

Chief Executive Report

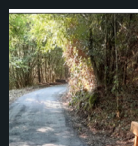
October
2021



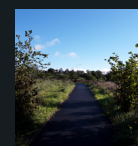
New Kilkenny Connects, the newsletter to stay to up date with Kilkenny -
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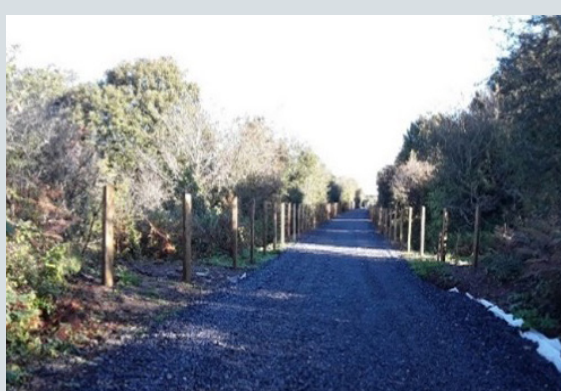
Kilkenny Day Fever hit the County!

Sunday 10th of October was the day Kilkenny came alive to celebrate Kilkenny Day with a festival feel ringing through the City and 5 foot high Cats on display around the City for all to see!

Read the full story on page 3

Construction of the 24km South East Greenway along the old New Ross to Waterford Railway Line, is now well underway.

See full story on page 11



Seating at Woodstock

New seating has been added to the pergola, created from a fallen cedar tree from the gardens. Seating is always in demand, particularly by older people who welcome the opportunity to sit down in a sheltered quiet spot.

See full story on page 9

Kilkenny *Connects*

Autumn
2021



New Cathaoirleach and Municipal District Chairs Elected - Page 2



Public Consultation and Part 8 Explained - Page 10



World Leaders in Craft!
- Page 11



Kilkenny's Unsung Heroes Awarded
- Page 13

Follow the Cats

Kilkenny Catwalk 2021 is a trail of 21 cat sculptures on display around the City. Illustrated by some of Ireland's most talented artists, this innovative art and walking trail continues until Easter 2022.

See full story on page 9



Annual Newsletter

The 2nd Annual Newsletter highlighting some of the projects and work of the Council over the last year is currently being distributed countywide by An Post.

There is an online flipbook version available on the Council's website and will be promoted on our social media channels.

Fáilte Ireland

investment in new

Medieval Kilkenny

Experience opens

Kilkenny Tholsel to

visitors for the first

time.

Fáilte Ireland, in partnership with Kilkenny County Council and Kilkenny Civic Trust, has announced funding on 21st September, 2021, for the new Medieval Kilkenny Experience, a world-class visitor attraction projected to attract over 100,000 visitors to the heart of Kilkenny City.

The new attraction will encompass the historic Town Hall (Tholsel), the existing Medieval Mile Museum and the churchyard of St Mary's. This will be the first time the Tholsel is accessible to the public.

A new brand and interpretive scheme will unify the entire complex and differentiate it from the existing attractions offering in Kilkenny using fun, humour and 'horrible history' style stories to appeal to, in particular, family groups and those visitors who have already visited other heritage attractions in Kilkenny.



Official Opening of Kilkenny Western Environs

Infrastructure Project (LIHAF)

Minister for Housing, Local Government and Heritage, Deputy Darragh O'Brien, T.D., visited Kilkenny on 24th September last and officially opened the Kilkenny Western Environs Infrastructure Project (now known as the Breaghagh Valley).

area to support the construction of a total of approximately 3000 housing units, leading in time to the alleviation of housing supply issues currently being experienced in Kilkenny City.

This new road will service an area of 140 hectares (350 acres) of land zoned for housing, schools and social infrastructure in a location within easy reach of Kilkenny City Centre. Resulting from the investment in this project by Kilkenny County Council and the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage, it is expected that over the next 3-5 years approximately 1000 housing units will be provided, with sufficient infrastructure in place in the



Kilkenny Day

Returning for the second year, Kilkenny Day took place all around the County with events to suit all ages and interests. There was live music, a food and craft market, children’s workshops, and lots more. The celebration was open to locals and visitors, with everyone encouraged to get out to explore and experience everything Kilkenny has to offer.

Kicking off the ‘Kilkenny Day’ activities was two very special screenings of Cartoon Saloon’s Wolfwalkers on the grounds of the Kilkenny Castle. This outdoor cinema, in association with Kilkenny Animated, took place on Saturday evening, 9th of October. Wolfwalkers was nominated for Best Animated Feature Film at this year’s Oscars and the screening was introduced by directors Paul Young and Ross Stewart. This event will be free but ticketed available from Eventbrite.

Communications

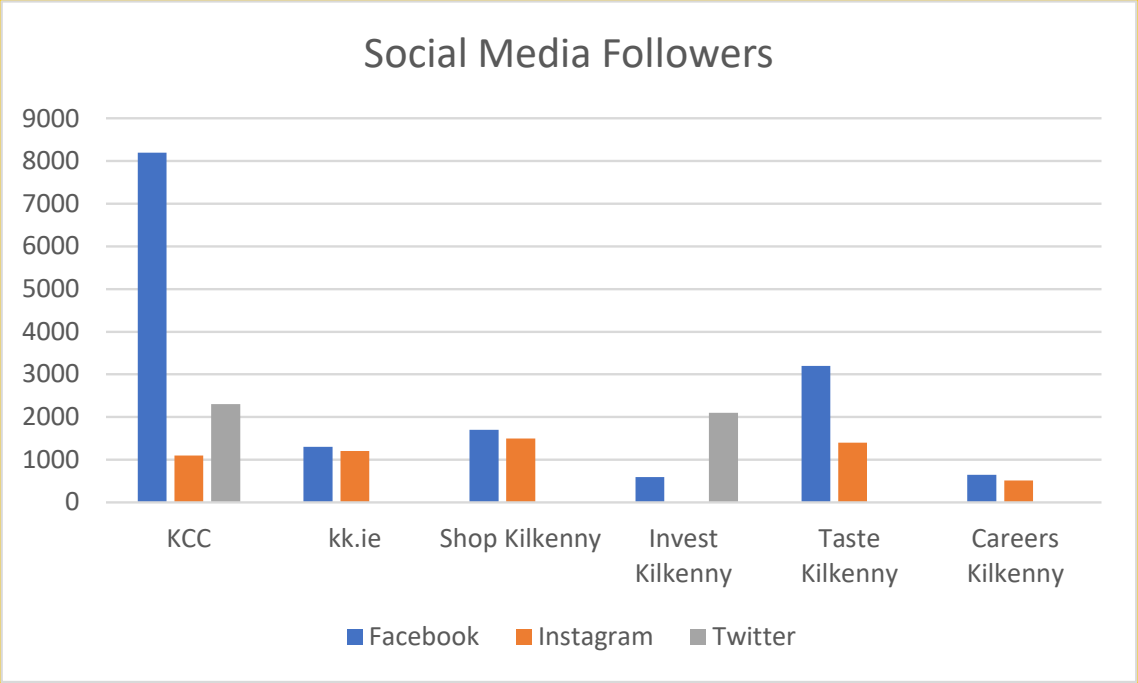
Press Releases

A total of 92 press releases were issued by the Communications Unit for the period from 1/1/2021 to 30/9/2021.

Engagement

The Communications Unit worked with various Departments on communications and engagement strategies for a number of projects in 2021 including, Cycle Kilkenny, St. Patrick’s Festival Kilkenny, Environmental Waste Campaigns, Housing Delivery Programme, Culture Night, Heritage Week, MakemyWay Day.

Social Media



Data is based on the same time frame for 2020. Every account is showing a positive incline attracting more followers on social media and a strong communication tool for the council with a following of over 26,000 people.

Register of Elector

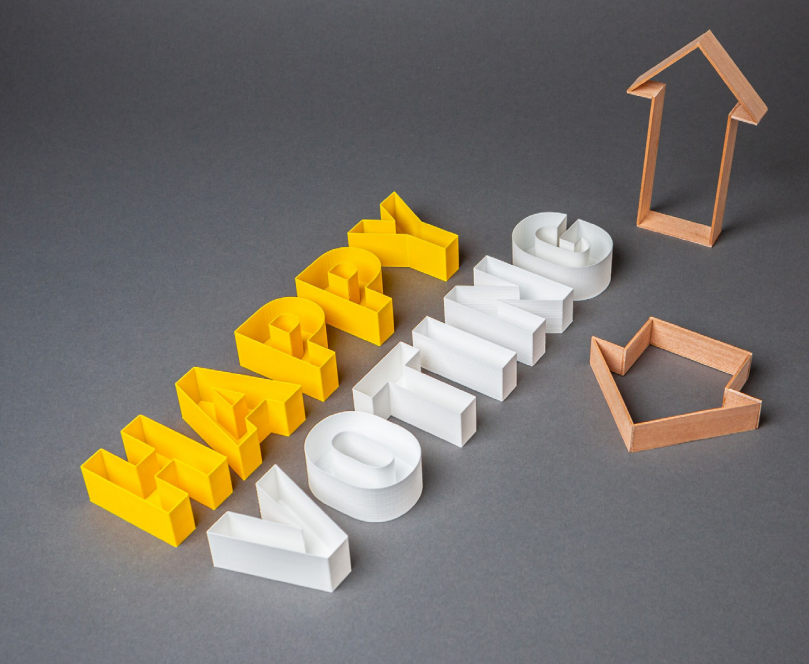
2022/23

The Draft Register of Electors for 2022/2023 is currently being compiled.

In order to register to vote and be included in the Register of Electors 2022/23 a form called an RFA 1 form needs to be completed for each individual voter and returned to Corporate Affairs before the 1st November, 2021. These forms are available from www.checktheregister.ie and in all Council Offices.

Currently the Franchise Section of the Council are carrying out a data cleansing process on the existing Register of Electors database in preparation for the national system to modernise the Electoral Registers across the Country. In order to maintain an accurate Electoral Register an essential element is address accuracy. In this connection, it has been agreed nationally that the allocation of EIRCODES to each property on the system will help to address this issue.

We will be carrying out a campaign in the coming weeks through leaflet drop, local media and social media to ask people to contact the Franchise Section to provide their Eircode details for updating to the Register of Electors database.



Freedom of Information

Requests:

The Council received 94 Freedom of Information Requests in the period from 1/1/2021 to 30/9/2021.

A total of 93 decisions were made by the Freedom of Information Officer in the period from 1/1/2021 to 30/9/2021.

ROADS

MAJOR PROJECTS (Included in NDP- Funded by TII)

N24 Waterford to Cahir Scheme

Kilkenny is the lead authority on this project. It is 60km in length and has a projected cost of €600 - €720m. It will link up with the Limerick to Cahir Scheme which is a few months further ahead in the process. The Consultants are working through Phase 2 on this Scheme. An options report will be prepared for late 2021 which will go out for public consultation. All the information on the Scheme is available on the website N24waterford2cahir.ie.

N25 Glenmore (New Ross ByPass) to Waterford Scheme

A route corridor has now been selected for the scheme (navy route) and the Phase 2 Gate Review Statement has been submitted to TII for approval to proceed to Phase 3 (Design & Environmental Evaluation).

Approval to proceed is awaited from TII and its Strategic Planning Unit. The overall outturn cost for the project is expected to be €90 to €120m. All the information on the Scheme is available on the website N25waterford2glenmore.ie.

MINOR PROJECTS (Not included in NDP-Funded by TII)

N24 Tower Road (Safety Scheme)

This scheme is currently subject to final design and tender preparation. Landowner negotiations are on-going. It is envisaged that the Scheme will go out to tender towards the latter end of Q4 2021 with a view to construction commencing in Q2 2022. The overall outturn cost for the project is expected to be circa €10m.

N77 Ballyragget to Ballynaslee

This Scheme is within the judicial review period following 177AE planning approval by An Bord Pleanála. This period will lapse in late October 2021. The CPO has already been confirmed for the above Scheme.

The gate review documentation is being prepared and subject to the approval of TII the Scheme will progress through to Phase 5 (Enabling & Procurement). The overall outturn cost for the project is expected to be circa €10m.

N24 Carrick Road

Following approval of the Preliminary Design Report for the Scheme the necessary documentation to make a simultaneous application to An Bord Pleanála for planning approval under 177AE and also Compulsory Purchase Order approval for the Scheme is being finalised. It is intended that the applications will be made in Q4 2021.

The overall outturn cost for the project is expected to be circa €10m.

Castlecomer Footbridge

The footbridge and associated works are under construction at present and planned to be open at the end of Q4 2021. The construction costs for the project is circa €1m.

Non-National Roads (Funding required from Department of Transport)

Kilkenny Ring Road Extension

Kilkenny County Council has tendered for Consultants to prepare a Strategic Assessment Report (SAR). The tenders are due back on the 1st October. The report will be prepared to submit to the Department for consideration to proceed with the design and planning of this important strategic project for Kilkenny City.



Development Management

Planning Summary	Total (September 2020)	Total (September 2021)
Planning Applications Received	646	809
Planning Applications Granted	506	669
Planning Applications Refused	49	60
Complaints Received	71	103
Warning Letters Issued	65	85
Enforcements Notices Issued	11	17
Cases Closed	45	78

The Planning Department is open for business subject to Covid-19 recommendations for social distancing and other safety measures for the protection of customers and staff. Visits to the Planning Office are by pre-booked appointment.

Appointment can be made by telephoning the Planning Office at 056-7794010 or by email to planning@kilkennycoco.ie.

Forward Planning

City & County Development Plan

The City and County Development Plan was adopted on the 3rd September 2021, and will come into effect on the 15th October. The final text, maps, appendices and environmental reports are currently being compiled.

Masterplans

Following the closure for pre-draft submissions to the Masterplan process for St. Canice’s Campus at the end of July, the Planning Section considered the 37 submissions during August and prepared a report categorising the submissions according to common themes. A report on the submissions received will be presented to the Kilkenny MD.

Work is continuing with the preparation of masterplans for the areas of Loughmacask and the Fairgreen area of the City. A draft Loughmacask Masterplan has been prepared and is being internally reviewed before it will be presented to Members in the coming weeks prior to public display of the draft. The preparation of the Fair Green Masterplan will recommence shortly.

Vacant Sites

- There are currently 31 sites on the Vacant Sites Register, two of which are under appeal to An Bord Pleanála.
- The number of cancelled entries due to site activation or improvement now stands at 16 sites.
- Payment demands were issued on May 10th for a total of 23 sites, with total outstanding levies amounting to €1,453,131.
- Owners had an opportunity to appeal the payment demands to An Bord Pleanála and we have received notice of 9 appeals.
- Owners of the 2021 sites were notified of the valuations of their sites and they now have the right of appeal to the Valuations Tribunal.
- The process of additions for 2022 will commence shortly.

Historic Town Initiative: Works to St. Mary’s Church boundary iron railings and masonry elements are nearing completion. The project has been part funded by the Heritage Council’s Historic Town Initiative.

The **Living City Initiative** continues, with inspections and letters of consent being issued in a timely fashion.

Conservation work has commenced on the following projects:

- Teahouse, Bateman Quay
- Black Freren Gate, within the Kilkenny City Walls

Building Control

Valid commencement notices submitted: 369 for the first 9 months of 2021 (up 45% compared to the first 9 months of last year).

Taken in Charge

Works are substantially complete for final taking in charge at the October Council Meeting of the following Estate:

Whitescaslte, Knocktopher, Co Kilkenny.

Works are in progress on the following Estates:	
The Fairways & Greenoaks, Ferrybank	[developer carrying out works]
The Greens, Thomastown	[developer carrying out works]
Roseleigh, Mooncoin	[developer carrying out works]
Whitehall, Paulstown	[developer carrying out works]
Filbuckstown, Mooncoin	[planning authority carrying out works]
Abbeygate, Ferrybank	Schedule of works has been agreed and developer will progress same
Seville Rise, Callan Road	Schedule of works to be agreed with the developer who will then progress same
Arbourmount:	When all reports back from service areas, schedule of works and costings to be drawn up
Abhainn Ri, Kilmanagh:	Additional works including additional CCTV to be carried out
Castlehyde, New Ross:	Currently there is an appeal by the developer with An Bord Pleanala regarding the bond condition of the most recent planning application.
Lakeside, Kilkenny:	Works completed, however issues around what areas are to be taken in charge. Local authority are awaiting on response from the Management Company.

ENVIRONMENT

Environmental Complaints

The number of complaints received by Environment staff for investigation to the end of September this year is 996. The vast majority of complaints continue to be related to littering and illegal dumping. Despite the restrictions imposed due to Covid-19, our Enforcement Officers remain very active on the ground in dealing with these complaints while adhering to Government and HSE guidelines.

RMCEI – Recommended Minimum Criteria for Environmental Inspections Plan 2021

Implementation of the RMCEI plan is progressing this year with a large number of inspections carried out remotely. A number of Environmental inspections have yet to be finalised whilst the economy continues to recover. We have moved our household and commercial inspections to on-line allowing business and homeowners to submit their information in a safe and secure manner. An Garda Siochana have given permission to commence joint inspections and checkpoints with them over the coming weeks.

Enforcement Actions (Litter & Waste)

The Environment Enforcement Team is very active in patrolling and carrying out investigations across waste, water, noise and air while adhering to all Government and HSE guidelines. A joint operation between staff in the Environment Office and City Hall is underway to tackle illegal dumping in the City Laneways. An awareness campaign along with enforcement activities are currently being rolled out.

The next phase of sending out warning letters to households has commenced and enforcement staff are now collecting evidence with a view to prosecuting the offenders.

Historic Landfill Sites

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

ranging from Tier 1 through to Tier 3 (remediation works). The risk assessment and remediation work at historic landfills are fully funded by the Department. The sites at Sherman’s Ballyragget and Gowran are fully remediated and validation reports have been issued to the EPA. Site Investigation works have been completed at Mallardstown and Sheastown and we are awaiting Tier 2 Risk Assessment Reports. Following the completion of Site Investigation work at Dungarvan we are procuring consultants to complete Risk Assessment Reports. We have also recently submitted Certificate of Authorisation (CoA) applications at the following locations to the EPA:

- Oldcourt Inistioge (EPA Ref. H0237-01); and
- Thorpe’s Ballyragget (EPA Ref. H0231-01).

Risk Assessment reports have also been received at a further 7 sites and are at various stages of review. Some will require additional analysis and monitoring work.

The current expected 2021 out-turn expenditure for Historic Landfills is €192,000. All of which is fully recoupable from the department allocation of €206,655.

Bring Banks Usage

The Council provides and manages 46 Bring Centres across the city and county and year to date (YTD), a total of 1,979 tonnes of recyclables were collected from our Bring Centres. This represents a 1% increase on the same period last year and reflects the trend in increased throughput observed since the start of the Covid pandemic. Loughboy Shopping Centre (with 121.2 tonnes collected YTD), LIDL Loughboy (with 119.29 tonnes collected YTD) and Newpark Shopping Centre (117.31 tonnes collected YTD) are the busiest bring centres in the City Environs while ALDI Graiguenamanagh (90.33 tonnes collected YTD) and LIDL Thomastown (85.84 tonnes collected YTD) are the busiest outside of the city. Environment staff are continuing to work very closely with our service providers to ensure the collection service is in keeping with demand, especially around long weekends and holiday periods. Kilkenny County Council is looking to increase the number of recycling centres in the county

this year and is currently in discussions with the Tidy Town committee’s with regard to suitable locations.

Columbarium Wall – St Kieran’s Cemetery

A Columbarium wall is a structure used for the respectful inurnment of human remains in niches designed to receive a receptacle containing the cremated remains or ashes of family members. Each niche has an individual front section incorporating a memorial plaque. The cremated remains are placed behind the plaque in a receptacle or urn designed specifically for that purpose. The memorial plaque is engraved with an inscription. Each niche can typically accommodate two cremated remains.

The provision of a Columbarium Wall Garden would provide an alternative option to traditional burials and inurnment of ashes in grave plots, to meet the needs of families who have made the choice to cremate their loved ones. The proposal would also help to extend the life span of the existing cemetery for use by future generations.

Following a presentation to the Kilkenny County Council Plenary Meeting in June 2021 and the positive feedback received therein, the project was submitted to the Planning Section for formal pre-planning and screening. Planning had no concerns or objections on project in the reports returned to the Environment Section in August 2021

The following provides an indicative timeline for the project:

- Publish Part 8 Planning Application in October 2021;
- Conclude Part 8 Planning by end February 2022;
- Progression of project to Tender in February 2022, subject to Council Decision on the Part 8 Planning.

ENERGY

SEAI has released the preliminary Measurement and Reporting Figures for 2020. Kilkenny County Council is currently reporting 41.6% improvement in energy efficiency when compared to the baseline period of 2009. It must be noted that the impact of reduced operations due to Covid-19 will have supported the result, however the 2020 target which was a 33% improvement was in fact realised in 2019. Final figures will be published by SEAI in December 2021.

The Better Energy Communities Programme (BEC) is SEAI’s national upgrade programme to support the retrofit of Ireland’s building stock and facilities to high standards of energy efficiency, thereby reducing fossil fuel, operational costs and greenhouse gas emissions.



Kilkenny County Council has a number of projects currently underway which will receive 35% funding support from SEAI. These projects include a lighting upgrade, heating control upgrade and EV charger installation at Kilkenny Machinery Yard, along with roof insulation, pipework insulation and heating control enhancements at County Hall. These projects will support the Council’s journey

towards 2030 public sector energy and carbon targets. Applications for the 2022 Community Energy Grants scheme will be opening shortly.

RIVER BASIN MANAGEMENT PLANNING (RBMP)

The draft RBMP is published and sets out the measures that are necessary to protect and restore water quality in over 4,000 water bodies throughout the country to good status. The draft Plan will be subject to a period of public consultation until the end of next March. Carol McCarthy from the Local Authority Waters Programme Office (LAWPRO) will present to SPC4 on the draft RBMP at the December meeting, which will assist Kilkenny County Council in making a submission.

The draft River Basin Management Plan for Ireland (2022 – 2027) was published last month and a 6-month statutory consultation period will close on 31st March 2022. Public participation is a key component via public information, consultation, and active involvement in the decision-making process.

To assist the consultation, LAWPRO is developing a virtual consultation room, which will go live in late October. This will allow the public to easily access the key points of the Plan and make a comment or submission electronically. LAWPRO will also convene a series of Municipal District level meetings across the country. Further details about the meetings in Co. Kilkenny, which are planned to take place in late November, will be circulated to all once finalised. These meetings will facilitate the public in making submissions and comments on the Plan. As restrictions ease it is hoped that these meetings will be held in person.

The 2021 Community Water Development Fund saw three applications from Co. Kilkenny. Keep Kilkenny Beautiful was awarded €5,749.50 for an outdoor classroom along the River Nore. Castlecomer Tidy Towns was awarded €1,600 for a baseline fish survey on the River Dinin, which is now complete. The School of Looking was also funded €5,600 for its Eco Showboat, which will navigate Ireland's inland waterways to spark new creative collaborations addressing climate change, freshwater ecology and biodiversity, working closely with local artists, scientists, academics and the wider community.

Work continues on the implementation of the current River Basin Management plan for Ireland 2018 – 2021. The South East Region catchment science team have continued their assessment of priority areas for action in Kilkenny. A summary of each is as follows:

Dinin River PAA

LAWPRO has carried out assessments in 3 sections of the Dinin River and have found that water quality in the South Branch has returned to Good Quality and no further actions are being recommended here. However, in the main channel of the Dinin, downstream of Dysart Bridge, water quality is significantly impacted due to excess nutrients, in particular phosphorus. The sources are upstream of the current study area and LAWPRO has proposed to extend this area for action in the third cycle to include all sections of the river. Farm advisors from the agricultural sustainability support and advisory programme (ASSAP) have started engagement with farmers in this catchment, highlighting the actions that farmers can implement on their farm to protect water quality.

Douglas River

The Muckalee (Douglas) River was also assessed. This is Kilkenny's only High Status River. Unfortunately, it is currently not reaching its high status potential and there are concerns about the risk of sediment loss to the river from forestry which is planted close to the river channel. LAWPRO has not completed final assessments here yet. ASSAP advisors have started engagement with farmers in this catchment, highlighting the actions that farmers can implement on their farm to protect water quality.

Breagh River

The LAWPRO team has commenced local catchment assessment in the Breagh. We are still working to identify what the problems are.

Duiske River

LAWPRO's catchment scientists have determined that water quality in the Duiske River has deteriorated due to high levels of the nutrient Nitrogen. We are working to identify the areas within the catchment that are contributing to this nitrogen.

Powerstown Stream

In the Powerstown Stream, elevated levels of phosphorus and ammonia were detected and linked to both agricultural and domestic waste water treatment system sources. The householders concerned are being notified that they may be eligible for a grant to upgrade faulty systems. ASSAP advisors have started engagements with farmers in this catchment, highlighting actions that farmers can implement on their farms to protect water quality.

Nuenna River

LAWPRO has found that water quality has deteriorated in the Nuenna, largely due to high levels of nutrients, particularly nitrogen, but also phosphorus. The wastewater treatment plant in Freshford was identified as a source for phosphorus, but it is not the only source. We have found that agriculture is the main source of these nutrients and much of the nutrients are entering the river through groundwater springs. LAWPRO has identified the areas within the catchment that are contributing those nutrients and ASSAP are continuing to work with farmers in this catchment to identify where the farmer should focus improvements/actions on the farm.

Pococke River

The LAWPRO team plans to begin its work in this catchment in the Autumn of 2021.

Erkina River

The Erkina is a large PAA with only a small section in County Kilkenny. LAWPRO's catchment scientists have recently commenced work here. Water quality is deteriorated primarily due to high concentrations of the nutrient phosphorus and nitrogen. Work is on-going to assess all activities (e.g. agriculture and wastewater treatment) to determine the relevant sources. ASSAP advisors have commenced engagements with farmers in this catchment and are awaiting detailed findings from the LAWPRO scientists to identify where the farmers should focus improvements on their farm.

Lingaun River

Only a small part of this PAA lies within County Kilkenny. LAWPRO hopes to commence work in this catchment later this year.

CONSCIOUS CUP CAMPAIGN

Conscious Cup Campaign is a way to limit your environmental impact when getting a take away coffee by presenting a reusable cup. An information session hosted by Carlow and Kilkenny County Councils was well attended on the 30th of September and a number of local groups have expressed an interest to come on board to get more businesses signed up to the Conscious Cup Campaign.

PICKER PALS PROGRAMME

In September, the Mayor launched the Picker Pals Programme in association with VOICE Ireland in the City and it has subsequently been announced that VOICE received national funding and will permit a further 18 classes to participate in the programme in County Kilkenny. Schools, both green schools and non-green schools have been notified of the opportunity and it is hoped that approx. 1,000 families will experience the litter picking programme over this school year.

ANTI-DUMPING INITIATIVE

As part of the Anti-Dumping Initiative, Kilkenny County Council received permission from Fingal County Council to edit and use their anti-dumping short video which is now showing across Kilkenny County Councils social media platforms. Elected Members are asked to share this video across their networks to ensure this important messages reaches communities across the county.

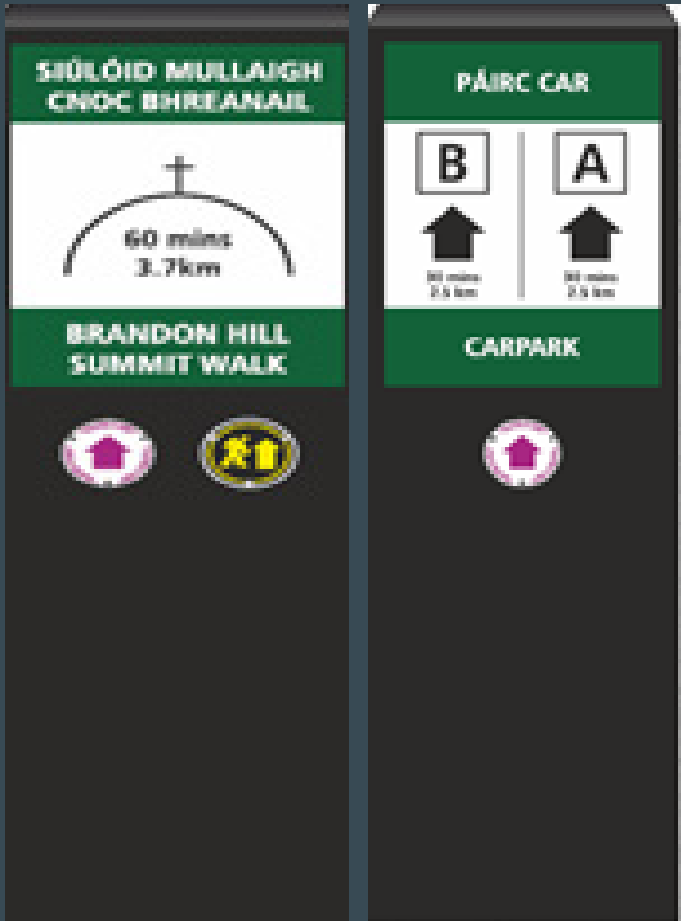
OCTOBER

REUSE MONTH

Reuse Month is celebrated every October and this year is being marked by a webinar series by Elaine Butler, an advocate for sustainable living. Four talks will take place each Tuesday evening covering practical aspects of how to make your lifestyle more sustainable. The series has been widely advertised and has been well received from the general public.



PARKS & SPECIAL PROJECTS



Outdoor Recreational Infrastructure Scheme (ORIS)

Works on the funded ORIS M1 and M2 projects has continued over the month of September. The Measure 1 applications are now all reaching completion stage and we will be in a position to claim down the full grant allocation before the end of October deadline.

The design of the signage to delineate the Brandon Hill Summit Walk is finalised and it is anticipated that same will be installed over the coming weeks. The signage provides for large map-broad trailhead signs in both the Deerpark and Raheendonore carpark, an information sign on “Freaney the Robber” and marker post signage with direction, length and the average duration to and from the summit. Following consultation with local landowner’s signage will also be provided along the trail to remind users to control their dogs at all times along the route.

Under the Measure 2 applications, works are also progressing well with respect to the restoration of the Victorian Pathways within Woodstock Estate. Under this phase of the project over 1.5kms of the paths were restored in recent months, with the majority of same along the South Leinster Way route. Currently works are focused on restoring the pathway from the “Red House” to Brownsford Stream Waterfall bridge. The bridge, which was constructed using metal and timber, is also being rehabilitated by Coillte in a joint approach to make this real gem of the Estate more accessible to visitors. Under this phase, we have also engaged specialist tree surgeons to help tackle the serious issue of invasive species, particularly Cherry Laurel, which negatively impacts on the native flora and fauna. Works on this element of the project commenced in September and will continue up to November 2021.



Image of invasive species removal and trail restoration to the bridge / viewing platform of the Waterfall

In relation to the second Measure 2 funded protect, to continue the Moat Field Loop Trail in Westfield, Callan. Discussions are still ongoing with the stakeholders with respect to the Council entering into a long-term lease agreement for the lands required to facilitate this phase of the project. Subject to getting this agreement in place, a design brief will be prepared to engage consultant engineers to prepare the detail design and tender documents.

Kilkenny Countryside Park

Whilst we await the outcome of our Measure 3 funding application submitted under ORIS in July, for €500,000, to advance this project to detail design and construction stage. We are pleased to report enabling works commenced in recent weeks along the Mass Path / Bleach Road Access. Under the adopted plan the Park will be serviced by car from the Dunmore Community Hall car park, which has capacity for 46 cars, visitors using this car park can walk along the Mass Path to access the Park. It is envisaged owing to the existing abundance of flora and fauna that this walk will positively add to the overall experience of visitors. The second access /parking area is located at the northern end of the Mass Path and is accessed from the Bleach Road, this area will accommodate 17 car and 60 bicycle spaces. The works, which are being undertaken by the Kilkenny Municipal District, provide for a) the rehabilitation of the Mass Path and the installation pedestrian passing bays from the car park in Dunmore to the Park and b) the widening of the old Landfill access road from its junction with Bleach Road to the entrance to the proposed parking area, this widening work is required to facilitate two-way traffic. The trail from Dunmore to the Bleach Road is already very popular with locals during Summer months and the current works will ensure that same can now be enjoyed all year round.



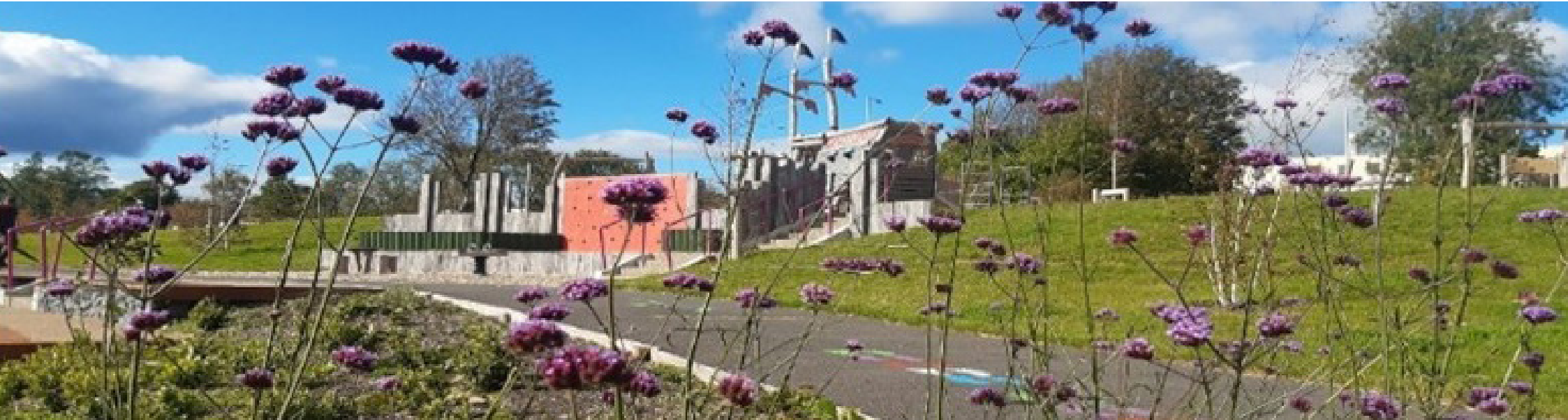
PARKS & SPECIAL PROJECTS

Parks and Playgrounds

An extensive round of playground repairs was carried out in September and early October. Repairs were carried out by contractors overseen by our in-house playground inspector. Works were carried out in Thomastown, Garringreen, Graiguenamanagh, Rosehill, Bennettsbridge, Ballyhale, Paulstown, Kilmacow, Kells, Talbots Court. These works will ensure that our playgrounds are in a safe condition for play for the coming months. A zip line funded under the Playground Grant through the Department of Children , Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth is on order for Kells playground and will shortly be installed.

Phase One of the Slieverue Linear Park is now substantially complete and the installation of outdoor gym equipment, which is on order, will see the completion of same. The new pathway takes walkers through a natural piece of ground before returning to the loop path via the Briar Woods estate and back to the village. The walk has proved very popular with local people using it daily for exercise. Phase Two is now being planned with some conceptual plans being drawn up for initial discussions locally. Subject to the relevant consents and securing the funding this phase has the potential to make the Park a real amenity asset for the village. The proposal provides for additional outdoor

recreation infrastructure for varying age groups, relaxing seated amenity spaces, additional planting to enhance biodiversity and the installation on a noise containment barrier along its boundary with the N29 national road. The latter in conjunction with additional woodland planting will aid in the creation of a rural tranquil setting.



Woodstock Gardens and Wider Estate

We were delighted to welcome Dr Úna Fitzpatrick, Project Manager: All-Ireland Pollinator Plan to Woodstock just a couple of weeks ago. Dr Fitzpatrick was delighted to see the work we have done on making Woodstock Gardens pollinator friendly, and was very impressed to see so many different pollinator species still around at this time of year.



Images of pollinator friendly planting at Woodstock



New seating has been added to the pergola, created from a fallen cedar tree from the gardens. Seating is always in demand, particularly by older people who welcome the opportunity to sit down in a sheltered quiet spot. New planting in the form of climbing Wisteria will shortly be added to the pergola with some further information on the history of the gardens to be added to the story boards on the wall. In addition to the cherry laurel removal at the waterfall under the ORIS scheme, some cherry laurel has been removed in the woodland parts of the lower gardens from the former canal. This canal, which was once fed from the Brownsford stream has become choked with laurel and bamboo over the years , the invasive plants having escaped from the Victorian era formal garden planting. Once cleared it is intended to replant the banks with oak saplings and maintain the canal laurel free as a historic garden feature.

PARKS & SPECIAL PROJECTS



September Sounds at Woodstock

After more than 15 months, music was truly back in Kilkenny with the September Sounds Series. A 3-day event held to showcase Kilkenny's finest musicians. The events were free and brought together established and new local artists to the stage. Woodstock Gardens was one of three venues across the city and county chosen to host the 'September Sounds Series' and on Friday evening, the 24th September, the Croquet Lawn beside the Winter Garden was alive to the sound of classical and jazz music much to the delight of all who attended. This collaborative event was brought by Kilkenny County Council's Arts Office and the Watergate Theatre and was funded by the Dept. Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sports & Media under the Live Performance Support Scheme.



Scenes from the September Sounds at Woodstock



South East Greenway

Construction of the 24km South East Greenway along the old New Ross to Waterford Railway Line, is now well underway. The project is being progressed in 8 individual sections or 'Lots', with the intention of expediting the works and breaking same down into more manageable contracts. Contracts for Lot 1- Mountellott to Raheen, Lot 2 - Ferrybank to Abbeylands and Lot 3 Raheen to Ballyverneen were awarded in the Summer and are progressing well and are on schedule for completion before the end of January next year.



Agreements on the accommodation works with adjoining landowner along Lots 4 – 7 are progressing. The detail design for Lot 4 – New Ross to Mount Elliot and Lot 5 – Ferrybank to Aylwardstown will be completed at the end of this month and construction tenders will issue shortly thereafter. The Waterford City Metropolitan Area approved the Part 8 Planning for the construction of the Access Ramp from the Greenway to the Abbey Road at their September Meeting. Agreement has also been reached with Waterford on the connection to their Greenway through the North Quays.

The route of the Link Road from the Abbey Road to the Belmont Road has now been confirmed. A Part 8 planning application will be progressed for the Link Road in the coming weeks. The proposed Ferrybank Car Park will be accessed from the new Link Road. Our consultants are currently preparing a preliminary design for the car park which will be a trailhead to include toilets and coach parking.

The consultants engaged to prepare a routes option report to link the villages of Slieverue and Glenmore to the Greenway are currently investigating the options identified during the preliminary assessment and will engage with landowners in the coming weeks.

Amenity Grants

The drawdown of amenity grants is well under way with groups submitting receipts for works carried out in 2021. To date approximately €50,000 of an overall budget of €140,000 has been drawdown.

In total 181 groups from across the county will benefit from amenity grants. The range of works involves grass cutting, planting flowers, erecting signage, tree and shrub planting and many other amenity type projects. An increase in the number of groups making efforts to manage their areas in a more sustainable way has been observed. For example, many groups are reducing the frequency of grass mowing and allowing flowering plants to grow while others are planting pollinator friendly planting schemes.



COMMUNITY

Streetscape Enhancement Scheme 2021

The Council received 61 applications for funding under the Scheme from the towns involved:

- Castlecomer
- Goresbridge
- Mullinavat
- Thomastown, and
- Urlingford.

Grants have been awarded totalling €130,414.

NEW KRSP Strategy Consultation Process Update

S3 Solutions and KRSP have consulted with a number of key stakeholders and the general public where online workshops took place and a survey was drafted and distributed to the public over the last two months. Final focus groups consultations are scheduled for early October. It is expected that the new KRSP Draft Strategic Plan will be available in late October/Early November 2021.

T&V Health Checks and Town Plans

Town Health Checks are complete and the Town Plans for Castlecomer, Goresbridge, Mullinavat, Thomastown, Urlingford/Johnstown have been sent to the printers and will be available on-line and in print shortly.

HERITAGE

Heritage Radio Show Wins Silver IMRO Award

The History Fix radio series about Kilkenny's history and heritage won Silver at the IMRO Radio Awards on 1st Oct. The series is a collaboration between KCLR and the Heritage Office of Kilkenny County Council, and is funded under the Kilkenny Creative Ireland Programme 2021. We're delighted with the success of the show and feedback from the public. <https://kclr96fm.com/the-history-fix/>

Black Friars Arch Conservation Works Commence

Conservation and repair work to Black Friars Arch commenced at the end of Sept. This is the only remaining gate in the medieval walls of Kilkenny, and repairs are needed to strengthen and consolidate it. Abbey Street will be closed during working hours whilst the repairs take place. These works are funded by Kilkenny County Council and the Irish Walled Towns Network.



BLACK FRIARS ARCH AND KILKENNY'S MEDIEVAL WALLS

CONSERVATION & REPAIR WORKS

We are conserving Black Friars Arch, built by the Anglo Normans in the 13th century as part of the medieval walls of Kilkenny City. Its name refers to the Friars of the nearby Black Abbey. It is the only remaining gate in Kilkenny's medieval city wall.

Find out more about the fascinating history of our city walls at www.kilkennyheritage.ie

These works are funded by Kilkenny County Council and the Irish Walled Towns Network

Project Consultants: David Kelly Partnership
Contractors: Tallis & Co. Ltd.
Survey: Tir 3D

Kilkenny County Council

Abbey Quarter – A Look Behind The Scenes

Would you like a behind the scenes look at what's involved in preparing a conservation management plan for the Abbey Quarter? Listen back to a special feature on "The History Fix" radio series including interviews with Project Manager Tony Lauhoff, and the other engineers, conservation architects, archaeologists and ecologists. The Plan, co-funded by Kilkenny County Council and the Community Monuments Fund 2021, will guide the future conservation, maintenance and presentation of St. Francis Abbey, Evan's Turret, the city wall, and St. Francis Holy Well.

A New Plan for Windgap Grotto

Windgap Tidy Towns is developing a Conservation Management Plan for the grotto in Windgap, with funding received from the Heritage Council Community Grant scheme. The grotto, which will celebrate 100 years in 2022, is thought to be the only one of its kind in Europe. The 1.6ha site on Windgap hill contains unique mosaics, statues, viewing points, flora, fauna and a mass path. The Heritage Office is supporting the project, and the plan will be completed in October. To find out more <https://www.heritageweek.ie/projects/history-of-windgap-grotto>



St. Lachtain's, Freshford: Getting Ready For Celebrations in 2022

Work continues at St. Lachtain's Church to improve visitor facilities and heating system in time for the 1400th anniversary of St. Lachtain (2022). The Select Vestry received a Community Monuments Fund grant (Dept Housing, Local Government, Heritage), and appointed a team of conservation architect, archaeologist, surveyor, engineer and videographer who will complete the works in November.

Tidy Towns Show Their Support For Pollinators

Seven Tidy Towns groups from Kilkenny entered the Local Authority Pollinator Award in the national Tidy Towns competition (Coon, Castlecomer, Kells, Inistioge, Freshford, Tullahought, Windgap). Results will be announced in November. This special award is a joint initiative of local authority Heritage Officers, Biodiversity Officers, and the National Biodiversity Data Centre. Best of luck to all the groups!

Help Map Kilkenny's Actions for Pollinators

If you, or your community has undertaken any actions to help support pollinators in Kilkenny please log them on <https://pollinators.biodiversityireland.ie/> (there's a short video to show how). This will help us record all the great work in Kilkenny to support pollinators. If you've any queries please email the heritage office heritage@kilkennycoco.ie

HERITAGE

COMMEMORATING THE DECADE OF CENTENARIES IN KILKENNY

The following projects funded under the Kilkenny Decade of Centenaries Programme 2021 (Department of Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport and Media) have been completed:

What was Kilkenny’s role in the revolutionary decade?

A new podcast, produced by the History Ireland Hedge School explores Kilkenny’s role in Ireland’s revolutionary decade, including the role of women. It addresses the claim by Ernie O’Malley that Kilkenny was ‘slack’ during the War of Independence. But was this really the case?

<https://podcasts.apple.com/us/podcast/history-ireland/id1503109266>

The Reburial of Jackie Brett – a tragic War of Independence story



The Reburial of Jackie Brett is a short film telling the tragic story of an accidental death and a burial in south Kilkenny in 1921. The film was produced by Kevin Hughes and shown at the Butler Gallery during Heritage Week.

<https://www.facebook.com/FilmJackieBrett>

New Garden of Remembrance for Callan

Callan Tidy Towns created a garden of remembrance at the Fair Green, Callan to mark the 100th anniversary of the Truce of the War of Independence and all those who lost their lives in the war. It comprises a replica of the 1916 Proclamation, the Tricolour, seating, and pollinator friendly planting. 7 trees that represent the 7 signatories of the Proclamation will be planted during the autumn. The area is open to all.



KILKENNY CREATIVE IRELAND PROGRAMME

The following projects funded under the Kilkenny Creative Ireland Programme 2021 (Department of Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport and Media) have been completed:

Our Stories through Objects

Butler Gallery in collaboration with the Fr. McGrath Family Resource Centre and Kilkenny Adult Learning Service (KCETB) developed a project in which people who have migrated or had to seek refugee status in Ireland tell their stories through personal objects. The project was exhibited from July 22 - Sep 17 in the Butler Gallery.

<https://heyzine.com/flip-book/41256b0ead.html#page/3>

Denise Mbala, Democratic Republic of Congo

Object: National Dress

These clothes are very important for African women. When an African woman dresses in these particular clothes, she feels a great lady. She is very elegant & pretty. During the celebration of the customary marriage, the bride dresses in these clothes and is really graceful. In my country, during the customary marriage, we ask for some of these special clothes for the mothers who gave birth to the ladies, we also ask for money, cola nuts, wine, beer etc.

The wedding is very important and great because it is a family marriage. The guests and family dress in similar clothes. After the registry marriage, we have a church wedding. So, in fact, an African woman has three ceremonies. After the ceremony, a celebratory meal is held with African food & drink. This dress is also worn for International Women's Day, the 8th March in DRC.

What’s the Story?

Dreamstuff Youth Theatre ran Youth Arts Workshops for young people (aged 13-19). This culminated in a show called “What’s the Story” performed as part of this year’s Alternative Kilkenny Arts Festival at the Butler Gallery in August.

NATIONAL WOMEN’S ENTERPRISE DAY

National Women’s Enterprise Day took place on Thursday 7th October and local entrepreneur, Kay Lyng, K Kajoux Jewels, nominated as the Kilkenny Leading Light, was a speaker on the first panel discussion - Innovation and Action. K Kajoux started out as a hobby, progressed to a full- time job and is now an employer with exciting growth plans on the horizon. Covid-19 initially hit the business very badly with all retail stockists having to close their stores. While in lockdown, Kay again engaged with the Local Enterprise Office for supports to help increase traffic, improve SEO and content on her website which resulted in a substantial increase in her online sales.



BEGIN TO EXPORT PROGRAMME

The Local Enterprise Office Kilkenny recently commenced an intensive export development programme for client companies who are exploring the possibility of trading overseas. With the evolution of digital sales channels, accelerated by Covid-19, internationalising business has never been so important or accessible. The goal for participants is the development of a Strategic Export Plan for their business. This plan will contain the necessary steps each company needs to undertake to ensure successful market entry for a new export market of their choice. The ‘Begin to Export’ programme is an interactive programme delivered by our training partners IMS Marketing to help LEO clients maximise export success.

SOUTH EAST GREEN FOR MICRO CONFERENCE

The South East Green for Micro Conference took place on Friday 15th October at 9.30am. The aim of this conference was to support small businesses in the South East to engage with environmental and sustainability challenges for their business. The event demonstrated through a mix of speakers how investing time and resources in green issues would support the future sustainability and profitability of small business. Key note speaker, Duncan Stewart shared his insights on how vital it is for businesses to address environmental issues within their business and how this will ensure the sustainability of small business into the future. Expert speakers from 3 CEA and the Southern Waste Region Office shared useful tips on how to make changes within business and provided information on supports available to businesses to start their green journey.

MANAGEMENT DEVELOPMENT BUSINESS COACHING PROGRAMME

This new Management Development Business Coaching Programme has been developed in conjunction with Carlow Local Enterprise Offices and is ideal for business owners who have a strong commitment to expanding their business onto the next stage of their business cycle and have previously received grants and other supports from their Local Enterprise Office. This programme will combine management theory, powerful peer learning, networking and action learning approaches.

FINANCIAL SUPPORTS APPROVED

- A total of €680,245 in direct financial assistance was approved to 31 manufacturing/export service businesses located throughout the county. This assistance is linked to the projected creation of 149 jobs over the next three years.
- €220,285 in Business Expansion Grant assistance was awarded to 12 existing businesses with a forecasted creation of 33 jobs. Business Expansion grants assist businesses trading greater than 18 months to make investment in growing their businesses and employment numbers.
- €240,375 was awarded in Priming grant assistance to 3 start-up businesses with a forecasted job creation of 113 jobs. Priming grants assist businesses trading less than 80 months with start-up investment costs.
- €56,111 was awarded in Feasibility/Innovation Grants to 4 businesses.
- 6 Technical Assistance for Micro Exporter (TAME) grants were awarded totalling €13,900. This scheme supports businesses to explore export market opportunities.
- 3 Grad Start Grants were awarded totalling €90,000 in order to support the employment of graduates within LEO supported businesses.
- 6 Green for Micro Grants were awarded totalling €12,870. This scheme provides 3 days mentoring to businesses to allow them to look at how then can green their businesses through the introduction of green practices.

FUNDING ANNOUNCEMENT FOR KILKENNY MEDIEVAL EXPERIENCE



Fáilte Ireland recently announced funding for the new Medieval Kilkenny Experience, a world-class visitor attraction projected to attract over 100,000 visitors to the heart of Kilkenny City by year 10 of its operation post investment.

Under Fáilte Ireland’s Large Capital Grants Scheme, Kilkenny County Council has been successful in securing €3.2 million to develop the experience, increasing visitor spend and supporting jobs in the City Centre.

LEO / ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT / TOURISM

URBAN ANIMATION FUNDING ANNOUNCEMENT – CREATIVE KILKENNY

Minister for Tourism Catherine Martin TD and Fáilte Ireland announced seven locations nationally where projects of scale will be developed that will transform and re-imagine urban spaces under Fáilte Irelands Urban Animation Scheme.

Following a competitive process, Kilkenny County Council was successful in securing €439,875 under the scheme to deliver 'Creative Kilkenny'. 'Creative Kilkenny' will animate public spaces throughout the core of Kilkenny City to transform and re-imagine our Medieval City for visitors, whilst also creating vibrant and creative community spaces for our citizens. The stories, culture, history and heritage of our City will be brought to life through a variety of large-scale outdoor public art and light installations.



KILKENNY CATWALK 2021

Kilkenny Catwalk 2021, a tourism and art trail around the City has now been officially launched. The Cats are now strategically placed all around the city at locations along the trail to showcase many of our main tourist attractions. The trail was launched by Cathaoirleach Cllr Fidelis Doherty on 10th October, Kilkenny Day, to encourage visitors to come to Kilkenny, take a mid-term break and see the Cats in the off season.

You can find details of all our cats and their artists online here:

Kilkenny Catwalk website: kilkennycatwalk.ie

Kilkenny Catwalk Social Media:

Facebook: [/Kilkenny-Cat-Walk](https://www.facebook.com/Kilkenny-Cat-Walk)

Twitter: [/WalkKilkenny](https://twitter.com/WalkKilkenny)

Instagram: KilkennyCatWalk

Kilkenny Catwalk App: available both in Android and iOS.



UNLOCKING KILKENNY'S TOURISM POTENTIAL

Kilkenny County Council in partnership with Kilkenny Tourism has been looking at ways to enhance and further develop Kilkenny's tourism offering to both domestic and international visitors. Post COVID our aim is to ensure that Kilkenny maintains its reputation as a world class tourism destination with plenty to see and do throughout the City and County. A webinar was hosted recently with 2 internationally renowned speakers on tourism trends and what the tourist wants. Terry Stevens and Misa Novak highlighted some examples of great international tourism experiences, the changes that are emerging in tourist expectations and how tourism providers are responding. Terry and Misa inspired our local businesses and other agency partners with practical, real-life, examples of successful collaborations and exceptional experiences for guests. We will now work with the sector to develop new and layered tourism experiences here in Kilkenny. We aim to provide leadership and supports to the sector as we emerge from this difficult period for tourism nationally and internationally.

VISITKILKENNY.IE



Kilkenny's Tourism Recovery Taskforce secured funding from Fáilte Ireland to further support Kilkenny Tourism's efforts to continue to market of Kilkenny as a world class and year round tourist destination for visitors to come and stay into the shoulder season of 2021. 'More to Explore' will use the 'Keep Discovering' marketing assets and run a campaign into Autumn/Winter to promote the main priorities of the Recovery Taskforce. The focus of the campaign throughout the remainder of the year is to showcase all that Kilkenny has to offer in terms of dining, festivals and fun, autumnal outdoors and things to see and do for families.

HOUSING

Housing Capital Delivery 2021

143 new build units have been delivered to date in 2021, the full list of capital schemes programmed for delivery in 2021 are outlined in the table below:

	Scheme Type	Project Name	Units	Project Status
1	AHB TURNKEY	Cois Na Bearu, Graignamanagh [Cooperative Housing]	14	Completed January 2021
2	AHB TURNKEY	Margaret's Field, Callan Road, Kilkenny City [Respond]	40	Completed April 2021
3	KCC BUILD	Glebeside, Donaguile, Castlecomer	33	Completed June 2021
4	KCC TURNKEY	Blackwater Grove, Lower Kilmacow, Co. Kilkenny	16	Completed June 2021
5	KCC BUILD	Pairc Nua [The Broguemaker], Kilkenny	18	Completed July 2021
6	KCC BUILD	Station Avenue Phase 2, Ballyragget	22	Completed July 2021
7	KCC BUILD	Ayrfield, Kilkenny City	8	6 units completed. 2 due for completion by year end.
8	KCC TURNKEY	Pennefeather Court Hebron Road Site 2, Kilkenny City	8	On site - due for completion Q4 2021
9	CAS CONSTRUCTION	Kingsriver, Ennisnag	2	Completed – September 2021
			121	

Other Units ‘Under Construction’ as at 30th September 2021 – 139 units

- 58 units at Pennefeather Green, Hebron Road, Kilkenny (Turnkey)
- 2 Units at Shanganny, Jenkinstown (KCC Direct Build)
- 23 Units at New Orchard, Kilkenny City [AHB Calf Turnkey – Cluid]
- 12 Units Brother Thomas Place, Church Lane, Kilkenny GSC
- 17 Uni1ts at Limegrove, Belmont, Ferrybank
- Reconfiguration of 1 apt to 2 units- Ayrfield, Granges Road
- 25 Units at Ladywell, Thomastown (KCC direct build)

KCC Projects due to start in Q4 2021 [10 Units]

- 6 units at Golf Links Road, (Mulhalls Shop) Kilkenny (KCC direct build)
- 2 Units at Inchacarron, Mullinavat (KCC direct build)
- 2 Units at Old Fire Station, Graignamanagh (KCC direct build)

Tender Stage [90 units]

- 88 units (houses/apartments) and community facility at Crokers Hill, Kennyswell Road, Kilkenny (KCC direct build)
- 1 Accessible bungalow, Circular Road, Kilkenny (KCC direct build)
- 1 Accessible bungalow, Haggardsgreen, Callan (KCC direct build)

Part 8 Planning-decision granted in September 2021

- 20 Units Canal Road, Johnstown (KCC direct build)



Minister Darragh O'Brien and Cathaoirleach Fidelis Doherty with KCC Housing Staff and representatives from McGarry NiEanaigh Architects at Glebeside



Minister Darragh O'Brien with KCC Housing Staff, Design Team (CJ Falconer and Associates, Nolan Construction Consultants, David Kelly Partnership, Douglas Carroll) and Contractor (Nevin Construction) at Pairc Nua

HOUSING

HOMELESS SERVICES SUMMARY SEPTEMBER 2021	
Homeless Presentations	41
Homeless Assessment Outcomes	
Prevention & Interventions	27
Emergency Service	6
Not eligible / Did not avail of service	8
HAP Place Finder Service	
No of Homeless HAP tenancies @ 1 st day of month	90
No of Homeless HAP tenancies created during month	3
No of Homeless HAP tenancies in place @ last day of month	93
Number of Homeless HAP tenancy breakdowns	0
Other Social Housing Tenancies supported /created during month	3
Households in Temporary Emergency B&B accommodation	5
Households in Temporary Emergency B&B accommodation with families	0
Households in Transition Emergency Accommodation (Own Front Door)	15
Households in Transition Emergency Accommodation (OFD) with families	2

SOCIAL HOUSING SUPPORT APPLICATION SUMMARY SEPTEMBER 2021	
Number awaiting Social Housing Support at Sept 30 th (Gross Need)	1812
Number awaiting Social Housing Support at Sept 30 th (Net Need)	831
No. of Social Housing Applications received in Sept 30 th	88
No. of applications incomplete / awaiting further information / clarification	61
No. of applications validated and ready for assessment during the month	30
No. of applications assessed during September	21
No. of applications awaiting assessment as at Sept 30 th	67

HOUSING ASSISTANCE PAYMENT SUMMARY UP TO SEPTEMBER 30 th 2021:	
Number of active HAP tenancies to Sept 30 th	803
New HAP tenancies set up	115
HAP tenants allocated Social Housing	96
Closed HAP Tenancies	59
HAP Rent Reviews	149
Other tenancy amendments	426
HAP Calls Received 2021 year to date	2797
HAP Calls Received September	411

HOUSING

September Monthly Statistics

<i>September 2021</i>	
LA/RAS/Leasing allocations up to end of Sept (offers made):	22
Number of LA tenancies surrendered in:	4
Tenant Liaison Officer cases in Sept:	54
Maintenance Calls for Sept:	518
Maintenance Calls year to date	4198

Housing Loan Activity 1st January 2021 to 30th September, 2021					
Loan Type	No. Received	No. Approved	Amt approved	No. Paid	Amt Paid
Rebuilding Ireland Home Loan	49	12	€1,986,077	16	€1,940,577
Reconstruction Loan	0	0	€0	0	€0
Caravan Loan	0	0	€0	0	€0
Total	49	12	€1,986,077	16	€1,940,577

Grants Approved & Committed up to 30th September 2021		
Scheme	No.	Amount
HGD - Housing Adaptation Grant	119	€1,072,743
MAG - Mobility Aid Grant	30	€125,430
HOP - Housing Aid for Older Persons	136	€814,260
Total	285	€2,012,432

Grants Paid out up to 30th September 2021		
Scheme	No.	Amount
HGD - Housing Adaptation Grant	56	€475,902
MAG - Mobility Aid Grant	19	€74,528
HOP - Housing Aid for Older Persons	83	€479,506
Total	158	€1,029,936

FINANCE

The expenditure by service division to the end of September is set out in table 1. Total Expenditure for the period was €75.5m compared with the annual budget of €89.9m.

TABLE 1	Actual YTD September 2021	Budget Full Year 2021
	€'000's	€'000's
Housing & Building	16,302	20,085
Road Transport & Safety	20,628	25,500
Water Services	5,497	7,115
Development Management	7,742	10,679
Environmental Services	8,746	11,748
Recreation & Amenity	4,976	6,647
Agriculture, Education, Health, Welfare	449	672
Miscellaneous Services	11,125	7,516
Overall Total	75,465	89,962

The bank overdraft facility was un-utilised for the year to date September 2021. The September Management Accounts expenditure for Miscellaneous Service above reflect the unbudgeted Commercial Rates Waiver of €5.27m, this will be recouped by the end of the year. The audit of Annual Financial Statements for 2020 commenced on 16th June 2021 and are being conducted remotely due to COVID-19. The audited statements will be presented to Council later in the year on completion of the annual audit by the Local Government Auditor.

Budget 2022 process is now underway with the adoption of LPT rate for 2022 on Wednesday 19th July, and will be ongoing throughout October and November. The Statutory Budget meeting is scheduled for Friday 26th of November.

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 187 appeals have been completed.

The following is a breakdown of the appeal outcomes to date:

- Decrease in Revaluation on Appeal 147 cases
- Appeal Withdrawn 33 cases
- Increase in Revaluation on Appeal 1 case
- No change to Revaluation on Appeal 6 cases

Income lost to date stands at €839,934. If this trend continues the total loss of income may be in excess of €1m once all appeal decisions have been made by the Tribunal.

Rates Waiver Quarter 3, 2021

Credit in lieu of commercial rates for Quarter 3 was applied to the rate accounts of all eligible businesses closed by or badly impacted by Covid restrictions. In total a waiver of €1.7m was applied in accordance with circulars issued by the Department of Housing, Local Government & Heritage for Quarter 3.

Businesses that fell into the ineligible category were invited to seek eligibility for inclusion in the waiver scheme where it could be shown the business suffered severe impact due to the pandemic in Quarter 3, 2021. One application was received before the closing date of 24th September, 2021. Kilkenny County Council has applied credit in lieu of rates of €5.2m for Q1, Q2 & Q3, 2021.

Rates Collection

The Covid 19 pandemic has had a serious impact on the local economy which in turn negatively impacts on the collection of Rates which is a primary source of income for Kilkenny County Council. Earlier this year the Government announced a waiver of commercial rates for certain categories of business and a waiver of €5.2 million was applied by Kilkenny County Council to eligible accounts. The Rates Section is currently working towards the collection of the balance of rates, circa €6 million, before the end of 2021. This is an onerous task for the Rates Section as many businesses continue to feel the effects of the pandemic and may find it difficult to meet their rates liability.

FIRE SERVICES

Capital Projects

Approval to go to tender for a new Fire Station in Urlingford has been granted from the National Directorate for Fire & Emergency Management. It is planned to have completed tender documents and to go out for Tenders on eTenders by the 15th October, 2021.

Identifying and sourcing a new site for Kilkenny City Fire is still ongoing.

Kilkenny Fire Service is now using 300 bar breathing apparatus cylinders. Funding for these such cylinders was approved from the National Directorate for Fire and Emergency Management. These cylinders are integral to the use of breathing apparatus in Kilkenny Fire & Rescue Service which is both an operational imperative and is also needed in order to maintain compliance with the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act 2005.

Fire Safety Certificates

73 applications for Fire Safety Certificates were received to 5th October, 2021. 90 were received for the same period last year. These applications were administered and assessed by staff working from home and from our Headquarter Station due to Covid-19.

Fire Services Acts 1981 and 2003

- Fire Prevention staff made targeted inspections of premises both to provide advice and to enforce legislation.
- 62 Licence Applications were processed under Section 24 of the Fire Services Acts 1981 & 2003.
- 7 Dangerous Substance licence applications were received and assessed to-date.
- 54 Fire Safety Inspections of premises have been carried out to date during level 5 -Covid-19.

Operations

Fire Brigades responded to 527 turnouts up to the 19th September, 2021. The same period last year we responded to 621 turnouts. The Fire Service is a very resilient and useful resource to the Local Authority in that Brigades (trained and equipped manpower) can be mobilised within minutes of an emergency in their area.

Recruit Fire Fighters for Freshford and Castlecomer Fire Brigades have started their QQI level 6 Fire Fighting Skills training this week in Bunclody Fire Station, Co. Wexford.

ARTS

Prima Materia Exhibition

Prima Materia, the Emerging Curator in Residence 2021 second exhibition opened on 17th September and will continue until 10th October. A solo exhibition of work by Helen MacMahon, it has been curated and designed to be viewed through the gallery windows (Meubles) and online at kilkennyartsoffice.ie and on Instagram @kilkennyartsoffice.

Creative Writing/Visual Arts Autumn Bursary 2021

As part of our Annual Programme Kilkenny County Council Arts Office focusses on engaging with and encouraging young people and children to create, experience and participate in the arts.

To this end the Arts Office devised a new bursary to support secondary schools in providing creative opportunities for their students. The bursary has been devised with transition students in mind but it could be utilised to provide creative writing or visual arts workshops for any year.

Knitted Together 2 Project

Our Knitted Together volunteers were champion again this year and we got 58 completed blankets and enough squares to get another 20 blankets put together. We had over 230 individuals including a few ICA guilds and knitting groups working over the spring and summer months on this project and we are currently organising a face to face event (guidelines allowing) in November when our volunteers, at last, can meet their fellow crafters and MAKERS.

Culture Night 2021

Culture Night took place on 17th September and we had 10 venues around Kilkenny hosting 13 programmes including a World Music Night, an Irish Music, Song Dance and Storytelling session, TADA! Theatre facilitating a fun writing workshop in person and the National Craft and Design Gallery a Culture Night Hub. This was just a small selection of events taking place on Culture Night. An overall total of 2,236 people attended Kilkenny events both online and in person.

Kilkenny Skate Park

The Arts Office worked with the skateboarders throughout the summer in order to engage them in the process of enhancing the Skate Park by getting it painted by a professional artist. The young people worked with the Arts Officer

to develop the design brief and to select the artist ensuring their ownership and connection to the outcome. The painting of the Park was completed in line with our original schedule and it has made an enormous difference to the aesthetic of the park and feedback to date has been extremely positive.

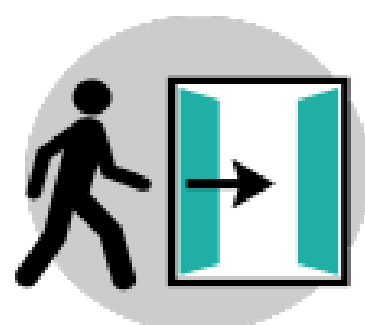
September Sounds

Local emerging and professional musicians took to stages at three fantastic venues over the weekend of September 24th – 26th. The sounds of classical, jazz, pop, rock, indie, folk and traditional music took place in Woodstock Gardens, Ballykeefe Amphitheatre and the Watergate Theatre. The funding to make all this happen came from the Department of Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport and Media and was delivered locally by Kilkenny County Council's Arts Office and the Watergate Theatre. This was a real opportunity for us to support the breadth of this important industry, i.e. the performers, but also their crew, the caterers, project and event managers, designers, marketing experts, health and safety personnel etc. all of whom are local in this instance. So, this was a palpable investment in our county, our people and our wonderful venues and resources. This programmes also served to re-connect participants and audiences alike to the beautiful resources and spaces we have in Kilkenny and re-ignite an appreciation of Kilkenny's wonderful assets.

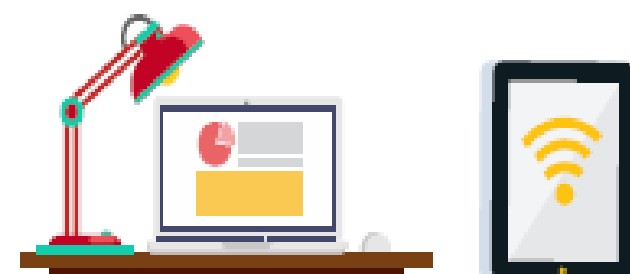
September 2021



20,720
Items borrowed



9,420
visitors



479
Internet and Wifi sessions



Mobile library back on the road

Our mobile library service set off on the road again on 7th September, much to the delight of the rural Kilkenny library users. On the road since 1972, this valuable service operates across the entire county, from Moneenroe to Mooncoin, and Ballyragget to Ballycallan.

The new schedule incorporates our original routes to all corners of the county, and now includes our Door to Door delivery service for over 65s.

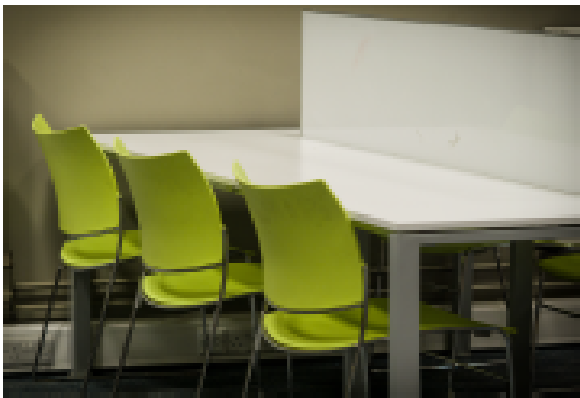
The service offers access to a range of books and dvds, and serves village-based community stops, 28 schools, 11 creches and early learning centres and 6 nursing homes -over sixty stops in total. Details are available on kilkennylibrary.ie / 056 779 4160.



LIBRARY SERVICES

Library services re-introduced

We were delighted to re-introduce computer and PC services, printing, scanning photocopying and study spaces in our libraries following the lifting of government guidelines in September.



Free To Be Me

Free To Be Me celebrates diversity, representation, and inclusion in books for children and young people aged 0–18. The guide has been carefully curated with the aim that every child can see themselves reflected in a book, as well as learning about the lives of others whose experiences and perspectives may differ from their own. Copies are available free of charge from all libraries in Kilkenny.

Virtual Bookclub

Our virtual bookclub continues to thrive, with 109 members, and approximately 65 active each month. The bookclub allows booklovers to engage in discussion and get recommendations from the comfort of home, at a time that suits!



Online Services usage:



2,066
eAudiobooks borrowed
▲ 28% on 2020



4,391
eNewspapers borrowed
▼ 10% on 2020



1,234
eBooks borrowed
▲ 7% on 2020



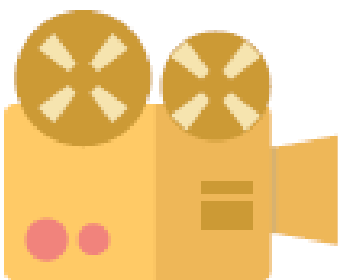
1,215
Online Course sessions
▲ 16% on 2020



853
eMagazines borrowed
▲ 18% on 2020



377
Songs accessed
▼ 73% on 2020



Digital Engagement

Our staff have prepared, recorded, edited and published **416** posts on our social media platforms in September. Our videos views were **4,537**.

Keeping it social!

Careers Kilkenny

Taste Kilkenny

Shop Kilkenny

Kilkenny.ie

Invest Kilkenny

Kilkenny County Council

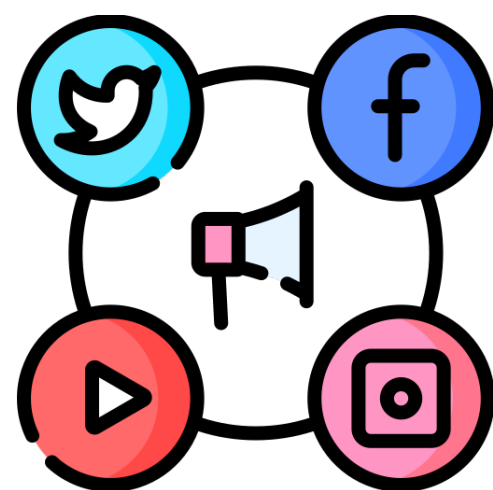
Kilkenny Tourism

Kilkenny County Council Library

Services

Kilkenny Civil Defence

Did you know
we manage these
social media
pages and more?



Kilkenny County Council
Comhairle Chontae Chill Chainnigh

Kilkenny

**THE BEST
OF IRELAND**



Kilkenny County Council
Comhairle Chontae Chill Chainnigh