



Kilkenny County Council
Comhairle Chontae Chill Chainnigh



CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S REPORT

SEPTEMBER 2021 ISSUE



To: Each Member of Kilkenny County Council

Monthly Management Report to
Members of Kilkenny County Council for
consideration at the September Monthly
Meeting.



Kilkenny County Council
Comhairle Chontae Chill Chainnigh



THE BEST
OF IRELAND

COME SEE COME DO

Since being recognised by the Restaurants Association of Ireland (RAI) as Ireland's top foodie destination, Kilkenny has continued to enhance its position as an unmissable part of Ireland's food culture.

REPORT AT A GLANCE

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EXECUTIVE FUNCTIONS

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



DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

Reuse Month (October)

- 5th October:
Sustainability on a shoestring
- 12th October:
How Science, Design and Engineering are helping to tackle the Climate Crisis
- 19th October:
Creating a sustainable wardrobe
- 26th October:
Raising Zero Waste Kids

7th October

National Women's Enterprise Day.

10th October

Kilkenny Day 2021

15th October

South East - Green for Micro Conference aims to support small businesses in the South East to engage with environmental and sustainability challenges for their business

1st November

Closing date for receipt of completed Register of Electors Forms.

November 2021

The Pride of Place National Awards will take place virtually.



National Day of Commemoration 2021 Regional Ceremony in Kilkenny

Kilkenny was again the regional host of a National Day of Commemoration Ceremony on Sunday, 11th July, 2021. As a result of the Covid-19 pandemic this year's commemoration was held again in the grounds of County Hall, John Street, Kilkenny.

The event itself was a simple and dignified ceremony commemorating all Irish men and Irish women who died in wars or on active service with the United Nations. Participants included Defence Forces, Gardaí, Clergy, local and regional

Elected Representatives and Oireachtas Members and other invited dignitaries including ex-servicemen.

The format of the event followed the template for the National Ceremony at the National Museum, Collins Barracks, consisting of service, wreath laying, prayers/reflection and appropriate music. Participation by the Gardaí, Army and clergy complement a wreath laying ceremony by the Cathaoirleach of Kilkenny County Council, Cllr. Fidelis Doherty.



An Garda Síochána in Kilkenny/Carlow launched the Divisional Garda Youth Awards, in association with Netwatch, Kilkenny County Council and Carlow County Council

The award winners were honoured in a series of awards ceremonies across the three Districts of Kilkenny, Carlow and Thomastown on Monday 5th July 2021. Kilkenny winners were presented with their awards at a ceremony in the Butler Gallery.

Register of Electors 2022/2023

Are You Registered to Vote?



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

Please ensure that RFA 1 forms are completed for each individual voter and returned to Corporate Affairs before the 1st November, 2021. These forms are available from checktheregister.ie and in all Council Offices.

CORPORATE

‘September Sounds’

Local emerging and professional musicians will take to stages at four fantastic venues over the weekend of 24th to 26th September as the sounds of classical, jazz, pop, rock, indie, folk and traditional music will take place across the beautiful City and County settings of Woodstock Gardens, Ballykeeffe Amphitheatre and Butler Gallery Courtyard.

The funding to make all this happen comes from the Department of Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport and Media and is being delivered locally by the Council’s Arts Office and the Watergate Theatre.

The response to the call-out for applications was overwhelming and the chosen acts will get to perform over the last weekend of September at ‘September Sounds’ and due to the outstanding quality of the applications to the call-out, an extra date has been added on October 10th and will run as part of ‘Kilkenny Day’.

The concerts will be free to attend. Those attending will have to have tickets which were available to book from Wednesday 8th September only through www.watergatetheatre.com.



Annual Newsletter

The 2nd Annual Newsletter highlighting some of the projects and work of the Council over the last year is currently being prepared and will be scheduled for distribution countywide in October.

This will be a 16 to 20 page document. The first newsletter circulated last year provided extensive information on the Council and the services it provides. This newsletter is more “news driven” and will contain a number of articles updating the public on the various projects and initiatives completed and underway by the Council together with some interesting snippets of information on Council services.

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



ROADS

National Roads

N24 Waterford to Cahir Scheme

The consultants are working through Phase 2 on this scheme. An Options Report will be prepared for late 2021. All the information on the scheme is available on the website N24waterford2cahir.ie.

N25 Glenmore to Waterford Scheme

A route corridor has now been selected for the scheme (Navy route). The scheme will progress through the Design and Environmental stages in 2021 and into 2022 with advancement through the statutory processes in 2022 into 2023. All the information on the scheme is available on the website N25waterford2glenmore.ie.

N24 Tower Road

Approval of the Compulsory Purchase Order for the Scheme was given by An Bord Pleanála in August 2020. This scheme is currently working through full design and tender preparation. It is envisaged that it will go out to tender in Q4 2021.

N77 Ballyragget to Ballynaslee

Planning permission and the CPO has been confirmed for the above scheme. Works will now commence on full design and tender preparation and advance works at the Glanbia Facility.

N24 Carrick Road

We are currently preparing the necessary documentation to make a simultaneous application to An Bord Pleanála for approval under 177AE and also Compulsory Purchase Order approval for

CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S REPORT SEPTEMBER 2021

the Scheme. It is expected that the applications will be made in Q4 2021.

Non-National Roads Kilkenny Ring Road Extension

Kilkenny County Council has a brief ready for tender to procure consultants to prepare a Strategic Assessment Report (SAR) to submit to the Department for consideration & approval to proceed with the design and planning of this important strategic project for Kilkenny City.

Speed Limit Review.

The Speed Limit Review has commenced. Details and dates have been issued through the MD office\meetings. Any representation from Councillors should be submitted to MD Office in line with the scheduled dates circulated.

Pavement Projects

N76 Riversfield to Ahanure North Pavement Improvement Scheme

This structural and road surface improvement scheme extending over 2.5km on the N76 south of Callan was substantially completed in September 2021 at a Tender cost of €820,000 ex Vat. Funding was provided by the TII. Works include drainage, roadmarkings, verge improvements and ancillary works.

N77 Oldtown to Ballyragget Pavement Improvement Scheme

This structural and road surface improvement scheme extending over 1.5km on the southern approach to Ballyragget Village is due to commence on 13th September,

2021 and is expected to be substantially complete in six weeks at a Tender cost of €750,000 ex Vat. Funding was provided by the TII. Works include drainage, roadmarkings, verge improvements and ancillary works.

HD 28 Programme (Skid Resistance Improvement) National Roads

N77 Baun to Hennebry's Cross HD28 Scheme

This pavement surface replacement scheme comprised the replacement of the surface course and ancillary works on a 3.3km section of the N77 between the Kilkenny Ring Road and Hennebry's Cross, including the roundabout. The scheme was completed in April 2021 at a cost of €669,000 ex Vat. Funding was provided by TII.

N77-N10-N76 Kilkenny Ring Road – N24 - N10- N78

Tender Documents are in preparation for the replacement of road surfacing to improve skid resistance on sections of the N77-N10-N76 Kilkenny Ring including eight roundabouts. In addition, tenders are being prepared for a section on the N24 west of Mooncoin. These are expected to issue in September 2021 with the intent to commence construction in 2021

Tenders for Pavement retexturing works to improve skid resistance are also in preparation for locations on the N10 at Foulkstown, N78 North of Castlecomer and N24 at Grannagh. These are expected to issue in September 2021 with the intent to commence construction in 2021

ROADS

Kilkenny Western Environs

The Kilkenny Western Environs Phase 1 Infrastructure Road Scheme is now complete and opened fully to traffic on 20th August, 2021. The Scheme extends from a new roundabout on the Kilkenny to Callan Road at Burrells Walk to a new roundabout on the Circular Road at Robertshill, along the new Western Environs Distributor Road. The Scheme also includes improvements to the Circular Road (from Robertshill to Kilmanagh Road Junction) and the Kilmanagh Road (from Circular Road to the old water pump at Drakelands).



Castlecomer Footbridge

Works are continuing on the footbridge in Castlecomer with an expected completion date of December, 2021, weather permitting.

Kilkenny City

As Members are aware, funding has been approved for works on Ormond Street to make it one-way from the Patrick's Street end permanently and for enhancement works. These works have commenced in September, 2021.

The Part 8 Planning will be advertised week ending Friday 17th September for the Outdoor Performance Area adjacent to the Watergate Theatre.

Further to the recent announcement of funding for the Weatherproofing of the Outdoor Seating area in the Market Yard, a Consultant has been appointed to prepare concept designs which will be brought before the Members before advancing to Part 8 Planning. The designs will also incorporate changes to Kieran Street.

Rás na mBan 2021 - Kilkenny



2021 marked the fifth time that Rás na mBan visited County Kilkenny.

Rás na mBan is the premier women's cycling event in Ireland. It runs for five days with a total of six stages to a total of over 400km of racing action. There was great excitement around the County as the cyclists made their way through the stages. Congratulations to all involved.

Overall winner was Anna Shackley 2nd placed Abi Smith, 3rd placed Loes Adegeest

PLANNING

Development Management

Planning Summary	TOTAL (To end August 2020)	TOTAL (To end August 2021)
Planning Applications Received	573	732
Planning Applications Granted	442	576
Planning Applications Refused	44	56
Complaints Received	69	93
Warning Letters Issued	64	82
Enforcements Notices Issued	10	16
Cases Closed	42	69

The number of planning applications being received continues to increase this year compared to 2020, with a total of 732 received to the end of August (up 28% compared to the same period last year).

The Planning Department continues to be 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. Appointments 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 by the Elected Members on the 3rd September last and will come into effect on the 15th October next. Kilkenny County Council notified OPR of the decision made by the Council not to accept some recommendations of the OPR. The final text, maps, appendices and environmental reports are currently being compiled. The Development Plan sets out the overall core strategy, objectives and zoning policy of the Council for the sustainable development of the City & County of Kilkenny for the next 6 years, including residential, commercial, amenity, urban and rural development.

Masterplans

Following the closure for pre-draft submission to the Masterplan process for St. Canice's Campus at the end of July, the Planning Section considered the 37 submissions received and prepared a report categorising the submissions according

to a number of themes. The submissions received will be presented to the Kilkenny MD at their meeting in September.

Work is continuing with the preparation of Masterplans for the areas of Loughmacask and the Fairgreen area of Kilkenny City. A draft Loughmacask Masterplan has been prepared and is being internally reviewed before it

Taking in Charge

The following estates were initiated for taking in charge at the July Council Meeting:

- Whitescastle, Knocktopher
- Roseleigh, Mooncoin

The following estates are at the final taking in charge stage:

- Rathullard
- FriaryWalk, Phase 1 & 2
- Brookfield
- Haven Court

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.

Conservation

Protected structures are recognised for the following special interest: Architectural, Historical, Archaeological, Artistic, Cultural, Scientific, Technical, Social.

will be presented to Members in the coming weeks prior to public display.

The preparation of the Fair Green Masterplan will recommence shortly.

PLANNING

The following funding streams continue to be managed by the Conservation Office:

Built Heritage Investment Scheme: The total funding in 2021 assigned for 14 projects in Kilkenny is €117,600.

Historic Structures Fund: The total funding in 2021 assigned for 6 projects in Kilkenny is €312,000. Applicants have cited challenges in acquiring trades people in recent months. The Conservation Officer is working continually with applicants and agents to deliver the projects by the Department's deadline.

Historic Town Initiative: Funding of €57,000 was secured from the Heritage Council's Historic Town Initiative for Phase 2 of St. Mary's, Callan boundary repairs. The masonry and ironwork repairs are nearing completion.

This Phase follows the successful completion of railing and masonry repair on the Green Street elevation in the centre of Callan.

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

Building Control

The total number of valid BCMS Commencements received year to date to the end of August this year (at 321) is 143% higher compared the same period last year.



ENVIRONMENT

Environmental Complaints

The number of complaints received by Environment staff for investigation to the end of August this year is 871. 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.

Decarbonisation Zone (DZ)

Kilkenny County Council still awaits formal feedback from the Department of Housing, Planning & Local Government on the potential DZ area put forward at the end of April. Pending feedback from the Department, the Council will form an Implementation Working Group of key staff and relevant stakeholders to develop an Implementation Plan by year end.

Graveyard Grant Scheme

The first phase of applications were assessed and approved by the Elected Members at the June Council meeting (totalling 19 out of 36 applications). The remaining applications (17 in total) were approved at the July Council meeting. All applicants have now received confirmation of their grant award.

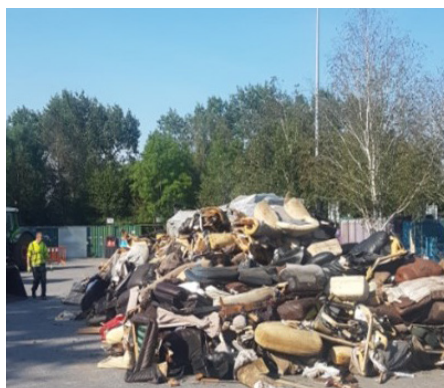
Return of the Tidy Towns Forum

The Tidy Towns Forum will regroup in Woodstock Gardens on Saturday, the 9th of October next for a Forum Event. 25 communities entered the national competition from County Kilkenny this year and are eagerly awaiting their results, which will

be announced later in the Autumn. The Forum Event will comprise of two sessions, a forest bathing wellness exercise and a nature walk which will be followed by a socially distanced cup of tea to allow volunteers to reconnect with each other as the Forum was inactive throughout the pandemic.

Bulky Furniture Waste Collection Initiative

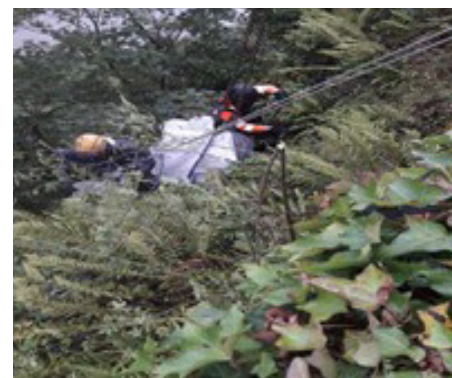
Dunmore Civic Amenity Site (CAS) and Granny Recycling Centre held bulky furniture drop off days in August. The initiative was a great success with 40 tonnes of furniture being processed over the two sites. Both events were funded through the Anti-dumping Initiative (ADI) Programme. There is no doubt that by running such events illegal dumping of such items is reduced across the county



Clean up at Rose Kennedy Bridge

As part of the Anti Dumping Initiative (ADI), the Council secured funding to clean up illegal dumping that was occurring in the vicinity of The Rose Kennedy Fitzgerald Bridge on the New Ross Bypass. In early August, a crane along with an Abseiling team were hired to assist with the clean up of a particularly steep section directly underneath the new bridge.

Approximately 3.5 tonnes of waste was removed from the riverbank. Once the works were complete a new 165 metre long security fence was installed to help prevent a recurrence of illegal dumping at this location.



Lifeguards

Kilkenny County Council employed a number of Lifeguards on a temporary basis for the summer months of June, July and August. Lifeguards were on duty from 2.00 p.m. to 4.30 p.m. and 5.00 p.m. to 7.30 p.m. each day seven days per week from 1st July to 31st August 2021 at the following locations:-

- The Meadows, Kilkenny City
- The Weir, Kilkenny City
- Thomastown
- Inistioge
- Graigueanamanagh

Lifeguards were also on duty at weekends (Sat/Sun and Bank Holiday Mon. only) from 2.00 p.m. to 4.30 p.m. and 5.00 p.m. to 7.30 p.m. during month of June.



ENVIRONMENT

Mayor Launches Picker Pals Initiative

The Mayor of Kilkenny City announced this inaugural environmental initiative - Picker Pals. Teachers of 1st class in all city primary schools will be invited to become involved in this fun environmental activity programme. Through fun stories and songs and a special pack containing everything needed for litter-picking. Picker Pals motivates children to lead litter-picking adventures with their families.

The Environment Section worked over the summer with the Mayor and VOICE Ireland to make the roll out of Picker Pals a reality. The programme has great potential to raise awareness about litter in communities and will run throughout the academic year. It ties into many of the objectives set out in the Council's Litter Management Plan 2021-2023 and the Council's Environmental Education and Awareness Strategy.



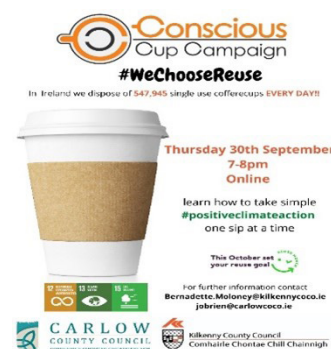
Illegal Dumping Awareness Campaign

Kilkenny County Council is promoting the "Your Country - Your Waste" campaign throughout September, a campaign created to highlight the importance of eliminating illegal dumping activities across Ireland. Funded by the Department of Communications, Climate Action and Environment and part of the National Anti-Dumping Initiative (ADI), it acknowledges that the problems caused by illegal dumping are a matter of individual responsibility. The KCLR radio campaign is being run in partnership with Carlow County Council and features a week-long promotion on KCLR Live, each week focusing on a different element of illegal dumping including the appropriate disposal of End of Life Vehicles, Awareness of the impacts of Illegal Dumping and highlighting the risks associated with Bogus Waste Collectors. Press adverts and editorials are also being issued in local press throughout September (e.g. Kilkenny People, Kilkenny Observer and Munster Express).

Conscious Cup Campaign

A total of almost 550 thousand single use coffee cups are disposed of in Ireland every day, leading to a substantial negative environmental impact. Take away cups adversely impacts on our natural resources such as trees, water & energy, creates carbon dioxide (CO2) and contributes to our growing litter problem across our Island. Carlow and Kilkenny County Council has

invited Sorcha Kavanagh from the Conscious Cup Campaign to explain its aims and how to get involved. The current uptake of the campaign is low in both counties, but it is hoped this initiative will influence businesses to get involved and for more community members to choose to reuse.



A webinar will take place on the 30th of September next and it will be circulated to the local tourism bodies, community groups and local business groups. **#WeChooseResue**

Reuse Month (October)

A series of online lectures are being planned for Reuse Month. Each Tuesday evening throughout October there will be an online lecture presented by Elaine Butler. Elaine is a blogger and an advocate of sustainable living.

Schedule

October 5th Sustainability on a shoestring

October 12th How Science, Design and Engineering are helping to tackle the Climate Crisis

October 19th Creating a sustainable wardrobe

October 26th Raising Zero Waste Kids

Registration details will be advertised across social media channels and directly to community groups throughout September.

PARKS & SPECIAL PROJECTS

Barrow Valley Outdoor Activity Hub

A contract to construct a new access road, parking area and 20 serviced campervan bays was completed in the summer at the Barrow Valley Outdoor Activity Hub in Graiguenamanagh. All summer this facility has been a hive of activity attracting campervan visitors from all over the country. Minister Heather Humphreys T.D., on a recent visit to the complex was very impressed with the initiative and stated it was an example of what could be achieved when the various stakeholders and



footpaths, emergency access road, public lighting etc. were funded through REDZ and funding from Kilkenny County Council. The contract to

was made up of a combination of funds secured under the LEADER Programme, the Outdoor Recreation Infrastructure Scheme (ORIS), Community and Kilkenny County Council funding. To assist with the advancement of the civil works element of the project Kilkenny County Council provided technical assistance with design, procurement and contract administration. The delivery of this project was identified as a key objective in the 2019 Graiguenamanagh/Tinnahinch Tourism and Recreational Project Concept Study.



community work well together. The increase in visitors numbers to the area has given the local business community a welcomed financial boost and brought a real vibrancy to the town. The Hub was officially opened on 22nd August 2021 in the presence of Cllr Fidelis Doherty Cathaoirleach of Kilkenny County Council, Elected Members of Kilkenny County Council. The Hub building was funded through the LEADER Programme with community match funding. The balance of the site works,

deliver the Hub access road, carparking area and serviced sites was completed at a cost of circa. €650,000. This funding



PARKS & SPECIAL PROJECTS



Silaire Wood Boardwalk and Trail Enhancement Scheme

Under the Outdoor Recreation Infrastructure Scheme (ORIS), Kilkenny County Council secured funding in 2020 to construct a new 400-metre boardwalk at Silaire Wood. It replaced the former timber boardwalk that was destroyed by severe flood in 2015. Apart from the nuts and bolts the new boardwalk is made from 100% recycled plastic. As you walk along the boardwalk, you are in fact walking on a mixture of blended plastic from household items such as bottle caps, plastic film and margarine tubs. It is estimated that this boardwalk could be made up of approximately 13.5 million bottlecaps. The total cost of this element of the project was €265,000, with €200,000 grant funded through ORIS and the balance provided from Kilkenny County Council. Funding was also secured under the LEADER Programme to undertake trail and carpark rehabilitation works and to provide new signage and seating. The total cost of same was €56,000 of which €42,000 was funded by Kilkenny LEADER Partnership with the balance of funding provided by Kilkenny County Council. In total an investment of just over €320,000 was made which has now secured this wonderful amenity into the future. The Boardwalk was officially opened by Minister Heather Humphreys T.D., Minister for Rural and Community Development in the presence of Cllr Fidelis Doherty Cathaoirleach of Kilkenny County Council on the 23rd July 2021.

2021 Outdoor Recreational Infrastructure Scheme (ORIS) Application Status

In addition to the 7 applications submitted under Measure 1 of the ORIS in June, the following applications were submitted under Measures 2 and 3 and the new Project Development Category.

Project Name	Description	Grant Sought
MEASURE 2 APPLICATIONS		
Woodstock Estate - Accessible Trails, Age Friendly and Disabled Parking and Wheelchair Swing	Upgrade of woodland and garden trails in Woodstock Estate to improve accessibility for all. Designated age friendly and disabled parking provision. Refurbishment of toilet block to improve accessibility and the installation of a wheelchair accessible swing and sensory play area.	€189,045
Rehabilitation of the Ardra Looped Walk & Arboretum Walk – Castlecomer Discovery Park	Trail rehabilitation to two established woodland walking trails located in the Castlecomer Discovery Park. The works include 2.1km of trail rehabilitation, surfacing and drainage, along with the provision of age friendly accessible amenity spaces and interpretation signage, on the natural and cultural heritage of the area. (Both trails are free to use by the public).	€195,945
Jeninstown Wood and the Millennium Forest Trail Enhancement and Accessibility Scheme	Trail enhancement to two established woodland activity trails located to the north and south of Kilkenny City. Works include trail rehabilitation, provision for universal access, age friendly accessible amenity spaces, bicycle parking.	€200,000
MEASURE 3 APPLICATION		
Kilkenny Countryside Park - Cycle Swim Play Stay, from the City to the Park.	Kilkenny Countryside Park – Cycle Swim Play Stay, from the City to the Park. The focus of this application is linked to recreational amenities along the North Kilkenny Cycle Loop providing local amenity/tourism provision to Walk, Run, Cycle, Wild Swim, Play and Stay	€499,500
PROJECT DEVELOPMENT APPLICATION		
Castlecomer Discovery Park Masterplan plus Planning & Design for Free Activity Attractions	Subject to grant approval, it is intended to engage consultancy services with an expertise in land-use planning, heritage, economics and tourism. There will be two key elements within the scope of the consultancy brief, namely: 1) Delivery of a clearly defined brief to develop a Masterplan; 2) Planning and design process of activity elements identified in the Masterplan.	€50,000

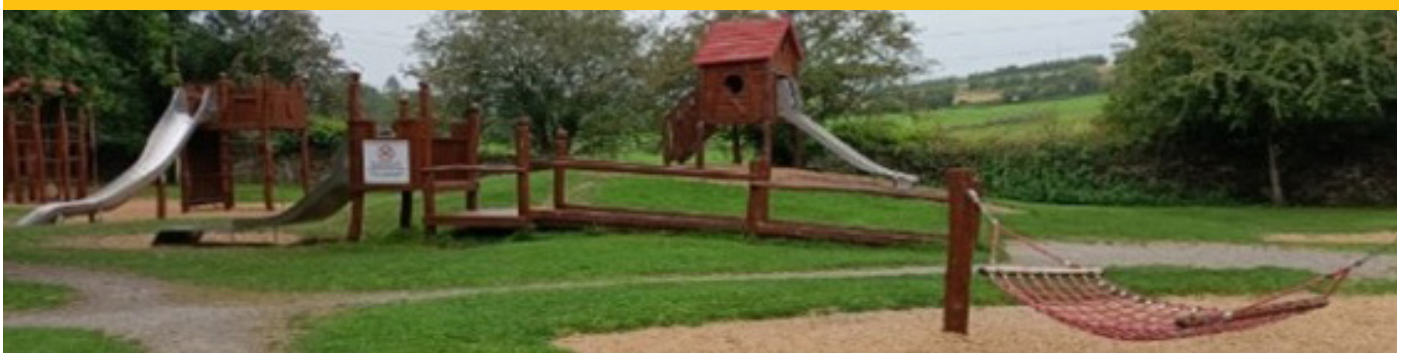
Progress Report on the 2020 Outdoor Recreational Infrastructure Scheme (ORIS) – Funded Projects



PARKS & SPECIAL PROJECTS

Location	Scheme	Status
Measure 1 Applications		
Goresbridge	Cois Bearbha riverside looped walk upgrade	Works substantially completed- seating/planting outstanding
Brandon Hill, Graiguenamanagh - Brandon Hill Summit Walk	Walking trail signage upgrade (in conjunction with enhancements to 2No. carparks - completed late Spring 21)	Trail signage design agreed and under manufacture
Nore Valley Walk	Signage and furniture upgrade along trail	Substantially completed awaiting delivery/installation of benches
Freshford Loop Walk	Trail enhancement works and marketing	Substantially completed awaiting delivery of benches
Woodstock Estate, Inistioge	Social media marketing campaign to promote Gardens and Trails within the estate	Services on going
Measure 2 Applications		
Woodstock Estate- Continuation of Loop Trail improvements - Measure 2	Trail enhancement to waterfall and removal of invasive species	Trail enhancement 40% complete, removal of invasive species to commence shortly.
Westcourt Callan - Continuation of Moat Field Loop Trail - Measure 2	Trail extension to Phase 2, to western side of Callan By-pass	Discussions ongoing with respect to long-term lease agreement with landowner to facilitate project.

Before and After Photos: Trail rehabilitation within Woodstock Estate along the South Leinster Way and walk to Brownsford Stream Waterfall.



Parks and Playgrounds

Parks and playgrounds across the county are in excellent condition following an extensive programme of repairs and maintenance over the summer months. Repairs have recently been carried out in, Thomastown, Garringreen, Paulstown, Graiguenamanagh and Windgap with new equipment added to Thomastown and Castlecomer. Funding for these replacement components was secured from the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth (DCEDIY). A second application for funding for playground enhancements was made to the DCEDIY for 2021. This application was

also successful and tenders to add a zipline to boost the play offering in Kells playground is currently being assessed.

Following completion of works on the construction of a new playground in Piltown the facility opened to the public on the 29th August. The site, which is also home to a protected structure is located



on the Main Street behind the old Garda Station and immediately adjacent to the River Pil. The playground was developed by the local community with assistance from the Parks Department and with funding from the Council's Community and Cultural Capital Facilities Scheme.



PARKS & SPECIAL PROJECTS

Woodstock Gardens and wider estate

Following an extensive refurbishment of the Tea Room, housed in the Woodstock Conservatory, it reopened to the public in July. Initially, the tea room could only cater for outdoor dining owing to Covid restrictions. Funding allocated during the summer by the Department of Housing, Planning, Local Government and Heritage to facilitate outdoor dining allowed us to expand our offering with improvements and increased capacity to the outdoor dining terraces either side of the Conservatory along with the provision of a covered seating area near the carpark which was serviced by the Woodstock Coffee truck. With civil marriage ceremonies and outdoor ceremonies becoming more popular, the demand for the Conservatory as a wedding venue is on the increase, with many couples wanting the gardens and or Conservatory as an alternative option for their big day.

Thanks to the assistance of the Civic Trust Social Media Team our reach across social media continues to grow weekly. A minimum of three posts are issued each week on what's happening in Woodstock Gardens. The weekly content schedule is focused on general awareness of the offering, building on our current following and driving traffic to the website. The results in the table below are very positive. Engagement on both Facebook and Instagram is growing with lots of followers interacting with our content.

Kilkenny County Council



A stretch tent in Woodstock was a valuable addition to our outdoor offering this summer

This marketing and promotion campaign is being funded under the 2020 Measure 1 Outdoor Recreational Infrastructure Scheme.

FACEBOOK - July 2021	INSTAGRAM - July 2021
Followers 8.4k (+464)	Followers 1.6k (+79)
Total Page Reach 85,645 (+90%)	Reach 4,931 (+304%)

PARKS & SPECIAL PROJECTS

South East Greenway

Construction of the South East Greenway is now well underway. This project, grant aided by the Department of Tourism, Transport and Sport involves the construction of a 24km Greenway from Ferrybank in South Kilkenny/Waterford and following the old railway line, northwards, to New Ross terminating at Mount Elliot. 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 and Lot 2 - Ferrybank to Abbeylands were awarded in May whilst the contract for Lot 3 Raheen to Ballyverneen was awarded in June. Works are progressing well on these sections and progress photos of same are provided hereunder.



In the coming months contracts for the remaining Lots will be awarded as the detailed design is finalised and the landowner accommodation work agreements are obtained within each Lot. Planning approvals, within the 3 counties, under Part 8 are also being pursued as required to facilitate future carparks and access points to service the Greenway.

Pollinator and wildlife friendly projects

As partners to the All-Ireland Pollinator Plan, the Parks Department is working with the Heritage Office, City Gardening Section and Area offices to manage open spaces in a more sustainable way. Mowing is being reduced where possible across the

county in an effort to increase the biodiversity of grass verges and parklands. The two large meadows at Dukesmeadows and Bishopsmeadows in Kilkenny City, which have been managed with an annual cut for some years now, have just received their annual cut. Many other areas are now being maintained using this

Amenity Grants

The drawdown of amenity grants for 2021 funding is well underway. The majority of recipients are finalising work on their schemes. In total €139,884 was allocated to 181 groups across the county. 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.

approach with the support of the public. This small measure provides a valuable source of food and habitat for insects, in particular our pollinators. A hedgehog survey has just been completed through NUI Galway to survey hedgehog activity at these sites. At all sites hedgehog activity was identified and tips have been provided for future management of the habitat to encourage further populations. Signage is erected to explain to the general public why grass is not being cut for example or why certain plants are planted.



(Right) Minister Heather Humphreys admires the Pollinator planting beds at Thomastown Quay Car Park

COMMUNITY

T&V Health Checks and Town Plans

All Town Plans and Health Checks have been finalised with Turley's Consultants. The Community Section agreed to bring all Town Plans to draft stage and then work with the Town Teams (Johnstown, Urlingford, Castlecomer, Goresbridge, Thomastown and Mullinavat) to finalise plans and fully establish their Town Teams. This process is underway for September. Plans will be made available as a resource pack to each of the communities involved and an interactive set of plans etc will be made available on our website.

Community Development Programme (CDP) Pilot

The Kilkenny Traveller Community Movement (KTCM) has been working with Kilkenny County Council and a number of agencies to establish the CDP Pilot in Kilkenny. A revised plan and budget have been submitted. The KTCM have advertised for a project Coordinator with a closing date of the 16th September.

Streetscape Enhancement Scheme 2021.

In August, Minister for Rural and Community Development, Heather Humphreys TD, announced a new €7 Million Fund to support the enhancement of streetscapes and shopfronts in over 50 rural towns and villages. Kilkenny received an allocation of €260,000. We were allowed submit a maximum of 5 towns for the rollout of this scheme. Kilkenny nominated 5 of Kilkenny County Council

the towns involved with the Health Checks – Castlecomer, Goresbridge, Mullinavat, Thomastown and Urlingford. Grants of up to €8,000 are available depending on the type of work being carried out and applies to all properties on the streetscape.

Pride of Place

The online virtual judging for the 2021 Pride of Place Awards took place on September 8th. Participating groups representing Kilkenny included KCAT (Callan), Windgap Village and the Older Peoples Forum Ipad digital connectivity project. The National awards will once again be virtual and will take place in November 2021.

RRDF Call 3 Application

An Application for Callan was submitted to the Department on the 30th July, 2021 under Call 2 Rural Regeneration Development Fund. The Call 2 application focuses on securing predevelopment funding for the Friary and Priory building in Callan and the development of a Masterplan for Bridge, West and Mill Street.

Towns in Focus Promotional Document; Callan Town Team & Thomastown

A promotional interactive document showcasing the progress of the Town Team and the Rural Regeneration and Town and Village Renewal projects delivered by Kilkenny County Council in both Callan and Thomastown will go live towards the end of September.

Tidy Estates

The 2021 Tidy Estates judging

will take place in September 2021.

2021 Events Grant Scheme

Seven applications were received requesting funding under the 2021 Events Grants Scheme

CLÁR

The CLÁR scheme is a targeted investment programme for rural areas that aims to provide funding for small infrastructural projects in areas that experience disadvantage through rural depopulation.

The successful applications were announced by Minister Heather Humphries on 30/08/2021. The following applications will receive funding under Measure 1 of the CLÁR Scheme - Support for Schools and Community Safety Measures

1. St Eoghan's National School, Kilmoganny €42,300 for Junction, footpath and pedestrian crossing and improvement works in Kilmoganny Village along with associated road markings
2. St. Aidan's National School, Kilmanagh €15,000 Provision of driver feedback signs

Bike Week 2021 12th – 18th September, 2021

National Bike Week occurs 12th – 18th September, see below some of the activities organised for this week in Kilkenny. Bikeweek also takes place in schools, with highlights including bringing school children on local routes and education programmes.

LEO / ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT



Local Enterprise Office Kilkenny launches Autumn Training Schedule 2021

The Local Enterprise Office Kilkenny has launched the Autumn 2021 training schedule which will run predominantly online for this season. The courses on offer range from Start Your Own Business Programmes, Management Development Programmes, financial related programmes such as book-keeping and taxation, sales and marketing, including short practical digital marketing courses and many more. The full training schedule is now available to view on the Local Enterprise Office website www.localenterprise.ie/kilkenny



Kay Lyng – Leading Light for Kilkenny at National Women's Enterprise Day

Kay Lyng – K Kajoux Jewels based in County Kilkenny has been chosen to represent the County and form part of the panel discussion at this year's National Women's Enterprise Day to be held on 7th October. Based on this year's theme, "Build the Future", Kay along with inspiring business owners from around the country will demonstrate how her business has developed; what started out as a hobby has progressed to full-time and now is an employer with exciting growth plans.

For more information on National Women's Enterprise Day, go to LocalEnterprise.ie/NWED

'Begin to Export' Programme

Four Kilkenny business have enrolled in our pilot 'Begin to Export programme, commencing Monday 15th September 2021. With the evolution of digital sales channels, accelerated by Covid, internationalising business has never been so important. Targeted towards owner managers, the programme is structured to give participants the necessary skills to begin exporting for the first time or maximise existing export opportunities.

Managing Development Business Coaching Programme

This new business coaching programme is being delivered by Kilkenny and Carlow Local Enterprise Offices. This Management Development Business Coaching Programme (MDBCP) is ideal for owners of small / medium size businesses, who have a strong commitment to expanding their business onto the next stage of their business lifecycle and have previously received grants and other supports from their Local Enterprise Office. This programme / intervention will combine management theory, powerful peer learning, networking and action learning approaches. You can register for the programme at www.localenterprise.ie/Kilkenny

LEO / ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

South East - Green for Micro Conference

Taking place on 15th October, this conference aims to support small businesses in the South East to engage with environmental and sustainability challenges for their business. The event will demonstrate through a mix of speakers how investing time and resources in green issues will support the future sustainability and profitability of small business. Key note speaker, Duncan Stewart will share his insights with the group 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 3CEA and the Southern Waste Region Office will share useful tips on how to make changes within your business and provide information on supports available to businesses to start their green journey. Further details will be available on www.localenterprise.ie/kilkenny in the coming weeks.

LEAN for Micro

In 2021, 7 businesses have commenced projects on the Lean for Micro mentoring programme in order to assist them to review their processes to become more competitive and innovative. Further information is available on <https://www.localenterprise.ie/Kilkenny/Financial-Supports/LEAN-for-Micro-Enterprises/>.

Key Statistics for 2021

- €488,171 in direct financial assistance was approved for 20 manufacturing/export service businesses located throughout the county. This assistance is linked to the projected creation of 60 jobs over the next three years.
- €165,285 in Business Expansion Grant assistance awarded to 8 existing businesses with a forecasted job creation of 19 jobs. Business Expansion grants assist businesses trading greater than 18 months to make investment in growing their businesses and employment numbers.
- €180,375 awarded in Priming grant assistance to start-up businesses with a forecasted job creation of 38 jobs. Priming grants assist qualifying businesses with start-up investment costs.
- €41,111 awarded in feasibility study grants to 3 businesses.
- 5 Technical Assistance for Micro Exporter grant awarded totalling €11,400. This scheme supports businesses to explore their export market opportunities.
- 3 Grad Start Grant awarded of €90,000 towards the employment of graduates within the business.
- 6 Green for Micro Grants awarded totalling €13,284. This scheme supports businesses to becoming more Green and environmentally friendly.

Kilkenny County Councils' Tourism Team continue in its efforts to support the tourism and hospitality sector as businesses open and now welcome visitors back to Kilkenny to enjoy all the city and county has to offer our guests.

Kilkenny Tourism and visitkilkenny.ie

Kilkenny County Council continue to support Kilkenny Tourism in the marketing of Kilkenny as a world class Tourist Destination for visitors to come and stay throughout the summer months.

"More to Explore" marketing campaign continued to run through the summer months encouraging visitors to come to Kilkenny and explore the city and county. The focus of the campaign throughout summer was to showcase all that Kilkenny has to offer in terms of dining out, picnic options and things to see and do for families. The autumn campaign is also being developed in partnership with Fáilte Ireland to maximise exposure for Kilkenny through the national "Keep Discovering" Campaign.



LEO / ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Graiguenamanagh Audio Guide Launched

The Tourism Team has developed a New Audio Guide to Help People Discover the Stories of Graiguenamanagh! Graiguenamanagh truly is a town where you can encounter a story around every corner. The new audio guide, Explore Graiguenamanagh, is designed to help visitors discover all the highlights of the town and its hinterland, while introducing them to some of the many tales that make Graiguenamanagh such a special place. The audio guide received funding through the Town and Village Renewal Scheme, can be found



on kilkenny.ie, visitkilkenny.ie as well as on AbartaHeritage.ie where it can be downloaded for free. Commenting at the launch of the Guide, Cathaoirleach of Kilkenny County Council, Cllr Fidelis Doherty stated “the local heritage society here in Graiguenamanagh deserve great thanks for all their time and input in making the guide as informative and interesting as it is. We hope that the guide will add to the visitors experience here when they come to the town and will encourage them to stay a little longer in the area and to really get out and explore the rural surroundings here.”

Kilkenny Welcome Team

Kilkenny County Council welcomed back its ‘Kilkenny Welcome Team’ in August. The Welcome Team are a group of over 21 trained volunteers who will meet and greet visitors to Kilkenny, providing a warm Kilkenny welcome along with visitor information over the summer/autumn months.

Officially launched by Kilkenny’s Cathaoirleach and Mayor, this innovative initiative was first developed in 2020 by Kilkenny County Council, in association with Kilkenny Tourism and the Kilkenny Tourism Recovery Task Force.

The Kilkenny Welcome Team are strategically placed at high footfall locations around Kilkenny City to provide a range of information from opening hours to local attractions, nearby toilet facilities, pharmacists, ATM locations, train and bus times.



Kilkenny Catwalk 2021

Work continues to prepare for Kilkenny Catwalk, a tourism and art trail around the City. The Cats have now been delivered to each of our Artists and work has commenced to “dress” each individual cat. The trail will be launched in October to encourage visitors to come to Kilkenny, take a mid-term break and see the Cats in the off season.

Where can I keep up to date with the project?

You can follow its progress online here.

Kilkenny Catwalk website: kilkennycatwalk.ie

Kilkenny Catwalk Social Media

Facebook: /Kilkenny-Cat-Walk | **Twitter:** /WalkKilkenny

Instagram: KilkennyCatWalk

Kilkenny Catwalk App: available both in Android and iOS.



HOUSING

Housing Capital Delivery Programme for 2021

143 new build units have been delivered to date in 2021. It is expected that 188 units will be delivered by end of 2021.

Details as follows:

	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	AHB TURNKEY y	Nuncio Road Phase 3	22	On site - due for completion Q4 2021
8	KCC BUILD	Ayrfield, Kilkenny City	8	6 units completed. 2 due for completion by year end.
9	KCC TURNKEY	Pennfeather Court Hebron Road Site 2, Kilkenny City	8	On site - due for completion Q4 2021
11	CAS CONSTRUCTION	Kingsriver, Ennisnag	2	On site - due for completion Q4 2021
12	CAS CONSTRUCTION	Grennan Villa, Thomastown [Camphill Communities]	5	On site - due for completion Q4 2021

Units 'Under Construction' as at 31st August 2021 – 112 units

- 58 units at Pennfeather 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 Units at Limegrove, Belmont, Ferrybank KCC Projects due to start in Q3/Q4 2021 [37 Units]
- 6 units at Golf Links Road, (Mulhalls Shop) Kilkenny (KCC direct build)
- Reconfiguration of 1 apt to 2 units- Ayrfield, Granges Road
- 25 Units at Ladywell, Thomastown (KCC direct build)
- 2 Units at Inchacarron, Mullinavat (KCC direct build)
- 2 Units at Old Fire Station, Graignamanagh (KCC direct build)

Pre 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)



	€'000's	€'000's
Housing & Building	14,451	20,085
Road Transport & Safety	17,984	25,500
Water Services	4,899	7,115
Development Management	6,867	10,679
Environmental Services	7,278	11,748
Recreation & Amenity	4,399	6,647
Agriculture, Education, Health, Welfare	403	672
Miscellaneous Services	10,095	7,516

Part 8 Planning-decision due September 2021
 • 20 Units Canal Road, Johnstown (KCC direct build)

18 Completed Apartments at Páirc Nua (former Broguemaker Site), Castlecomer Road, Kilkenny City – July 2021
 Nevin Construction & CJ Falconer Architects.

HOMELESS SERVICES SUMMARY AUGUST 2021	
Homeless Presentations	24
Homeless Assessment Outcomes	
Prevention & Interventions	9
Emergency Service	11
Not eligible / Did not avail of service	4
HAP Place Finder Service	
No of Homeless HAP tenancies @ 1 st day of month	90
No of Homeless HAP tenancies created during month	0
No of Homeless HAP tenancies in place @ last day of month	90
Number of Homeless HAP tenancy breakdowns	0
Other Social Housing Tenancies supported /created during month	1
Households in Temporary Emergency B&B accommodation	2
Households in Temporary Emergency B&B accommodation with families	0
Households in Transition Emergency Accommodation (Own Front Door)	12
Households in Transition Emergency Accommodation (OFD) with families	0

Total Applications Received	89
Total Applications Approved	60
Value of Applications Approved	€210,000
Total Applications Rejected	29

Total Applications Received	148
Total Applications Approved	57
Value of Applications Approved	€228,000
Total Applications Rejected	91

August 2021	
LA/RAS/Leasing allocations up to end of July (offers made):	44
Number of LA tenancies surrendered in:	8
Tenant Liaison Officer cases in July:	20
Maintenance Calls for July:	488
Maintenance Calls year to date	3680

HOUSING

Housing Loan Activity

Housing Loan Activity to 31st August, 2021					
Loan Type	No. Received	No. Approved	Amt approved	No. Paid	Amt Paid
Rebuilding Ireland Home Loan	30	8	€1,387,077	11	€1,418,977
Reconstruction Loan	0	0	€0	0	€0
Caravan Loan	0	0	€0	0	€0
Total	30	8	€1,387,077	11	€1,418,977

Private Grants

Kilkenny County Council approved a budget of €1.95m for all three private grants (HOP/MAG/HGD). The Council recoups 80% of all eligible expenditure from the Department. The estimated position at 31st August 2021 is as follows;

Grants Approved & Committed up to 31st August 2021		
Scheme	No.	Amount
HGD - Housing Adaptation Grant	92	€872,295
MAG - Mobility Aid Grant	23	€95,410
HOP - Housing Aid for Older Persons	124	€736,763
Total	239	€1,704,468

Grants Paid out up to 31 st August 2021		
Scheme	No.	Amount
HGD - Housing Adaptation Grant	47	€410,889
MAG - Mobility Aid Grant	17	€67,228
HOP - Housing Aid for Older Persons	69	€387,848
Total	133	€865,965

FIRE SERVICES

Capital Projects

Capital funding from the National Directorate for Fire and Emergency Management for the purchase of a new Emergency Tender Vehicle has been approved. The new Emergency Tender vehicle will have the capacity to carry rescue equipment for all types of emergencies including Road Traffic Collisions, chemical incidents and Heavy Goods Vehicle Rescue to greatly enhance Kilkenny Fire and Rescue response to such incidents. The new vehicle will replace our existing Emergency Tender and is expected to be on the run for Q1 2022.

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

Fire Safety Certificates

64 applications for fire safety certificates were received to 7th September 2021. 83 were received for the same period last year.

Fire Services Acts 1981 and 2003

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



Training

Kilkenny Fire and Rescue Service recently completed an Emergency Services Driving standards course accredited by the Road Safety Authority.



Operations

Fire Brigades responded to 440 turnouts up to the 9th August 2021. The same period last year we responded to 497 turnouts.

ARTS

EMERGING CURATOR IN RESIDENCE PROGRAMME

'Shiftings' Exhibition

The first exhibition of our 2021 Emerging Curator in Residence, Aoife Banks, opened in July. It was designed to be viewed through the windows of 75 John St, Johns Green House and online. It was a group exhibition that explored the untold stories of Ireland's colonial past, bringing forgotten histories, contested legacies, and silenced memories to the fore. Six pieces were loaned from the Arts Council of Ireland's collection to feature the show. Exhibiting artists included Kian Benson Bailes, Ailbhe Ni Bhriain, Ursula Burke, Ruth Clinton, Maeve Coulter, Niamh Moriarty and Katharine West.

COMMUNITY PROGRAMME

'Knitted Together project'

Engagement and interest in this project has continued with knitted/crochet squares collected from the Supervalu stores in Ballyragget, Callan, Thomastown and Loughboy, the Centra shops in Knocktopher and Mullinavat and the front lobby, County Hall. The next phase is to then organise the making of the blankets.

LITERATURE

Summer Masterclass with writer Emmaleene Leahy

Our one-day online summer masterclass took place during July and was perfect for those who had attended creative writing courses in the past and wanted to advance and progress their writing skills.

Culture Night

Culture Night 2021 takes place on 17th September and we have eight venues around Kilkenny facilitating a number of programmes including a World Music Night in the Butler Gallery, an Irish Music, Song, Dance and Storytelling session by Craobh Osrai Comhaltas in the Medieval Mile Museum, TADA Theatre will facilitate a fun writing workshop for all ages and the National Design and Craft Gallery will have a Culture Night Hub. This is just a small selection of what's on offer in Kilkenny for Culture Night and all events can be checked out on the Culture Night website at <https://culturenight.ie/events/> and our brochure.



Kilkenny County Council

Broadsheet 2021

The ever popular 2021 Kilkenny Poetry Broadsheet has been published and is available in all the library branches. Anyone else who would like a copy can email the artsoffice@kilkennycoco.ie and request a copy. This years poems will also be uploaded to our Poetry Phone and launched as part of Culture Night.

LOCAL LIVE PERFORMANCES – SEPTEMBER SOUNDS & KILKENNY DAY

The Local Live Performance Scheme being rolled out nationwide was established by Minister Catherine Martin TD to help with the reopening of the music industry and get musicians and the industry back to work. Kilkenny issued a call out for musicians and performers in early August for our September Sounds series. The response to a call-out for applications was overwhelming and the chosen acts will perform over the last weekend of September at 'September Sounds' and due to the outstanding quality of the responses / applications to the call-out, an extra date has been added on 10th October as part of Kilkenny Day.

The events will feature various genres and will take place in in Woodstock Gardens, Ballykeefe Amphitheatre and Butler Gallery over the 24th – 26th September. The fourth October concert will take place on Kilkenny Day, venue TBC. The concerts will be free but ticketed.

FINANCE

Finance Report – September 2021.

The expenditure by service division to the end of August is set out in table 1. Total Expenditure for the period was €66.4m compared with the annual budget of €89.9m.

Table 1	Actual YTD June 2021	Budget Full Year 2021
	€'000's	€'000's
Housing & Building	14,451	20,085
Road Transport & Safety	17,984	25,500
Water Services	4,899	7,115
Development Management	6,867	10,679
Environmental Services	7,278	11,748
Recreation & Amenity	4,399	6,647
Agriculture, Education, Health, Welfare	403	672
Miscellaneous Services	10,095	7,516
Overall Total	66,376	89,962

Finance update

The Covid-19 restrictions in place for the first six months of 2021 have had a serious impact on the Council's income streams to date, especially commercial rates and car parking income. A significant number of businesses had to close due to Covid. The Government announced an extension of the commercial rates waiver for the nine months to the end of September for businesses impacted. The value of this waiver amounts to €5.2m and compensation will be provided by Government for this amount. The cost of the waiver is included under miscellaneous services in the August accounts. Income from car parking is

also significantly below budget with only 35% of the annual budget figure received to the end of August.

It is still too early to predict with accuracy the expected income shortfall for the year.

A submission will be made by the Sector to the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage in the coming weeks seeking compensation for the shortfall.

As previously advised to Members a number of discretionary expenditure items in the 2021 Budget totalling €2m have been deferred until more clarity is available on the projected outcome for the year. The bank overdraft facility was not utilised in the eight month period to the end of August 2021.

Budget 2022

Work has commenced on the preparation of the Council budget for 2022. A number of meetings will be held with Elected Members during October and November to agree a budget for 2022.

Rates Waiver 2021

Earlier this year the Government announced an initial waiver of commercial rates for a three month period which was ultimately extended to nine months for eligible businesses. A credit in lieu of commercial rates has been applied to the rate accounts of all eligible businesses closed by or badly impacted by Level 5 restrictions and the Rates Section communicated this with eligible and ineligible

FINANCE

businesses. In total a waiver of €5.2m was applied. 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. The total value of applications determined as eligible for consideration under severe impact to date is €38,465. The closing date to seek eligibility for inclusion under severe impact for Q3 is 24th September, 2021. Queries in relation to the Rates Waiver 2021 can be made on line at rateswaiver@kilkennycoco.ie or by calling 056-7794209.

Rates Revaluation

Following the full revaluation of all commercial properties carried out by the Valuation office in 2017, 197 customers with a total rate demand value of €4.5m appealed their new valuation to the Valuation Tribunal. To date 186 appeals have been completed. 146 of the 186 appeals have resulted in a decrease in rates. The total income lost to date stands at €836k. If this trend continues the total loss of income may be in excess of €1m once all appeal decisions have been completed by the Tribunal.

Small Business Assistance Scheme (SBAS)

The Department of Enterprise Trade & Employment launched the Small Business Assistance Scheme for COVID (SBASC) which was intended to target those businesses with operating costs that do not qualify for the COVID Restrictions Support Scheme (CRSS) operated by the Revenue Commissioners subject to key eligibility criteria. The closing date for Quarter 1 of the scheme was the 21st April, 2021. The following is the breakdown of SBASC Q1: -

Total Applications Received	148
Total Applications Approved	57
Value of Applications Approved	€228,000
Total Applications Rejected	91

Small Business Assistance Scheme for COVID - Quarter 2 (SBASCQ2)

The Government announced the extension of the Small Business Assistance Scheme to Quarter 2, 2021 in May. A new category of businesses who are not ratepayers were included in the extension of the scheme. There were two turnover thresholds introduced i.e. eligible business with a turnover of more than €50,000 received a grant of €4,000 and eligible business with a turnover of €20,000 to €49,999 received a grant of €1,000. The closing date for applications was 21st July, 2021.

Total Applications Received	89
Total Applications Approved	60
Value of Applications Approved	€210,000
Total Applications Rejected	29



ABBNEY QUARTER



Brewhouse incl. Horse Barrack Lane and Brewhouse Courtyard

Work on the redevelopment of the Brewhouse building (by Kilkenny Abbey Quarter Development Ltd) is being advanced and it is expected that the building works will be completed by the end of the year (2021). At that stage, the building will be fitted out for office use with the building expected to be occupied in spring 2022.

This project includes the development of the Public Realm area of Horse Barrack Lane and the Brewhouse Courtyard, with these projects being part funded by the Urban Regeneration & Development Fund and the European Regional Development Fund. These areas of public realm will be completed in early 2022.



Tionscadal Éireann
Project Ireland
2040



European Union
European Regional
Development Fund



Ireland's European Structural and
Investment Funds Programmes
2014-2020
Co-funded by the Irish Government
and the European Union

Mayfair Library

Tenders have been received for the development of the new City Library in the Mayfair Building and a letter of Intent has been issued to the successful tenderer. Subject to approval from the Department of Rural & Community Development, it is expected that work on site will commence in early October. The construction contract is for a 15 month duration. The Library is expected to be open in early 2023.



Additional funding for this project to the value of € 2.245M was announced by the Minister for Rural & Community Development in July of this year. The redevelopment of the Mayfair Building includes the completion of the landscaping works to Horse Barrack Lane and the development of a pedestrian plaza area between the building and Parliament Street.

Tea Houses

Conservation work on the Tea Houses on Bateman Quay commenced in August, with the works expected to take approx. 6 months to complete. The building will be made available for reuse by private operators and it is expected that expressions of interest from interested parties will be sought before the end of the year. This project is funded by the Urban Regeneration & Development Fund.



Maturation Building

Work on the demolition of the former Maturation Building on the site commenced in late August and these works will be completed in early October. These demolition works are required to facilitate the development of the urban street and the new buildings proposed for the Abbey Quarter site.



Urban Park & Street

Following the grant of planning consent by An Bord Pleanála in Feb 2021, work on the detailed design and tender documents for the Urban Street and Park project is being advanced. It is expected that the project will be tendered in early 2022, with construction to commence in spring 2022 and will be completed by the end of 2023.

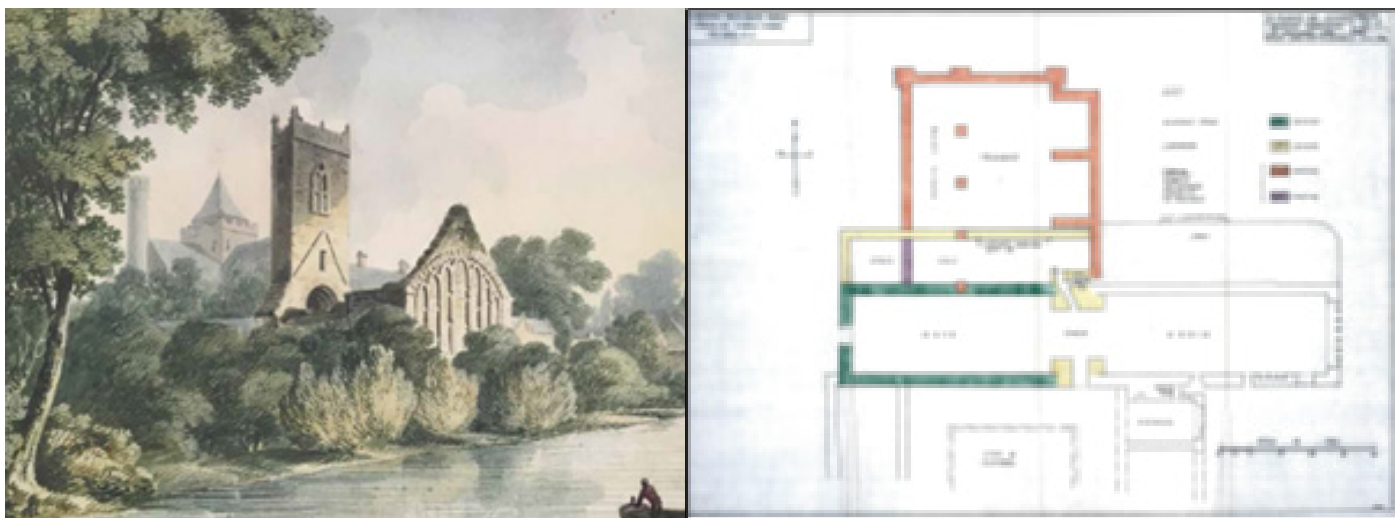
The Urban Park, which will be centred around St Francis Abbey, will be the central focus of the Abbey Quarter Development. The development of the street will open up the former Brewery site for the development of new buildings.

The project is part funded by the Urban Regeneration and Development Fund, with some funding for the street element of the project provided by the European Regional Development Fund.



Abbey Quarter Conservation Plan

Kilkenny County Council, in conjunction with the Office of Public Works, the National Monuments Service and the Heritage Council is currently preparing a Conservation Plan for the Heritage Structures on the Abbey Quarter site including St Francis Abbey, the City Walls, Evans Turret and St Francis Well. A specialist Conservation Team, led by Howley Hayes Architects has been appointed to prepare the plan and it is expected that a draft of the Conservation Plan will be published in October for an informal public consultation on the draft plan.



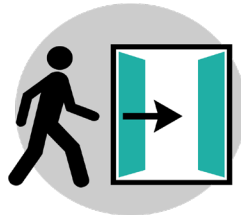
The preparation of the Conservation Plan is being part funded by the National Monuments Service through the Community Monuments Fund.

LIBRARY

July and August 2021



35,223
Items borrowed



3810
Book and Browse
appointments



636
Contact and Collect
appointments

Right to Read Literacy: Summer Reading Challenge

Our annual Summer Stars Reading Challenge for children took place from mid June to August, and we had 888 children signed up!

Summer Stars is a National Initiative under the Right to Read Literacy Programme, and is designed to encourage children of all ages to enjoy reading for fun throughout the summer. This helps maintain reading and literacy levels throughout the break from school and reduces the 'summer slide' decline in reading habits. The challenge is to read 8 books over the Summer.

All those that participated will be entered into a draw in their local library for a €50 book voucher and local or book related vouchers.
Pictured are Rian, Oisín and Odhrán who completed the challenge in Ferrybank Library.



Additional funding for Mayfair Library



We were delighted to welcome Minister for Rural and Community Development, Heather Humphreys to Kilkenny in July, who announced additional funding of €2.2 million for our new Mayfair Library under the Libraries Capital Programme.

"One of the key actions of our public library strategy 'Our Public Libraries - Inspiring, Connecting and Empowering Communities', is to develop library buildings that are fit for purpose and reflect the quality of services on offer," said Minister Humphreys.

Heritage Week

As part of a national heritage week, our Local Studies week promoted images and memories of the Mayfair Ballroom from days gone by on social media, and also published a podcast by Author and Historian Eoin Swithin Walsh on Kilkenny Cumann na mBan and the women that served in it.

The podcast brings the spotlight down on a handful of Kilkenny women and discusses the various roles they played in the revolutionary period. Women such as Hannah Dooley, the Bibby sisters, Maisie and Josie Stallard, Kitty and Mary Teehan of Shipton House (Kilmanagh), the Luttrells of Garryricken, and Mary-Jo Power of Piltown and Ninemilehouse, were all names well-known to the flying columns and IRA that operated in Kilkenny during the War of Independence and Civil War, and is available on our website and through social media.



Online Services usage:



4,076

eAudiobooks borrowed

▲ 22% on 2020



9,615

eNewspapers borrowed

▼ 5% on 2020



2,610

eBooks borrowed

▼ 6% on 2020



2,043

Online Course sessions

▼ 24% on 2020



1,489

eMagazines borrowed

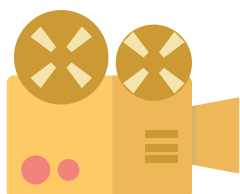
▼ 13% on 2020



1,195

Songs accessed

▼ 65% on 2020



Digital Engagement

Our staff have prepared, recorded, edited and published **697** posts on our social media platforms in July and August. Our videos views were **8,965**.



Kilkenny County Council
Comhairle Chontae Chill Chainnigh