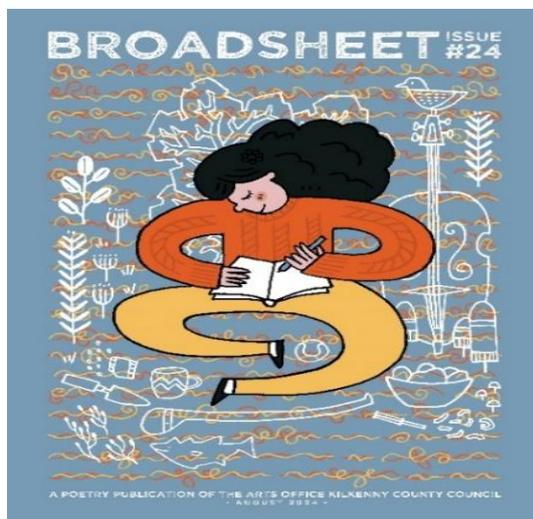


Seafall performing at Cleere's Bar

ARTS

Poetry Broadsheet

The printed publication of the Kilkenny Poetry Broadsheet was successfully launched at the Parade Tower during the Kilkenny Arts Festival on the 16th August, 2024. A total of 120 people were in attendance. The printed Broadsheets are available for free across all libraries in the County.



Bursaries

The Age & Opportunity Tyrone Guthrie Centre Residency Award in partnership with Kilkenny County Council Arts Office and is in association with the Tyrone Guthrie Centre aims to support professional artists of 50+ to develop their practice. This will be achieved through a dedicated bursary to attend a residency over the course of a week.

Thirteen Kilkenny based applications were received with visual artist Caroline Schofield chosen as the successful recipient. Caroline Schofield is a visual artist whose practice involves working creatively with individuals and groups through a reciprocity of skill sharing, ideas and stories in participatory and collaborative Arts & Health contexts.

Climate Action Community Arts - Waste Not Want Not

The Arts Office's Community Arts and Climate Action 2024 programme 'Waste Not Want Not' continues and August has seen us planning and devising programmes for the Autumn /Winter. These new programmes include activities for community participants who have a passion for the planet we live on and those interested in moving away from current fast fashion trends.



WNWN Clothing Repair Flyer

Rhizome Residency

The Arts Office invited applications from artists across all art forms who have a clear passion for nature and the environment and who are curious about how the impact of biodiversity loss and the climate crisis is likely to impact the arts and culture in Ireland. This residency is part of a larger Collaborative project and is a response to the challenges of the climate crisis, acknowledging that the arts will need to adapt to survive and thrive. The Rhizome residency, which is specific to Kilkenny is an effort to gather and layer the dynamic and complex range of art and culture in Kilkenny.

Public Arts

Our 2024 -2026 public art programme has commenced and are accepting submissions which will result in five commissions. We are seeking compelling, ambitious proposals from artists; which meet, challenge and expand ideas of public art.

Tea Houses

The Tea Houses are situated by the River Nore in Kilkenny City Centre and have recently been acquired by the Kilkenny Arts Office to be activated as visible spaces to host ongoing visual arts projects with a multidisciplinary approach that encourages a sense of community and active citizenship. These spaces have many possibilities, such as a gallery, a curatorial office, a studio, a residency, a gathering, a garden, a music session, a meeting place, and so much more.

Project No. 1 - Everything Flowing by artist Sinéad Fahey, was our first exhibition. Works were selected from her expansive art practice in response to the site of the Tea Houses,

acknowledging the River Nore and the habitat of the area. Sinéad passionately captures our entangled connection with the natural world. Several paintings and works on paper burst with gatherings of fish, birds and flowers, conveying a palpable flow of energy and togetherness. *Everything Flowing* reminds us of our place in the world, among multiple species and complex systems, emphasising a respect and appreciation for symbiotic relations with nature. The exhibition was curated by Rachel Botha. The exhibition was hugely successful with impressive footfall and great interest in gaining access to the Tea Houses.

Creative Kilkenny

Creative Health and Wellbeing project 'Living Artfully', commenced during the month of July with the appointment of Paula Phelan as project manager. This project is a collaboration with Carlow County Council. The project aims to enable collaboration with key stakeholders, community and voluntary groups, both urban and rural, through an immersive and creative exploration through the Creative practices. Living Artfully will provide a range of workshops to specific targeted groups living in Carlow and Kilkenny, primarily engaging in support services. The project was kick started through an induction day with 11 members from the artist panel.

Live Music in Retirement Homes, is a heartfelt ode to health and wellbeing, crafted with the wisdom of key partners to ensure accessibility and enjoyment for our cherished older audiences. Each performance featured a trio of exceptional artists which included, Mary Coughlan, Niamh Kavanagh, John Spillane, Sandra Oman, Jerry Fish, Anthony Kearns, Simon Morgan, Prof Luke O'Neill, Sibeal, Celine Byrne, Gerald Peregrine, Lynda O'Connor, Vincent Lynch and Dermot Dunne. External evaluation of the project was conducted in August through an onsite visit at Mount Carmel Care Home, Callan.

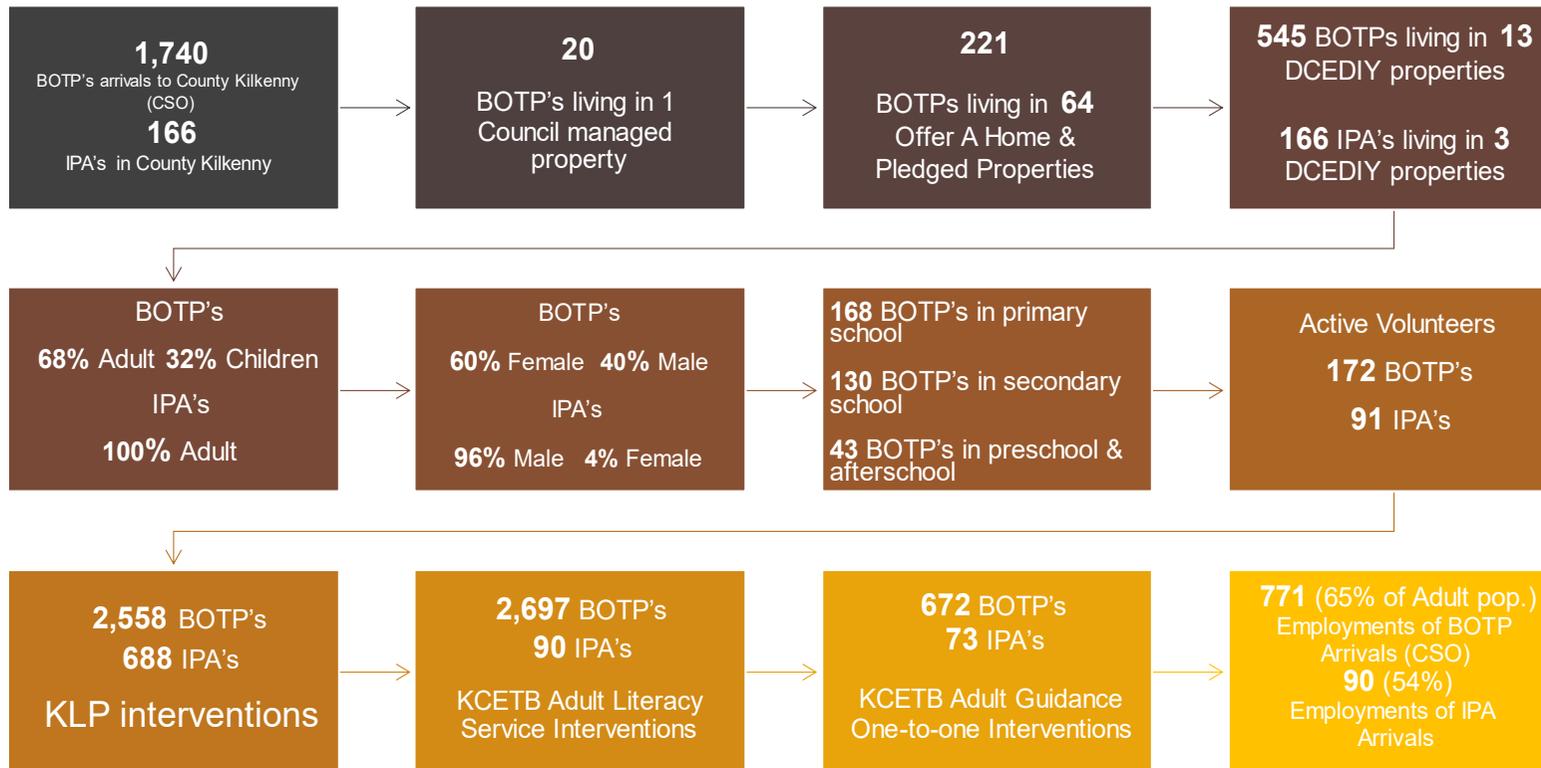


Live music in care homes funded under Creative Health and Wellbeing

Targeted Pop Up Projects were led by Creative Kilkenny in collaboration with departments such as Town Regeneration, Integration, Arts, Climate Action, Community, Heritage, Libraries, Healthy Kilkenny, Environment and Age Friendly.



Community Integration Monitor to 06.09.24



FIRE SERVICES

Capital Projects

The design of the new Fire Station HQ for Kilkenny City is progressing well. A Part 8 Planning Application is to be submitted shortly. All major construction projects, including major refurbishment projects at Fire Stations require capital funding from the NDFEM. Ongoing day-to-day maintenance of Fire Stations is funded from the Fire Authorities own revenue budget.

Fire Safety Certificate Applications

- 65 applications for Fire Safety Certificates were received to date.
- Ukrainian Response Unit - Fire Safety Certificate compliance.
- The Fire Authority Technical Staff have been involved in Kilkenny County Council's Ukrainian Response Unit.

Fire Services Acts 1981 and 2003

- Fire Prevention staff made targeted inspections of premises both to provide advice and to enforce legislation during 2023.
- 12 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.
- 72 Fire Safety Inspections of premises have taken place in 2024.

Fire Brigade Operations

The existence of a professional Fire and 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 hrs per day/7 days per week/365 days per year. The Brigades have attended 661 callouts to date in 2024. These incidents included a number of road traffic collisions, house fires, ambulance assists, chimney fires and automatic fire alarm activations.

Recruitment of Retained Firefighters

As a result of our recent recruitment campaign, the first group of 10 Recruit Fighters from Castlecomer, Freshford, Callan and Graiguenamanagh have successfully passed a Fire Fighting Skills Course. This course aims to equip learners with the underpinning knowledge, skills, understanding and attitudes to enable them efficiently, effectively, safely and competently perform the role of Firefighter, as an individual,

and as part of a team, in responding to a diverse range of operational incidents.

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's Fire and Rescue Service have a Command and Control vehicle, 2 seater electrical fire vehicles 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 schools 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 Class in Kilkenny City and County where the school management accept our invitation to visit their schools. Kilkenny Fire Service Firefighters took part in Field days in Bennettsbridge and Graiguenamanagh.



Training

Kilkenny County Council's Fire and 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 and 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.

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

Touch Type Read Spell Licenses

Kilkenny County Council Library Service are delighted to be able to make Touch Type Read Spell (TTRS) licenses available again for the upcoming school year. TTRS is a multisensory, structured, online typing course which assists students to learn at their own pace. It can be beneficial for those with dyslexia, dyspraxia, ASD, ADHD as well as those who may experience spelling, reading or writing difficulties.

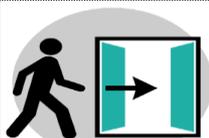
Parents, guardians, teachers or adult learners can register their interest in accessing this service for a period of 12 weeks by contacting their local library branch.



LIBRARY



40,935 Items borrowed



30,129 Visitors



1,986 New Members

Thomastown Library Update

Subfloor blockwork is completed, and superstructure blockwork is well advanced. All underground services / popups are installed in the floor areas.

Structural Steel is on site and scheduled to commence.



Heritage Week 2024

Events were held across our network of library branches to celebrate Heritage Week 2024. These included one-on-one genealogy workshops giving members of the public the tools to uncover their family history and a lecture on the history of Irish wakes and the art of keening. Storyteller in residence, Helena Byrne, also ran a series of workshops for children titled "Tales and Travels to the Otherworld" where she delved into the world of Irish folk tales, fairies, banshees and piseógs.

Summer Stars 2024

The Summer Stars reading challenge has been another success this year with 2,043 children signing up to the challenge and 365 already completing it and receiving their certificates. Throughout the summer, library staff organised 182 events to celebrate this initiative with 2,683 in attendance.

Library Activities

Events	In Branch	Online
171	170	0
Offsite	Live	Numbers
3	141	2564

This month we held lots of activities and events across our libraries. These events included:

- An information session on mapping Kilkenny holy wells and mass paths in the Mayfair Library
- A ciorcal comhrá Gaeilge in Loughboy Library
- A children's Lego club in Castlecomer Library
- ETB felting classes in Thomastown Library
- A toddler storytime in Urlingford Library
- Chair-based pilates classes in Graiguenamanagh Library
- A Dirty Bertie activity morning in Ferrybank Library
- A walking tour commemorating the 700th anniversary of the Kilkenny witch trials which was organised and facilitated by our Local Studies Department

Throughout the month of August, our library branches hosted 171 events with a total of 2,564 attendees both in our branches and on visits to local creches, schools and community groups.

Online Services Usage


3,685 eAudiobooks borrowed

1,518 eBooks borrowed

30 eComics Borrowed

172 Language Learning Sessions


6,160 eMagazines borrowed

100 Movies Streamed

448 Online Learning Courses



Digital Engagement

Library staff prepared, recorded, edited and published 255 posts and videos on our social media platforms in August. Our engagements for the month were 7,792 and our videos and reels had 5,668 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 August:

SDG 17: Partnership for the goals

This summer, Kilkenny Library Service (in partnership with Grow It Yourself Waterford) launched the LEAF literacy and food education programme in 5 of our library branches. This initiative focuses on empowering communities to grow their own food, fostering food empathy and promoting sustainable living by providing access to information and free seeds to grow peas, beans and spinach.



SDG 15: Life on land

Beekeeper Edel Heeran ran information sessions for children in 4 of our library branches to teach them about wild bees and honeybees and how the *All-Ireland Pollinator Plan* was developed to help them.

FINANCE

The expenditure by service division to the end of August is set out in table 1. Total Expenditure for the period was €81.5m compared with the annual budget of €111m.

Table 1	Actual YTD April 2024	Budget Full Year 2024
	€'000's	€'000's
Housing & Building	19,080	26,258
Road Transport & Safety	21,091	29,958
Water Services	5,016	7,699
Development Management	12,483	14,720
Environmental Services	10,324	16,899
Recreation & Amenity	5,158	8,759
Agriculture, Education, Health, Welfare	402	690
Miscellaneous Services	6,709	6,331
CMC for distribution	1,316	
OVERALL TOTAL	81,580	111,134

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 5 cases

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

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 will be 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 2,429 grants were paid out up to 30th August 2024 with a value of €4,252,910.

The closing date for businesses to submit the outstanding information is 27th September 2024. All of those businesses will be contacted this week to ask them to submit the required information.

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 utilized in the eight month period to the end of August. The audit by the Local Government Audit for FY 2023 has now been completed and the audit report along with the final Annual Financial Statement for 2023 will be presented to Council at the September meeting.

Budget 2025

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

The consultation period on setting the local adjustment factor for the Local Property Tax for 2025 commenced on July 23rd and closed on September 2nd. One submission was received. The ask from the Elected Members will be to maintain the same base rate adjustment that has been in place for the last five years from 2020 to 2024 inclusive.