



Comhairle Chontae Chill Chainnigh
Kilkenny County Council

CHIEF EXECUTIVE REPORT

MAY 2025 ISSUE



EXECUTIVE FUNCTIONS

- A list of Orders made in the last month will be available in the Corporate Department for inspection by the Elected Members.

DATE FOR DIARY

- The EPA Annual Climate Change Conference will be held on Wednesday 28th May 2025 in Dublin Castle.

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Civic events in April 2025

**Official opening
of
Rosehill Bridge**



**Launch of
Not Around Us
campaign in
Carlow Town Hall**

Community Awards Night



Cathaoirleach's Reception for Josephine O'Neill and Peter & Patrick Funchion



**Josephine O'Neill
receiving her
certificate at the
Cathaoirleach's
Reception**

**Peter Funchion
receiving his
certificate at the
Cathaoirleach's
Reception**



St. Patrick's Day Parade awards 2025



**Neasa Ní Dhuibhir,
representing Gaelscoil
Osraí, winners of the
Best School Award**



**Members of Kilkenny Malayali Association,
winners of the Most Creative & Entertaining
Award**



**Members of Ukrainian Community,
winners of the
Best Interpretation of
the Theme Award**



**Members of 15th Kilkenny
FortGrange Scout Group,
winners of the
Best Rural Award**



**Representatives from the
Diocese of Ossory,
winners of the Best Young
People Award**

**Members of Dragon's Lair
Martial Arts, who were
presented with a Special
Commendation Award**



**Elected members of Kilkenny County Council,
Oireachtas Members, and the St. Patrick's
Festival Organising Committee**

PLANNING

DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT

Planning Summary	Total January to April 2024	Total January to April 2025
Planning Applications Received	59	79
Planning Applications Granted	61	59
Planning Applications Refused	2	8
Complaints Received	55	49
Warning Letters Issued	33	35
Enforcements Notices Issued	17	320
Cases Closed	31	77
Cases Sent for Legal Prosecution	0	3

FORWARD PLANNING

LOCAL AREA PLANS

Ferrybank / Belview Local Area Plan

The Draft Plan preparation continues. Significant matters relating to the role of Ferrybank as:

- the second largest urban area in the County its role as part of the wider Metropolitan area
- it's contributing to the development of Waterford as envisaged under the National Planning Framework

are currently being considered as part of the final draft plan preparation. It is anticipated that a draft plan will be published for consultation in May2025.

Castlecomer Plan Review Process

The Castlecomer Municipal District Members were briefed at their March Municipal District Meeting on the progress with the Proposed Settlement Plan. The Plan, and the various accompanying assessments, including an Infrastructural Assessment and Environmental Assessments are being finalised for public display. It is anticipated that this Draft Plan will be on public display in May 2025.

TAKING IN CHARGE

Works are progressing on the following Estates:

- Hillview, Bennettsbridge
- Ard Daire, Ferrbank
- The Beeches, Ferrybank

The following estate was taken in charge in April 2025

- Rathullard, Phase II

Active Land Management

The new Residential Zoned Land Tax (RZLT) has come into effect. The Council prepare the RZLT maps, and Revenue will administer the tax. The settlements currently liable are Kilkenny City, Rosbercon, Callan and Thomastown. Relevant landowners must file a return with Revenue by 23rd May, and any queries in relation to payment of the tax should be directed to Revenue. Two sets of maps were on public display until April; the Final Maps for 2025 and the Annual Draft Maps for 2026.

Five rezoning requests were made by landowners for impacted sites on the Final Maps 2025. These landowners have now been issued with acknowledgement letters that they can use to seek an exemption from the requirement to pay the 2025 tax liability from Revenue. Ten submissions were made on the inclusion or exclusion of sites from scope for the tax, on the Annual Draft Maps. The rezoning requests will now be considered, and decisions will be communicated to the landowner by 30th June. Determinations must be made on the ten submissions on scope, and the landowner notified not later than 1st July. The landowners will have an opportunity to appeal the determinations on scope to An Bord Pleanála.

There are 18 Vacant Sites on the Vacant Sites Register, and the number of cancelled entries due to site activation or improvement is 29. The Vacant Site levy (VSL) will be replaced by the RZLT later this year, but any outstanding VSL's will remain due to the Council.

Conservation

The Conservation Office manages all protected structures in Kilkenny County and City. These structures are recognised for the following special interest: Architectural, Historical, Archaeological, Artistic, Cultural, Scientific, Technical, Social.

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

Built Heritage Investment Scheme 2025: Discussions concerning methodologies for successful projects with applicants is ongoing.

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

▪ Planning Referrals.....	11
▪ Further Information requests	3
▪ Clarification of Further Information requests.....	0
▪ Section 57 Declarations.....	2
▪ Post planning	1
▪ Part VIII	0

Building Control

Valid Commencement Notices Received	Disability Access Applications Received
April 2025 91	April 2025 10
April 2024 148	April 2024 24
April 2023 89	April 2023 15
April 2022 144	April 2022 32

TOWN REGENERATION OFFICE

The Health Check Report for Graiguenamanagh has been completed and was presented to the Town Team on 15th April. The next step is to progress a Town Centre First Plan for Graiguenamanagh.

Vacant Property Refurbishment Grant

The following are the full statistics up to end of April, 2025:

Number of Applications Submitted to-date.....	286
Number of Approvals/ Approvals in Principle to-date	198
Grant Drawdown to-date.....	46
Number of queries during the month of April.....	88



Before and After Refurbished Property

THRIVE

The Council submitted an application for funding under the THRIVE scheme for the redevelopment of Carnegie and surrounding public realm area. It's expected that it will be towards the end of the summer before allocations are announced.

Derelict Sites

CPO for a property in Parliament Street, Kilkenny has progressed to Vesting Order stage. The derelict site known as The Nightcap in Dunkitt was put on the market for sale. Notice under Section 183 for disposal of the property is for consideration at the May meeting. A CPO was commenced for a house in a derelict condition at Filbuckstown.

Butts Area Regeneration Framework

A further public engagement event took place on 25th April with 47 attendees. Our consultants also met with the Task Force and the inter-departmental group of the Council. Findings to date and concepts for progression were presented at each meeting. It was agreed at the public consultation that there would be specific consultation around the condition of the existing properties and how these could be addressed. It was also agreed that there would be a specific consultation around proposals for a one way traffic system and other traffic concerns with the City Engineer. Both these consultations will take place over the month of May.

ENVIRONMENT

CLIMATE ACTION

Community Climate Action Fund – Phase 2

We are excited to announce that Phase 2 of the Community Climate Action Programme is expected to be officially launched by the Department of Environment, Climate and Communications within the coming weeks. Read more about the eligible themes and projects here.

Community Groups, Non-Profit Organisations, Residents' Associations, Sports Clubs etc. are now invited to submit an expression of interest by emailing climate@kilkennycoco.ie



Phase 2 of the Community Climate Action Programme is launching in the coming weeks!!

Themes

- ✓ Energy
- ✓ Travel
- ✓ Shopping & Recycling
- ✓ Food & Waste
- ✓ Biodiversity

CONTACT US NOW

✉ climate@kilkennycoco.ie
☎ 056-7794350

Follow us on Instagram @Kilkennycoco and Kilkenny County Council on Facebook

 Comhairle Contae Chill Chainnigh
Kilkenny County Council



Public Consultation on EV Infrastructure Strategy Open



Residents, stakeholders, and the general public are invited to share their views on the future of electric vehicle (EV) infrastructure in Co. Kilkenny as part of a new South East Regional Infrastructure Strategy. The strategy which covers Kilkenny, Wexford, Tipperary, Carlow, and Waterford City and County Council areas, will help ensure that the South East is adequately served by EV charging points.

It will focus on:

- (i) **Destination Charging** - popular destinations such as Shopping Centres, Hotels and Tourist Attractions.
- (ii) **Neighbourhood Charging** - within residential areas, making it easy for EV users to charge their vehicles convenient to their residence. The project is managed by ZEVI and the Roads Departments of the five Local Authorities in the South East. Submit your views from 1st May until 4.00 p.m. on 30th May, 2025 at <https://southeastevstrategy.com>

Spotlight on Community Action

The Community Climate Action Officer is working with and supporting the successful community groups as they deliver their projects for the Community Climate Action Programme. Some of the groups have completed their projects and this month we can showcase two more of the completed projects.

Thomastown Community Allotments



Thomastown Community Allotments have successfully completed their project which involved upgrading their allotment beds by using recycled timber frames, installing a workbench in the polytunnel, a pergola and planting for pollinators at Cloughabrody, Thomastown.

TCAT Westcourt, Callan



TCAT Threefold Community have completed their project which involved installing a new polytunnel at Westcourt, Callan, as part of a Community Supported Agriculture Project, to enable them to grow organic vegetables all year round. *(Photos by Dylan Vaughan)*. Visit [Climate Action](#) on the Kilkenny County Council website to see details of all 22 community climate action projects

Climate Action Training

Training was provided in April to staff and members of the Climate Action Steering Committee under the [Local Authority Climate Action Training](#) Programme. Further training will continue throughout 2025-2027 as follows:

- 4th April Urban Water Nature-Based Solutions
- 17th April Biodiversity - an Ethos and Regulatory Requirement

New Climate Adaptation Network

The Climate Action Coordinator is participating in a new [Climate Adaptation Network](#) Working Group established by the EPA in April. The network is examining how public and private sector bodies can plan for climate change, and support Ireland's transition to a climate resilient, biodiversity rich, environmentally sustainable and climate neutral economy by 2050. A report will be produced by the end of 2025.

Local Authority Climate Conference

The Climate Action Team attended the 2nd National [Local Authority Climate Action Teams Conference](#) in Wexford in April which was addressed by the Minister for Climate, Environment and Energy Darragh O'Brien, and organised by CARO. Climate Action staff from 31 Local Authorities attended.

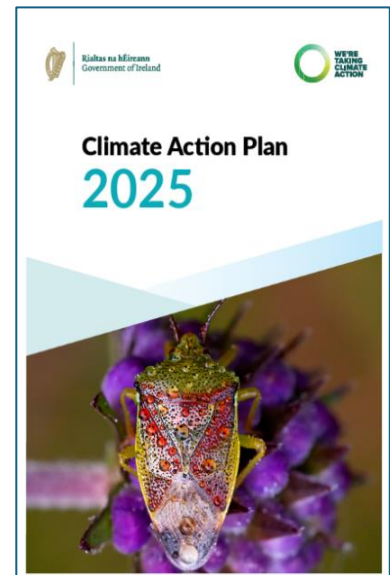
Supporting Delivery of Climate Action Plan

The Climate Action Office is in the process of meeting with each of the 25 service areas in the Council who have committed actions in the KCC Climate Action Plan to review delivery of actions and provide support. To date, meetings have taken place with LEO, Arts Office, Creative Ireland, Civil Defence, Fire & Rescue Services, and Internal Audit.

New National Climate Action Plan 2025

The government published the [2025 National Climate Action Plan](#) in April. There are 3 updated actions in the Plan relevant to Local Authorities, as follows:

- Deliver Phase 2 of the Local Authority Climate Action Training Programme to ensure local authority staff and elected members can access relevant and practical climate training (CARO)
- Support local authorities in implementing their Decarbonising Zones (DZs) through the national DZ Advisory Group (Dept Environment Climate & Communications)
- Develop Local Authority Climate Action Plan Stakeholder and Sectoral Reports (Dept Environment Climate & Communications)



Department of Finance Climate Initiatives

At a national level, there are two recent climate initiatives from the Dept of Finance.

- [Climate Change Risk Matrix](#) setting out climate-related economic risks impacting individual businesses and households and the economy. Alongside the physical and transition risks posed by climate change, the matrix lists financial risks grouped into strategic risks, credit risks, market risks, underwriting risks, operational risks and liquidity risks.
- Updating the [Macroeconomic Climate Modelling](#), describing the Depts work on a Joint Research Project (JRP) with other government Departments, agencies and stakeholders to achieve the targeted reductions in overall greenhouse gas emissions by 2030, and reach net-zero emissions by no later than 2050. The JRP will provide robust estimates detailing the Macro-Economic impacts of the Low carbon transition over the medium-to-long term.

ENVIRONMENTAL AWARENESS

New Dog Warden for Kilkenny

A new Dog Warden has been appointed to serve both Carlow and Kilkenny, a move aimed at promoting responsible dog ownership and ensuring the safety and well-being of our communities. Louise Brennan will be undertaking a series of patrols around the City and County, promoting responsible dog ownership and compliance with the Dog Control Act 1986.

In addition to this exciting development, we are thrilled to highlight the recent refurbishment works completed at the Dog Shelter located in Paulstown. These improvements not only enhance the facility but also create a more comfortable and welcoming environment for both dogs and their future families. The works completed include the construction of 2 large pens and 3 external dog shelters, a new outdoor visitor pen with seating, installation of extra fencing to divide pens, a new footpath and walking path, as well as new bedding and retrofitting.



Green Dog Walkers Campaign



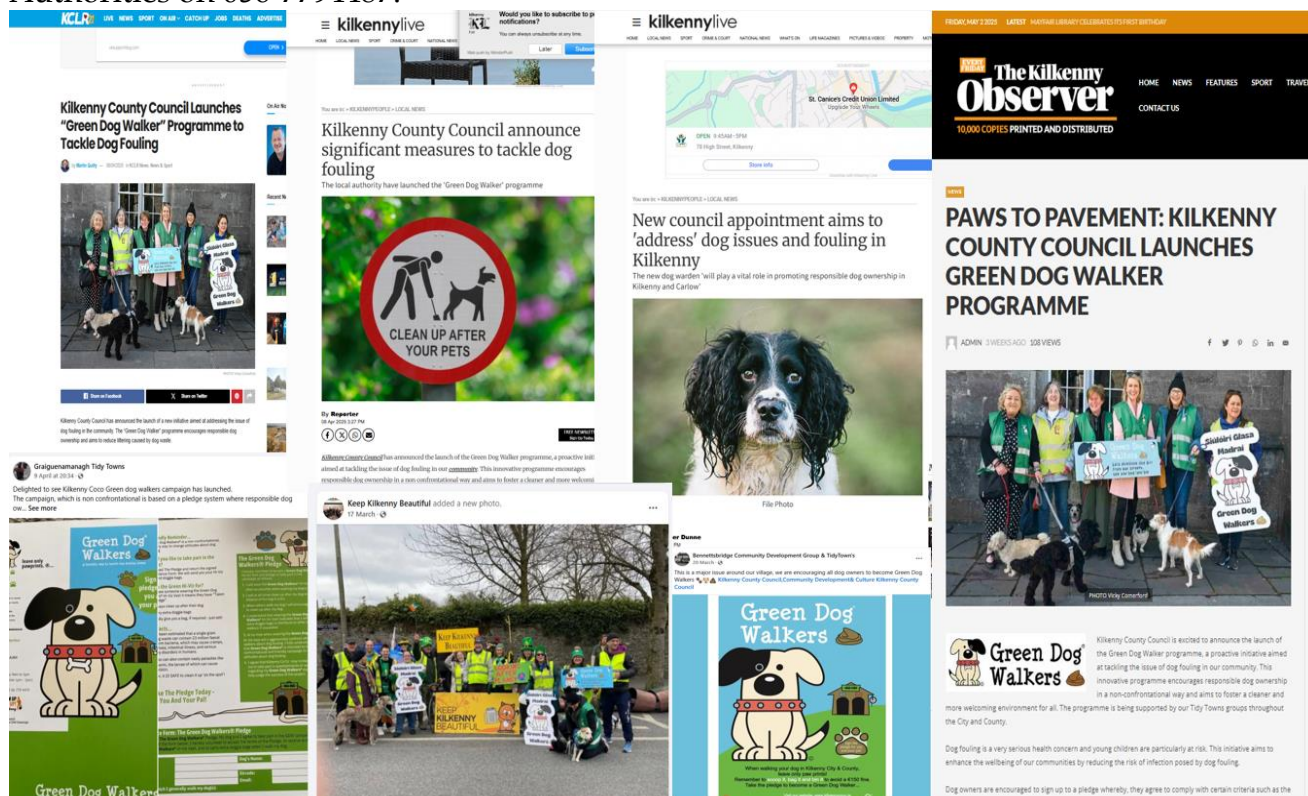
The Green Dog Walker programme was launched on the 31st March, 2025 here in Kilkenny. It aims to be a positive, friendly way to change attitudes about dog fouling in the City and County and encourage responsible dog ownership.

Dog fouling is a very serious health concern and young children are particularly at risk. This initiative aims to enhance the wellbeing of our communities by reducing the risk of infection posed by dog fouling.

Dog owners are encouraged to sign up to a pledge whereby, they agree to comply with certain criteria such as the wearing of a green armband when walking their dog, cleaning up after their dog, be happy to approach dog walkers who needs a bag and be a friendly reminder to other dog walkers to clean up after their dogs.

If members of the public are interested in becoming a green dog walker, pledge forms will be available in pet stores, vets, kennels libraries and council offices throughout Kilkenny or alternatively, pledge online at www.kilkennycoco.ie. Each dog walker who makes a pledge will receive a free High Vis and a dog bone bag dispenser for their dog lead.

If any resident associations or community groups would like to promote the campaign in their own local area, contact the Environmental Awareness Officer with Kilkenny Local Authorities on 056-7794487.



Anti-Litter and Anti-Graffiti Grant 2025

Kilkenny County Council is offering community groups an opportunity to promote anti-litter and anti-graffiti awareness in their local community.

The grant is to mobilise community groups to care for their local environment by decreasing the impact of litter by its removal and to promote a social message locally to encourage everyone to put litter in its rightful place – in a bin.

Further details are on the application form below. Hard copies of the application form are available from the Environment Section, County Hall, John St. Kilkenny City.

Closing date for applications is Friday, 23rd May, 2025.

WASTE

Bring Banks Usage



The Council provides and manages 47 Bring Centres across the City and County. A total of 727 tonnes of recyclables were collected from our Bring Centres to date in 2025. Loughboy Shopping Centre (19 tonnes collected) Aldi - Kilkenny City (17 tonnes collected) and Lidl - Johnswell Rd (15 tonnes collected) were the busiest locations in the City in April. Lidl in Thomastown (11 tonnes

collected) and Supervalu in Thomastown (9 tonnes collected) were the busiest outside of the City in April. Environment staff are continuing to work very closely with our service providers to ensure the collection service is in keeping with demand, especially around long weekends and holiday periods.

Dunmore Civic Amenity Site (CAS)

April 2025 saw 141 tonnes of Municipal Solid Waste and 102 tonnes of Municipal Dry Waste. The various recycling streams deposited at the Dunmore facility during the month of April and their respective tonnages can be seen in Table 1 below.

Table 1

Recycling Stream	Quantity (Tonnes)
Cardboard	6.7
Plastic	4.5
Paper	6.3
Glass Bottles & Cans	6.5
Food Waste.....	0.3
Mattresses.....	3.4
Metal	12.5
Timber.....	11.1
Tetra-pac.....	0.6
WEEE	15



As part of the Landfill aftercare the landfill gas flare continues to run 24hrs per day seven days per week extracting and burning approximately 35m³ of landfill gas per hour.

AIR NOISE WATER

Water Quality – Farm Inspections

Council staff continue to carry out farm inspections with 80+ completed to date. The target for 2025 is 308 inspections.

Septic Tank Inspections

Septic tank inspections have now commenced with 22 completed to date. The target for 2025 is 59 inspections to complete

Environmental Complaints

All Environmental complaints received are logged on the CRM (Customer Relations Management) System. The number of complaints that have been received and logged for the month of April 2025 is 68 compared to 81 complaints received in April 2024. The number of complaints received for January – April 2025 is 342 compared to 359 complaints for the same four-month period in 2024. The nature of these complaints included littering, illegal dumping, burning of waste and abandoned cars. The majority continue to be related to illegal dumping. Whilst every effort is made to bring unacceptable environmental practice into compliance, Environment Enforcement staff continue to manage significant enforcement cases progressing through prosecution cases.

Noise

Several staff in the Environment Office have enrolled on upcoming Training days. This Training will enable staff to carry out monitoring on noise complaints.

Air

Two new air monitors have been installed – Butts area and City Centre. Staff will be monitoring the information received from these air monitors.

PARKS & SPECIAL PROJECTS

The Museum of Medieval Kilkenny

Works on the Tholsel building continue to progress through-out the building and a summary of same is provided hereunder:

- **Basement** – Brick vault repairs 80% complete, Limewash shelter coat applied to walls and ceilings, limestone flags numbered, lifted and stored for re-use and the swapping out of timber lintels with galvanised steel lintels is nearing completion.
- **Ground Floor** - Limestone flags in arcade (Loggia) raked out and repointed with lime mortar, delaminated cement render removed from southern end of arcade and new lime mortar render applied, the removal of ceiling within the arcade (Loggia) is nearing completion and archaeological excavation works in the rear annex, to accommodate the new lift and stairwell remain ongoing.
- **First Floor** - Soft strip almost completed with the exception of the removal of the old staircase to accommodate lift shaft and new staircase.
- **Second Floor** - Soft strip almost completed and introduced mezzanine ceiling over Mayor's Parlour and old office space removed, returning same to original double ceiling height feature.
- **Third Floor** – Soft strip substantially completed and the introduced floor (mezzanine) removed.
- **Fourth Floor** – Soft strip completed.



Enhancement to the Tholsel building form part of the wider “**Museum of Medieval Kilkenny**” project which will see the unification of the Tholsel and the Medieval Mile Museum as one single visitor experience. The overall objective of this project is to develop an offering that will become one of Ireland's top visitor attractions, while also securing the future of the Tholsel to continue in its role to act as the seat of local Government in the City.

The Medieval Mile Museum, within St. Mary's Church, remains opens to visitors and the contractor will continue to work in manner that minimises disruption to the operation of same.

WOODSTOCK GARDENS & ARBORETUM

Tea Room and Food & Beverage Offering

The recruitment of seasonal staff to assist with the management and operation of the above has concluded. This facilitated, in April, the weekend re-opening of the Woodstock coffee truck and ice-cream parlour and over the past few glorious sunny weekends, visitors could avail of a wide range of sweet treats and beverages, giving them the perfect excuse to indulge. With the arrival of the May the Tea Room also re-opened and throughout May and June we will continue to offer a weekend service before opening to 7 days a week during July and August.





Walled Garden Over the past month, all herbaceous and fruit bush beds in the Walled Garden have been carefully mulched. This not only enhances their visual appeal but plays a vital role in conserving moisture, suppressing weeds, and improving soil biology. Rhubarb and potato planting is underway and kitchen garden plants will continue to be sowing over the coming weeks. This combined with the recently enhanced pathways ensures that the Walled Garden is well presented for the coming season.

Around the Garden

The team has been busy throughout the gardens. Topiary work continues in the Winter Garden, keeping the formal shapes sharp and striking. A new wildflower meadow has been introduced in the lower part of the croquet lawn, and we're delighted with the results—spring has brought a colourful tapestry of cowslips, bluebells, self-heal, wood sage, and more. The Rose Garden is responding beautifully to its winter pruning and promises to be a highlight of the summer. Tree replanting efforts are ongoing following winter storm damage, and in some areas, fallen trees have opened up unexpected vistas. These have been embraced by the team to create new scenic viewpoints and peaceful rest spots throughout the garden.



The Clover Centre Ferrybank

Earlier this year the council appointed Digby Brady Landscaping Architects, to assist with the preparation of a masterplan for a 9.5 acre site in Christendom, Ferrybank. These lands, previously held by Clover Meats trustee's transferred into the ownership of the council in late 2023.

It is intended this masterplan will be developed through a collaborative approach with the local community through extensive public consultation in order to identify local community needs, priorities and desires. The overall objective of this initiative is to develop a high quality, community centred, multifunctional local park that creates a space that offers quality of life improvements in terms of physical and mental health wellbeing, returning this area once again to a hub for social interaction.

Since the appointment of the consultants, extensive engagement has taken place with many stakeholders and the first public consultation open evening took place on Thursday 1st of May in the Ferrybank Primary Care Centre, attracted a large attendance of c.60 people.

The next step is to review the feedback from the local community and the outcome of same will feed into the future function and design of the site.

In addition to the above, the topographical and ecological surveys, necessary to advance the design, have been procured and will be undertaken shortly.

LEO/ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Summary of 2025 Awards to Businesses

- €68,560 in direct financial assistance has been approved for 3 manufacture /export service businesses in located in throughout the County.
- €38,560 in Business Expansion Grant assistance
- €30,000 awarded in Business Priming Grant Assistance
- 6 Businesses have commenced LEAN one to one consultancy programmes to investigate possible resource efficiencies and process improvements their businesses with an additional 4 businesses participating in the build better business Lean programme.
- 16 businesses have availed of the Digital for Business programme to prepare and implement a plan for the adoption of digital tools and techniques across the enterprise.
- 8 businesses have availed of the Energy Efficiency Grant totalling €47,063 to support investment in technologies and equipment of enterprises
- 20 business have availed of the green for business consultancy support scheme. This scheme supports businesses to become greener and environmentally friendly.
- 2 applicants have been supported to make loan applications to the Micro Finance Ireland loan fund.
- 345 people participated on focused small business training, including 41 people participating on the Starting Your Business programme
- 153 businesses have availed of specialised business specific mentoring on a variety of topics including finance, marketing, social media marketing and HR.

Start/Exit 4 Idea Generating Workshop

Work is ongoing on the START Kilkenny enterprise competition in conjunction with Exit 4 in Urlingford.

An Idea's Generation Workshop to help participants explore and navigate a business idea which can be further developed was held during the month.



Broadband Digital Update

Update on the rollout of the National Broadband Plan (NBP) across County Kilkenny

National Broadband Ireland (NBI), the company delivering the new future-proofed, high-speed Fibre-to-the-Home network under the National Broadband Plan (NBP) on behalf of the Government, confirmed that over 18,300 Kilkenny homes, businesses and farms can now avail of a high-speed fibre broadband connection, with over 7,000 premises already connected to NBI's network. 19,000 premises in County Kilkenny are included in the State's Intervention Area, which will see NBI deliver minimum speeds of 500 megabits per second to homes, businesses, farms, and schools. As the biggest investment in rural Ireland since rural electrification, County Kilkenny will receive €72m of Government investment under the National Broadband Plan. National Broadband Ireland is calling on people living in County Kilkenny to visit nbi.ie/map/ and enter their Eircode to see if they are ready to connect.

There is a total of 18,324 premises that can now pre-order or order high-speed, reliable broadband across County Kilkenny with 7,186 connections made so far. This includes the rural communities surrounding Castlecomer, Kilkenny City and Mullinavat.

Night Time Economy



Café Lates

The first ever Café Lates, which was launched to encourage local cafes in the City to extend their opening hours by offering innovative and cultural events after 6pm, took place on Thursday 17th April. The following cafes participated:

- Tapas & Music @ Tower & Castle
- Brazilian classical music @ The Book and Coffee Shop
- Frankenstein Bolts @ Wild Flower Café (Butler Gallery)
- Chocolate Making at The Chocolate Garden Café
- Beats & Board Games @ The Cookie Co-Op
- Pottery Painting @ Wild Tails

There was a wonderful atmosphere across all of the cafes and the feedback from the business owners and customers has been very positive. The next Café Lates will take place on Thursday 29th May.

Culture Night Late

Culture Night, which is co-ordinated by Kilkenny Arts Office, will take place on Friday 19th September. The call for funding is open until Monday 19th May. Additional funding has been provided through the Night Time Economy for Culture Night Late for events that will take place after 6pm. This includes funding for events that take place in cafés in Kilkenny City after 6pm under the Café Late's @ Culture Night initiative. Further details can be found at <https://kilkennyartsoffice.ie/culture-night-kilkenny-2025-open-call-for-event-funding/>

Kilkenny Arts Office and the Night Time Economy have also collaborated to submit an application for Culture Night Late funding to the Arts Council. A decision on funding is expected in May.

Kilkenny Tourism and visitkilkenny.ie

Kilkenny Tourism continues its work in delivering Kilkenny's marketing and pr plan for 2025. Our Summer 2025 campaign, "Love Kilkenny Longer" continues to keep Kilkenny to the forefront of the domestic visitors' mind for a longer summer break this year with lots to see and do for visitors and great offers and packages to avail of when booking. April's marketing efforts showcased and promoted arts, crafts, history and the outdoors here in Kilkenny with a bright, fun twist on the campaign.



"Outdoor Kilkenny" continues to encourage visitors to get out and immerse themselves in activity around the County. This campaign is a really positive intervention to support the Outdoor Activities Sector and works in conjunction with our main destination campaign.

April activity also included the development of:



Experience Packages – Social Media Influencer Dev Skehan visited the County in April and showcased many of our Kilkenny Experiences.

B&Bs/Guesthouses Promo - A B&Bs and Guesthouses guide went live in April and was pushed out across socials throughout the month.

Radio - Today FM promotion and a weeklong giveaway on 2FM, ran in April with prizes offered for breaks in Kilkenny.

Members Event is being arranged for all Kilkenny Tourism members for early summer with guest speaker to be confirmed. This is an annual summer event and should be a great night for the sector to connect and engage as well as to hear from an engaging expert on the night.

Festivals and Events



April saw the launch of the ever popular Smithwicks Roots Festival, with a fantastic launch night held in the Smithwicks Experience outdoor performance space.

The festival will run from 2nd to 5th May. Since 1998 the festival has attracted some of the finest names in the American/Roots canon. Audiences wind their way through our cobbled streets sampling a huge range of music in over 30 venues, hosting over 40 Irish and international acts, with shows on from early afternoon until late into the night.

There's a mix of old and new acts this year with all styles catered for, from swing to bluegrass, rockabilly to Cajun, folk, blues and beyond. Roots has been supported by Kilkenny County Councils Festivals Grant Scheme again for 2025.

Meitheal 2025



Running since 1975, Meitheal is Fáilte Ireland's flagship annual trade event which is organised in conjunction with Tourism Ireland to enable Irish Tourism businesses to sell the best of Ireland to top international tourism buyers.

There were 16 Kilkenny based attractions and accommodation providers at the two day face to face event, meeting buyers from over 20 different countries to bring business to Kilkenny.

HOUSING

The Directorate of Housing incorporates a wide range of services for applicants and tenants to facilitate and support the provision of independent and supported accommodation. The following information gives the up to date progress for April, 2025 under the various support services.

AFFORDABLE HOMES

All Affordable Homes at the Nyne Park, Callan Road, Kilkenny; Cluain Glasan Granges Road, Kilkenny and Abbey Meadows Ferrybank are now Sold / Reserved and Application Portal for all schemes are closed.

Work is progressing with the team to deliver Affordable Homes across County Kilkenny. Over the coming months it is hoped to begin advertising and marketing of Schemes at:

Church View, Kilmacow: <i>13 x 3 Bedroom Units</i> <i>Houses completion estimated Q3 2025</i>	
Abbeyhill, Thomastown: 22 units: 16 x No 3 Bedroom Units 6 x No 2 Bedroom Units Houses completion estimated Q4 2025	

Information to follow and will be made available at <https://kilkennycoco.ie/affordable-homes>

At a national level the Department have revamped the Affordable Homes website where all Affordable Homes available for purchase around the country are listed.
www.affordablehomes.ie

Affordable Homes supported through the Local Authority Affordable Purchase Scheme are generally targeted at first-time buyers (exceptions apply) who need assistance bridging the gap between their own available funds (including the Help to Buy scheme), the mortgage that they can obtain and the cost of the new home. Under the Affordable Purchase Scheme eligible buyers will be able to purchase their own new home by availing of this shared equity scheme. Kilkenny County Council will retain an equity share with successful applicants buying out this share over time. Equity shares are calculated on an individual basis and are linked to an applicant's income, their savings and their maximum mortgage capacity. Under the Affordable Purchase Scheme successful applicants will be able to avail of a reduction on the full market price, of between up to 20% & 25%, depending on the price of the property and the applicant's own financial circumstances.

For any queries in relation to any of the above please contact the Affordable Housing Team at: Email: affordablehousing@kilkennycoco.ie Tel: 056-7794280

HOMELESS SERVICES

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

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

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

HOMELESS SERVICES SUMMARY APRIL 2025	
Homeless Presentations	53
Homeless Assessment Outcomes	
Prevention & Interventions	39
Emergency Service	8
Not eligible / Did not avail of service	1
HAP Place Finder Service	
Number of Homeless HAP tenancies at 1 st day of month	153
Number of Homeless HAP tenancies created during month	0
Number of Homeless HAP tenancy breakdowns	1
Number of Homeless HAP tenancies in place at last day of month	152
Other Social Housing Tenancies supported/created during month	9
Provision of Emergency Accommodation	
Households in Temporary Emergency Supported Accommodation at 30 th April	38
Households in Temporary Emergency B&B accommodation	8
Households in Temporary Emergency B&B Accommodation that are families	8
Households (<i>singles/couples</i>) in Transition Emergency Accommodation (<i>Own Front Door</i>)	41
Households (<i>Families</i>) in Transition Emergency Accommodation (<i>Own Front Door</i>)	15

SOCIAL HOUSING PROVISION

SOCIAL HOUSING SUPPORT APPLICATION SUMMARY APRIL 2025	
Number awaiting Social Housing Support at 30 th April 30 th (<i>Gross Need</i>)	1,399
Number awaiting Social Housing Support at April 30 th (<i>Net Need</i>)	690
Number of Social Housing Applications received in April	71
Number of applications incomplete / awaiting further information/clarification	57
Number of applications validated and ready for assessment during the month	58
Number of applications assessed during April	25
Number of applications awaiting assessment as at 30 th April	42

HOUSING ASSISTANCE PAYMENT (HAP) SUMMARY APRIL 2025	
Total active HAP tenancies	439
New HAP tenancies set up	15
HAP allocated Social Housing	25
Closed HAP tenancies	24
HAP Rent Reviews	94
HAP Other tenancy amendments	467

HOUSING ALLOCATIONS APRIL 2025	
LA/RAS/Leasing offers of allocations made in April	30
LA/RAS/Leasing offers of allocations made to date 2025	96

TENANCY MANAGEMENT

Complaints

The Tenancy Management Section of Kilkenny County Council deals with anti-social behaviour complaints in relation to our tenants as outlined in the Anti-Social Behaviour Strategy. The number of cases received in April was 51.

MAINTENANCE HOUSING STOCK

The Housing Operations team have commenced a pilot scheme for roll out of a new app for stock surveys to existing housing stock as agreed with the department. The completion of stock surveys will allow Kilkenny County Council to improve the delivery of our planned maintenance programme.

MAINTENANCE CALLS APRIL 2025	
Maintenance calls in April	545
Maintenance calls year to date	2,625

PRIVATE HOUSE GRANTS

The 2025 housing grants allocation has been received from the Department of Housing, Local Government & Heritage in the amount of **€1,920,000.00** comprised of €1,632,000.00 (85%) grant and €288,000.00 (15%) KCC contribution.

GRANTS APPROVED & COMMITTED APRIL 2025		
Scheme	Number	Amount
HGD - Housing Adaptation Grant	93	€972,615
MAG - Mobility Aid Grant	9	€26,983
HOP - Housing Aid for Older Persons	131	€758,145
Total	233	€1,757,743

GRANTS PAID OUT APRIL 2025		
Scheme	Number	Amount
HGD - Housing Adaptation Grant	17	€161,380.75
MAG - Mobility Aid Grant	1	€2,863
HOP - Housing Aid for Older Persons	40	€226,282
Total	58	€390,526.75

HOUSING LOANS

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

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

HOUSING LOAN ACTIVITY 2025					
Loan Type	Received	Approved	Amount Approved	No. Paid	Amount Paid
Local Authority Home Loan	13	0	€0	2	€168,250
Caravan Loan	0	0	€0.00	0	€0
Total	13	0	€0	2	€168,250

VOIDS

At the end of April 2025 there were 36 vacant units of local authority accommodation awaiting refurbishment or remediation works. 10 vacant units have been upgraded in April 2025 ready for allocation.

COMMUNITY

Community Projects

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

TOWN & VILLAGE SCHEME			
Community Group	Project Description	Grant	Status
Glenmore CLG Project Development Measure 2022	Develop plans for a building purchased under Building Acquisition Measure. The building will be used as a community shop/café and meeting facility	€49,950	Near Completion
Thomastown Men's Shed Project Development Measure 2022	Develop usage of building formerly known as Supervalu	€49,950	Public consultation completed and identified uses of the building and site, site specific floor risk assessment carried out
Callan 2023	Restoration and clean-up of the King's River to enable the community to use it for activities fishing, swimming & canoeing and kayaking	€247,500	In progress, consultant appointed, archaeologist to be appointed, tender to be drafted and works to commence
Dunnamaggin Local Community Group 2023	The Transformation of a community green space into and events amenity for all the community knows as Madge's Garden	€247,500	In progress, Community Group finalising the project scope, Capital office will then agree scope with consultant and tender for project
Urlingford Town Team 2023	Refurbishment of Community Hall. Phase 2	€500,000	Commencement notice posted
Callan Project Development Measure 2024	Develop plans to establish an outdoor classroom community space in Abbey Field and examine the re-development of a derelict cottage in Moate Field and complete biodiversity studies on both sites	€49,950	Brief finalised and gone to tender
Paulstown Community Group Project Development Measure	Complete feasibility and design studies for the creation of a centre point in the village, consisting of an open public green space with seating and leisure facilities. This will redevelop the village centre and provide accessibility between the main street and residential areas	€49,950	Consultant appointed

RURAL REGENERATION DEVELOPMENT FUND			
Community Group	Project Description	Grant	Status
Piltown	Phase 1 of the project comprises of main street urban renewal enhancement, parking bays, EV charging points, and bicycle bays x2	€2,180,931	In progress
Glenmore	Develop the South East Greenway Connectivity Link and Pink Rock Cycle Loop & Amenity Trail	€2,356,423	In progress
Thomastown	Thomastown Library and upgrade to Community Centre	€4,013,115	Works progressing as scheduled
Graiguenamanagh	Category 2 Application for development of Master Plan and purchase of buildings and land	€1,450,000	With Department awaiting decision on approval

COMMUNITY & CULTURAL FACILITIES CAPITAL SCHEME			
Community Group/ Year Approved	Project Description	Grant	Status
Johnstown Sports Field 2022	Contribution to development of walk way around complex	€40,000	Tender Process complete. Contractor appointed. Awaiting start date.
1st Kilkenny Scout Group 2022	Upgrade of lighting to LED lighting, improve installation in attic, upgrade boiler and installation of solar panels	€15,000	Due to commence August 2025.
Ballyhale Shamrocks GAA 2022	Walking track & flood lighting	€40,000	90% completed
Mooncoin Celtic AFC 2023	LED Floodlighting for extra training area	€20,000	Not yet commenced, awaiting further information
John Lockes GAA Club 2023	Walkway improvements, CCTV, Sensory activity outdoor wall panels/litter bins/walkway benches & security gate	€11,000	Works complete.
Bigwood Playground 2023	New playground	€35,000	50% complete
Cois Nore 2024	Develop and Refurbishment of Community Space	€40,000	Work in progress due to complete August 2025
Piltown AFC 2024	Walkway, Lighting and Security Fencing	€36,000	Part Payment issued, due for completion June 2025
Callan United AFC 2024	Upgrade of Dressing Rooms and Storage facilities	€35,000	Works complete, waiting on paperwork to pay grant
Inistioge Community Council 2024	Bi folding doors to increase space for large functions	€14,000	Works complete,
Danesfort GAA Club 2024	Extension of floodlit walkway	€15,000	Works complete
Mullinavat Community Group 2024	Installation of CCTV and fob entry system	€9,000	Work due to be completed May 2025
Ballyhale Shamrocks 2024	Upgrade of toilets / disability access	€9,000	Works not yet commenced
Gowran Community Complex 2024	Contribution towards the refurbishment of a community hub	€27,000	Tender process on-going.

CLÁR			
Community Group	Project Description	Grant	Status
Tullagher Rosbercon GAA Club	Provision of tarmacadam car park, passing bay and emergency access road to new playing field	€50,000	90% of works completed
Kilkenny County Council Supported by Coolagh Community Group	Upgrade works outside Community Hall	€45,000	90% of works complete
Galmoy Community Hall	Provision of a MUGA	€30,015	Not yet commenced
Skeoughvosteen Community Centre & GAA	Provision of outdoor public and wheelchair accessible public toilets	€50,000	Procurement in progress
Ballyouskill Community Hall	Upgrades to carpark, roof repairs and replacement of door.	€36,641	Not yet commenced

CRF			
Community Group	Project Description	Grant	Status
Bennettsbridge Community Centre	Tarmacadam and lining of carpark opposite community hall	€51,000	Nearly complete, lining of carpark to be finalised
Knocktopher Community	Pedestrian crossings, ramp, repairs to stone walls on approach roads to village, picnic benches on approach roads	€52,062	All complete, awaiting delivery of picnic benches



Muckalee Public Lighting (Phase 2) completed CLÁR Project:

Heritage/Conservation Project of the Year 2025 Piltown Garda Station and Remote Working Hub

Piltown Garda Station Remote Working Hub was nominated and shortlisted for the Irish Building and Design Awards 2025. Piltown Garda Station is a key historic building within the fabric of Piltown. The detached three-bay two storey Market House, was constructed circa 1825, and it was later used as a courthouse circa 1903. The building was renovated in 1926 to accommodate use as a Garda Barracks and Sergeants residence. In 2020 Piltown Community Enterprise CLG contacted Kilkenny County Council to explore if there was any avenue to repurpose the unoccupied building into a community asset for economic growth through the creation of a Remote Working Hub, that would attract both established and new businesses to the area and provide a professional work environment.

The project has saved an unoccupied building that otherwise would have deteriorated into further disrepair and detracted from the main street. The original features in the building have been saved and preserved and it has provided remote office space for local businesses with hotdesking opportunities for remote workers. Overall the project has rejuvenated business and community interest in the building. The added bonus for the community of Piltown and An Garda Síochána is that there will again, be a presence of a usable Garda space in the town.

Kilkenny County Council in conjunction with the OPW (*Building owners*), An Garda Síochána Estate Management and Piltown Community Enterprise CLG came to an agreement on how a restructuring and renovation project for the building would benefit all parties, whilst also preserving and protecting such an important structure in the village. The project received €500,000 in capital funding from the Town & Village Fund, €256,000 from An Garda Síochána, €58,000 from Piltown Community Enterprise CLG, €34,000 from SEAI and €105,000 in funding from Kilkenny County Council.



Richard McEvoy, Richard McEvoy Contracting Ltd, Anne Marie Shortall, SEO & Catherine Byrne-Murphy, AO, Kilkenny County Council, Anne Marie Power & Gerri Hickey, Piltown Community Enterprise CLG, Brendan O'Brien, EE, Kilkenny County Council.



Before: Front Elevation 2023



After: – Front Elevation 2024



Before : Garda Station Back Office 2024 – Calsitherm Insulation



After: Garda Station Office 2024



Before: Remote Hub Kitchen 2023

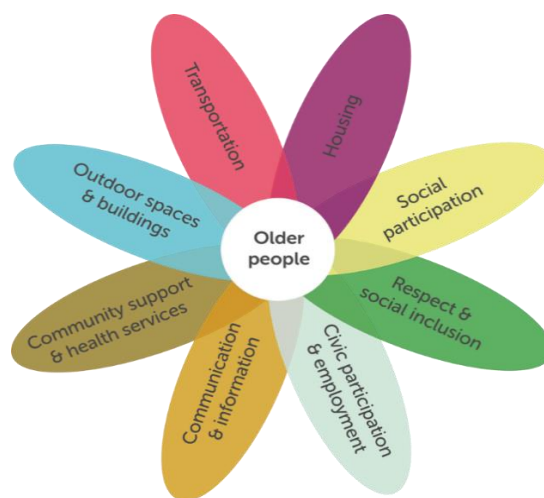


After: Remote Hub Kitchen Accessibility 2024

Age Friendly Programme

The draft Age Friendly Strategy for Kilkenny was presented to a meeting of the Age Friendly Alliance members on Tuesday the 29th April, 2025. The draft Strategy and the Action Plan was discussed by the delivery partners on the Alliance and recommended for presentation to a plenary meeting of the County Council for adoption. The Action Plan is aligned to the eight Age Friendly Themes developed by the World Health Organisation.

A range of broad actions are set out under each theme that seek to respond to the main issues, challenges and opportunities identified in the research and consultations. Kilkenny Age Friendly Strategy has also identified 3 Strategic Priorities that underpin the Action Plan and all of its actions. These Strategic Priorities were identified through the consultation process and reflect a number of core messages that emerged from the consultations that apply to all areas of strategy and how its actions are designed and implemented. The priorities will guide and support the strategy in achieving its overall vision of a more inclusive and caring society for older people.



World Health Organisation 8 Themes

The Strategic Priorities are Accessible Services, Diversity and Inclusion and having a City and County Focus. To ensure that public services are fully accessible to older people and that in-person customer service is available when required. Support greater engagement and participation of older people from minority and marginalised communities in Kilkenny Age Friendly Programme. Ensure an equitable and balanced spread of Age Friendly activities and resources across Kilkenny City and County.

Healthy Ireland - Kilkenny & Carlow County Council Launch "Not Around Us" Campaign to Promote Smoke and Vape-Free Spaces for Young People

The Carlow-Kilkenny 'Not Around Us' campaign, launched by Deputy Jennifer Murnane O'Connor TD, Minister of State for Public Health, Wellbeing & the National Drugs Strategy, on April 11, 2025. This initiative is led by Carlow and Kilkenny Local Community Development Committees and supported by various local and national bodies, including; Kilkenny County Council, Children and Young People's Services Committee, the HSE and collaborates closely with Comhairle na nÓg.

The Not Around Us Campaign is a youth-informed initiative that empowers young people to 'ask' and 'advocate' for smoke- and vape-free environments in the outdoor spaces they use regularly. Developed in response to the voices of children and young people in Kilkenny and Carlow, the campaign aims to de-normalise smoking and vaping in these areas, protect young people from second-hand smoke, and contribute to a healthier, tobacco- and vape-free Ireland.

At the Launch the Minister acknowledged the initial sign-up supporter organisations in Kilkenny including; the Presentation Secondary School, Fr McGrath FRC, Newpark Close FRC, Droichead FRC, Foróige (The Drum) and Ossory Youth. As part of the sign-up process, these organisations were provided with an educational consultation toolkit, leaflets and signage to display on their premises.



Kilkenny and Carlow County Council Launch "Not Around Us" Campaign to Promote Smoke and Vape-Free Spaces for Young People in Carlow and Kilkenny

Peace Run

On Thursday 3rd April 2025, the Sri Chinmoy Oneness-Home Peace Run visited Kilkenny. This international torch relay for peace, which has been visiting Ireland for over 25 years, covered a total distance of 400 km from Cork to Belfast. The running team consisted of 10 people from countries including Ireland, Croatia, Russia, Ukraine, France, and Vietnam.

During their visit, the team stopped at two local primary schools: Church Hill National School in Cuffesgrange and St. Aidan's National School in Kilmanagh. At Church Hill National School, the runners were welcomed with artwork and a rendition of John Lennon's song "Imagine," performed by the 6th class students. At St. Aidan's National School, the school band entertained the runners, and the students formed a guard of honour as the team departed. At both schools, each student had the opportunity to hold the Peace Torch, which has been carried by many world figures including Pope Francis, Pope John Paul II, President Nelson Mandela, Queen Elizabeth II, Saint Mother Teresa, Muhammad Ali, State Governors, City Mayors, and celebrities around the world.

In the afternoon, the runners had lunch at the Hoban Hotel in Kilkenny, where they were greeted by Mayor Andrew McGuinness. The team presented the Mayor with a Certificate of Appreciation to express their heartfelt gratitude to the people of Kilkenny for their enthusiastic participation in the Peace Run, before making their way to Dublin to continue spreading their message of peace.



Ambarish Keenan presents Mayor Andrew McGuinness with a Certificate of Appreciation



Children at Church Hill National School, Cuffesgrange, hold the Peace Torch

INTEGRATION

The Local Authority Integration Team (LAIT) continue to provide on-going integration support to people categorised in the following groups living in County Kilkenny:

- Beneficiaries of Temporary Protection (BOTP) (Ukrainians)
- International Protection Applicants (IPAs)
- Programme Refugees
- Refugee, Subsidiary Protection or Permission to Remain status

Currently there are 471 Ukrainians in 12 commercial properties under contracts with the Department of Children Equality Disability Integration and Youth (DCEDIY), 210 Ukrainians living in Offer A Home and Irish Red Cross pledged properties who avail of the Accommodation Recognition Payment. There are 193 International Protection Applicants (IPA's) in 4 commercial properties under contract with the DCEDIY. 69% of Ukrainians and 60% of IPAs are registered as employed.

In March, the LAIT continued their work providing information, advice and advocacy to:

- 84 Ukrainians with 145 interventions including queries relating to their status and the immigration process and many initial assessments carried out also.
- 51 IPAs with 118 interventions including queries around the immigration process, signposting to health services and enquiries relating to work permits among other topics.

Events

The LAIT collaborates with partner agencies and are planning more events for the year ahead, for example:

- On St Patrick's Day the LAIT organised a multi-cultural group which took part in the Kilkenny St Patrick's Festival Parade. This group comprised of local migrants who are in the International Protection process. They carried a banner which read 'Ní neart go cur le chéile - There is no strength without unity'
- On 27th March, the LAIT held a talk at the Mayfair Library for local migrants on the topic of Housing. This was in collaboration with the Kilkenny County Council Housing Dept
- The LAIT are planning a talk on Revenue and Taxation in collaboration Revenue for their service users - hopefully to take place before the end of April
- Together with Creative Ireland the LAIT are facilitating a photography workshop for some members of the local migrant community which will culminate in an exhibition at the Butler Gallery entitled 'I am Me, Before I was a Refugee'. These workshops will begin in late April and run until the end of May with the exhibition taking place during Refugee Week (mid-June)
- The LAIT continues to facilitate weekly drop-in clinics in collaboration with Kilkenny Leader Partnership, held at the Fr. McGrath Centre Neighbourhood Hall every Tuesday morning.



Offer of a Home and IRC Pledged Properties on 31st March 2025

March 2025	Number of Pledged Properties	Number of Residents
Offer a Home Scheme	56	187
Pledged Properties (<i>shared and not shared</i>)	6	23
Total	62	210

The 'Offer a Home' Scheme is managed by Local Authorities on behalf of the Government. A Government tax-free Accommodation Recognition Payment (ARP) of €800 per month is available to property owners offering accommodation to Ukrainians with Temporary Protection status. Minister Foley recently announced her intention to seek Oireachtas approval to extend the ARP scheme for a further year to the end of March next year. Subsequent to this, a draft order will be advanced proposing a reduction in the monthly ARP payment from €800 to €600, from June 2025. This reduction seeks to mitigate any unintended impact on the private rental sector. It also reflects recent policy changes which aim to ensure that such temporary and timebound supports for people who are Beneficiaries of Temporary Protection are proportionate and equitable. As the payment is payable monthly in arrears, the first payment at the reduced rate will be received by hosts on 8 July 2025.

Further details are available on www.offerahome.ie or you can contact the Kilkenny County Council Ukrainian Response Team. Currently 56 properties have been pledged under the Offer of a Home Scheme in Kilkenny, providing accommodation for 184 Ukrainians.

A separate programme is in place run by the Irish Red Cross which is seeking pledges of spare rooms or accommodation that would be shared with the owner or others. If an owner wishes to pledge a spare room in their house, they can contact the Irish Red Cross at (01) 6424600 or email info@redcross.ie.

Community Recognition Fund

The Community Recognition Fund was first introduced in 2023 to recognise the huge efforts made by communities in welcoming and supporting Ukrainians coming to Ireland. This funding is specifically targeted at projects that are located in areas within Kilkenny hosting Ukrainian Beneficiaries of Temporary Protection. The following is a list of successful projects under Window 3 of the Community Recognition Fund 2024, recently announced. These groups have been awarded funding from the Department of Rural and Community Development.

GROUP	PROJECT	AMOUNT AWARDED
St. Canice's Community Action CLG	Enhancement of Fr. McGrath Family Resource Centre	€100,475
Kilkenny Christian Centre Kilkenny City	Phase 2 of the Light House Project	€390,607

FIRE SERVICES

Fire Safety Certificate Applications

Kilkenny Fire & Rescue Service Fire Senior Fire Officers advise on current Building Regulations in relation to the Fire Safety standards required for proposed developments. In addition, Kilkenny Fire and Rescue Service Fire Prevention Officers hold Fire Safety Certificate/Fire Prevention clinics under Section 18(5) of the Fire Services Acts 1981 and 2003. These are predominantly held on a weekly basis and/or upon request in Fire Station HQ.

This process has been a huge success as it has aided greatly in reducing:

- our Fire Safety Certificate invalidation rates and,
- our Fire Safety Certificate refusal rates and,
- expand the knowledge of the professional cadre within this construction industry.

It is our belief that this has produced a positive culture of compliance amongst the business/commercial community and the professional bodies (*Registered Architect/Chartered Engineer*) in relation to fire safety in the City and County of Kilkenny.

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

Fire Services Acts 1981 and 2003

- Fire Prevention staff made targeted inspections of premises both to provide advice and to enforce legislation during the first few months of 2025.
- 4 Licence Applications were processed under Section 24 of the Fire Services Acts 1981 and 2003.
- 1 licence applications under the Dangerous Substances legislation was assessed to date
- 40 Fire safety inspections of premises have taken place to date.

Fire Brigade Operations

The existence of a professional fire and rescue service is fundamental to public and personal safety. The Fire Service plays a crucial role in making our communities safer, whether it be preventing and protecting people from fire and other risks or responding swiftly and effectively to the incidents and emergencies that occur 24 hrs per day/7 days per week/365 days per year. 360no callouts were received to date. These incidents included a number of road traffic collisions, house fires, ambulance assists, outdoor rubbish, chimney fires and automatic fire alarm activations.

Recruitment of Retained Firefighters

Our current complement of Fire fighting staff in our 7 Fire Brigades are as follows: Kilkenny City (14), Castlecomer (12), Freshford (11), Urlingford (8), Thomastown (10), Callan (12), Graiguenamanagh (10). The WRC recommendation is to have a minimum of 12 Firefighters in all Fire Stations. Our second recruitment campaign is well underway to recruit fire fighters in Freshford, Urlingford, Thomastown and Graiguenamanagh. As well as responding to emergency calls and undertaking community fire safety initiatives, Retained Firefighters attend weekly training nights to maintain competency levels and undertake routine checks on their equipment.

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

Training

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

All personnel responding to Fire and Rescue Service incidents require a minimum level of training to meet core requirements. In addition, many personnel also require further training for specialist or supervisory roles. Furthermore, a number of Fire and Rescue Service personnel have completed Instructor courses in order that they in turn can instruct and direct delivery of training sessions / courses. Personnel also require appropriate refresher training in all of the above throughout their careers, generally delivered either through on-station training or through specific refresher courses. Training has traditionally been delivered at varying levels (*e.g. local station, fire authority, region, national and international*) and through a variety of arrangements.

Recruit Firefighters undertook Compartment Fire Behaviour Training in Hackettstown Fire Station. The aim of this 5-day course is to provide the learners (trainee firefighters), who have completed the 10-day Using Breathing Apparatus (Initial Wearer) course, with the skills, knowledge and competency necessary to wear Breathing Apparatus in compartment fires. This course provides practical training on the knowledge and skills that are required to enable recruit firefighters to safely work as BA wearers at operational incidents, within the incident command structure and BA procedural norms. This course is intended to develop the learners in the discharge of their roles as firefighters and to assist their Fire Authority in its function as a fire and rescue service.



Class photo of CFBT course

Health and Safety

Kilkenny Fire and Rescue Service is committed to safeguarding, as far as is reasonably practicable the Safety, Health and Welfare of all employees, contractors and visitors. Kilkenny Fire and Rescue Service are committed to attaining full compliance with the Local Authority Safety Management System (LA SMS).



LEAF Literacy and Food Education Programme

The LEAF programme (funded under the Community Climate Action Programme) was launched in 5 of our library branches last summer and continues this Spring with free seeds (peas, beans and salad leaves) available when people register with a participating library. Our libraries branches hosted a number of eco-friendly talks and workshops throughout March to support this programme.

Graiguenamanagh and Thomastown Libraries welcomed Kitty Scully from RTÉ's *Homegrown* to share tips and techniques for creating an abundant, low-impact food garden. Ferrybank Library hosted a "Rain Gardens Made Easy" talk, providing advice on how to create the perfect rain garden and help prevent flooding. This was followed by an Eco Soap Making workshop with Aoife Munn where participants learned how to make planet friendly bars of soap.

Castlecomer Library hosted horticulturist Monica Fleming for a seed-growing workshop where she discussed and demonstrated seed swapping, seed sowing, compost, seeds trays, watering, aftercare and potting.

Loughboy Library held a vegetable growing talk with Giedre Dunphy where she shared tips for growing and fermenting vegetables and discussed the health benefits of fermented foods.

We had **53** attendances at these events.



Thomastown Library Update

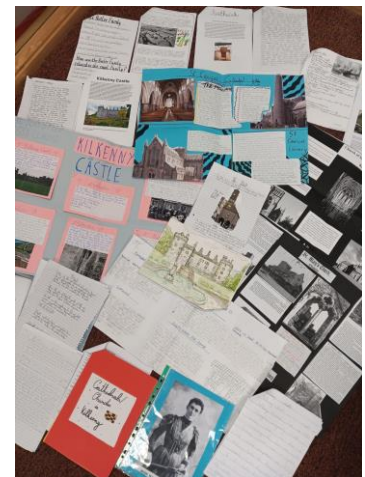
- Wall cladding cleats and rails are completed.
- Revised steel over the windows are completed and external wall cladding is now in place.
- M&E Containment has commenced on site.
- Stud Partitions are proceeding on both floors.



Fadó Fadó Winners Announced

An unprecedented **116** entries were received from primary school students all over the County for our first Fadó Fadó Young Researchers competition. Participants were asked to dig deep into history to learn about their local heritage including exploration of old buildings, ruins, local folk tales and stories or even their own family members. The entries showed great variety and originality with the children really embracing the project and engaging with the past.

This competition was a collaboration between Kilkenny Archaeological Society, Kilkenny County Council Library Service and Rothe House Trust and a prize-giving ceremony will be held in April to reward our well-deserved winners.



Library Activities

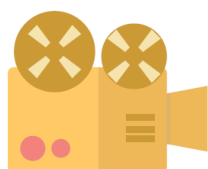
This month we held lots of activities and events across our libraries. These events included:

- A Taispeántas Filíocht agus Ceol in the Mayfair Library
- A mechanical hand workshop for Engineers Week in Loughboy Library
- A chair yoga course in Ferrybank Library
- A drop-in event from the Natural History Museum in Graig Library
- A first aid workshop for parents and guardians in Castlecomer Library
- St. Patrick's Day storytime and crafts in Thomastown Library
- A World Book Day quiz in Urlingford Library
- ETB adult art classes in Callan Library





Online Services Usage Apr 2025



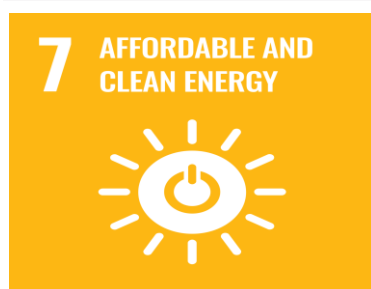
Digital Engagement

Library staff prepared, recorded, edited and published **282** posts and videos on our social media platforms in March. Our engagements for the month were **4,075** and our videos and reels had **6,257** views. Our virtual newsletter was sent to **8,193** email accounts.

Alignment with the Sustainable Development Goals



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



Castlecomer Library hosted an energy advice clinic where members of the public could book a one-on-one appointment with an energy expert from the South East Energy Agency.

Image: SDG7



Several of our branches hosted STEM workshops to celebrate Engineers Week and introduce primary and secondary school children to the diverse world of engineering. These included a wobble bot workshop in Thomastown Library and a mechanical hand workshop in Loughboy Library.

Community Arts Climate Action Project, Textiles & the Circular Economy

The Arts Office invited proposals for their 2025 'Waste Not Want Not Programme' engaging with communities to raise awareness about the textile industry and the circular economy. This project will engage with local artists, makers, and community members in creating artworks that highlight the importance of sustainable practices in the textile industry. The project will promote dialogue around sustainable textile practices and engage participants in processes and making, enabling conversations and sharing of knowledge and skills.

The successful project is 'Inflow' inspired by the River Nore, exploring our deep interconnection with the natural world through the lens of textile waste and the circular economy. Led by three experienced circular textile creatives, Lynn Haughton, Jeni Roddy and Arran Murphy the project will invite Kilkenny community members to reconnect with the river and reflect on its vital role in sustaining life.

InFlow will not only foster creativity and community connection but also plant the seeds for lasting behavioral change through tactile, meaningful engagement and awareness of the principles of the circular economy.



Rhyme Rag

Poems for the Spring edition of Rhyme Rag 2025 have now been selected. Twelve poems have been chosen by Rhyme Rag Editor Jessica Traynor. Rhyme Rag workshop's took place in Loreto Secondary School and Grennan College resulting in beautiful work. All poems can be found on the Rhyme Rag - www.rhymerag.net/category/poems/poems-2025/ and Rhyme Rag Instagram account over the coming weeks.



Tea Houses

For May Day & Poetry Day, there was an evening of poetry, discussion, art, and activism in the Tea Houses. The event featured poet Sarah Clancy who spoke about using poetry as a tool for resistance, solidarity, and social change. Inspired by the power of poetry and exploring how art can be at the forefront of activism, there was be a drop-in collage-making workshop with artist and organiser Jessica Weber Patterson. Participants had the opportunity to present their work in the windows of the Tea Houses over the May bank holiday. An Artist Lunch was held on Saturday 26th April 2025 at the Tea Houses. This was a casual gathering for local artists to catch up, share food and conversation.

Creative Future Academy

Kilkenny Arts Office joined forces with Creative Futures Academy (CFA) once again to offer bursaries to Kilkenny based artists seeking to gain new qualifications and skills to expand their practice. The bursaries range from €500 to a maximum of €750. CFA offers a range of flexible, short, part and full-time postgraduate courses at NCAD, UCD and IADT. The Arts Office and CFA share a focus in developing the skills and capacity of the arts, creative and cultural sector.

Realise Summit

The REALISE Summit took place on 10th April 2025 at IMMA, Dublin. This event was organised by Native Events and Julie's Bicycle Europe, in partnership with the Regional Waste Management Planning Offices. The summit aimed to bring together Ireland's creative community to discuss and promote sustainability within the cultural and creative industries. It featured a diverse range of speakers from sectors such as film, TV, theatre, festivals, and the arts. The event included interactive workshops on energy, materials, nature, and communications, designed to equip attendees with practical tools to integrate sustainability into their practices. The Arts Officer, Assistant Arts Officer and Creative Ireland Engagement Officer attended the event. The Arts Office assisted the Climate Action Dept in offering an artist bursary to four Kilkenny Based Artists whose work focuses on sustainability and climate-related themes to enable them to attend the event. Artists Sheila Jordan, Clodagh Holahan, Roisin Sheehy and Mairead Holohan attended.



Realise Summit at IMMA Dublin

CREATIVE IRELAND

Living Artfully Project

The Long Grazing Acre concert, part of the Creative Ireland Living Artfully Project, was a resounding success with a packed house in attendance. Held on Thursday 26th April 2025 at the Carlow Methodist Church, this special event was a highlight of the Pan Celtic Festival. Creative Ireland Kilkenny and Carlow, in collaboration with Forward Steps Traveller Women's Support Group, proudly presented an array of talented artefacts created during the Living Artfully project. Showcasing the creative contributions of the community. The audience was captivated by the performances of renowned Uilleann Piper Paddy Keenan, award-winning traditional singer Thomas McCarthy, and singer-songwriter Trish Reilly, along with other gifted artists like Marty Barry and Elizabeth Connors. The concert featured a blend of traditional and original music, songs, and stories, celebrating the rich cultural heritage of the Traveller Community. Additionally, artworks.



*Long Grazing Acre Concert as part
of Living Artfully Project*



*Musicians Paddy Keenan, Thomas McCarthy, Marty
Barry and Elizabeth Connors performing*

Cruinniú na nÓg 2025

Cruinniú na nÓg Festival will be taking place on 7th June 2025, at various venues throughout Kilkenny. Young people across Kilkenny will be invited to participate in 52 imaginative activities. This celebration of youthful creativity offers a platform for children and young people to engage in the creative activities within their communities.

This year's festival will feature a diverse array of participants, including animators, dancers, game developers, circus performers, drama enthusiasts and artists. The program includes a wide variety of over 13 events in local libraries starting from 3rd June, 2025, such as animation and game development with Cartoon Saloon, drumming. Partnering with Waterford walls and the Watergate theatre graffiti Music Generation DJ rapping in collaboration with Foroige. Local businesses are expected to benefit significantly from increased foot traffic and community engagement, boosting sales and visibility.



Scent and Sensibility workshop with learners from Loreto special unit

HERITAGE

Community Monuments Fund 2025

Minister for Housing, Local Government and Heritage, James Browne TD, and Minister of State for Nature, Heritage and Biodiversity, Christopher O'Sullivan TD, have announced the 122 projects that will be awarded €7.5 million in funding under the 2025 Community Monuments Fund. Just under €500,000 of this fund has been awarded to seven projects in County Kilkenny. These grants help owners and custodians of archaeological monuments to safeguard them into the future. The Community Monuments Fund supports a range of initiatives to conserve, maintain, protect and promote local monuments and historic sites. This investment safeguards monuments for the benefit of communities and the public. It does so by enabling conservation works and repairs as well as building resilience through protecting monuments from the effects of extreme weather and climate change. The scheme also encourages public access and improvements to the presentation of local monuments. Please find below details of the Kilkenny projects awarded.

Stream	Site Name	Owner	Details of Works	Award
1	St Colemans Church, Churchclara	KCC	Conservation works on medieval building structure	130,000
1	St Catherine's Church, Rathbeagh	KCC	Conservation of medieval residential tower at west gable of church, including removal of vegetation, repointing, consolidation of wall-tops, repair of vault, and stair.	130,000
1	19 Parliament Street	Mary Dolan	Phase 2 of works to secure an early 17th century building on Parliament Street, Kilkenny focusing on the surviving stone masonry external and internal walls.	130,000
2	Kilree Monastic Site	KCC	Conservation Management Plan for graveyard, including tree survey and access plan	19,742
3	Grangefertagh Medieval Church and Graveyard	KCC	Urgent conservation works to Mac Giolla Phádraig tomb and installation of structure to cover tomb. Match funding of €20,000 committed by Kilkenny County Council	30,000
3	Kilbeacon Cemetery, Mullinavat	KCC	Urgent repair works to boundary wall of historic cemetery	30,000
3	St Canice's Cathedral	St Canice's Cathedral	Updating of interpretation in St Canice's Cathedral	30,000
Total Value of Award				499,742

Heritage Council Grant Award 2025

Kilkenny County Council has been awarded €37,500 from the Heritage Council under the County Heritage Plan Actions Grant. This funding will contribute to Phase 3 of the County Kilkenny Mass Paths Survey which received excellent engagement from the public over the past two years. The aim of the project is to record and map the routes of mass paths across the County. Over 80 mass paths have been identified over the last two years and in this phase of the project we will work with local heritage societies and residents in nursing homes to record what knowledge remains of these under-valued features of Kilkenny's Heritage. The grant will also fund a heritage awareness and engagement campaign on local media

Irish Walled Towns Network Grant 2025

Kilkenny County Council has been awarded €14,000 from the Heritage Council through the Irish Walled Towns Network Interpretation and Events Grant Programme. This will co-fund the development of an interpretation plan for Kilkenny's City Walls. The aim of this project is to develop a knowledge-based, strategic approach to the interpretation of Kilkenny's City Walls linked to and informed by the Kilkenny City Walls Interpretation Plan (Oxford 2005) and existing sources related to the City Walls. The interpretation plan will guide on-site and off-site interpretation of the history in archaeology of the City walls, placing it in the context of the wider area and of comparable sites elsewhere. The plan will provide a road map of interpretative actions and initiatives over the coming years that will build community and visitor engagement. The plan will be underpinned by authentic, engaging and inclusive approaches to City wall interpretation

Kilkenny County Heritage Strategy Public Consultation Workshops

Public consultation continued in April for the next Kilkenny County Heritage Strategy with events taking place at the Mayfair Library on 26th April 2025 and in Castlecomer Library on 29th April 2025. A stakeholder consultation event also took place in Kilkenny on 10th April 2025. In addition, submissions have also been made through Kilkenny County Council's online consultation portal. There has been a high level of engagement to date, our final two consultations will take place at Ferrybank Library on 7th May 2025 and Thomastown Concert Hall on 17th May 2025.

BIODIVERSITY

Wild Kilkenny – Discover, Learn, Protect and Record

Kilkenny County Council is collaborating with the Kilkenny Carlow Education Training Board under their Community Education division to offer a 5-week community biodiversity training course titled “Wild Kilkenny – Discover, Learn, Protect and Record. The course is oversubscribed and is being delivered by local experts covering topics including geology, woodland and grassland ecology. The course provides 2-hour lectures mid-week and a Saturday morning field session over a 5-week duration. Through this training, it is hoped to inspire individuals to take an active role in recording species and participating in national citizen science monitoring schemes.

National Biodiversity Week 2025

Preparations are underway to prepare for National Biodiversity Week which takes place from the 16th-25th of May 2025. There is a host of events organised by community groups and the Kilkenny County Council. Look out for the Biodiversity Centre Fold which is appearing in local print media to celebrate National Biodiversity Week.



Kilkenny County Council and a number of local organisations have organised public events to celebrate National Biodiversity Week. Explore the rich variety of life in Kilkenny by attending one or more of the events listed below.

WHERE	WHAT	WHEN	ORGANIZER DETAILS
Ferrybank Library	Gardening for Pollinators. 1-hour Talk	Wednesday, 21 st May at 2pm	Kilkenny Library Service
Callan	Bat Walk. 1-hour Walk & Talk	Thursday, 22 nd Meet at Car Park at KCAT	Biodiversity Office
Kilkenny City	Dusk Chorus. 1-hour Walk & Talk	Thursday, May 22 nd Meet at the Castle Park 8	Organised by OPW and Bird-watch Ireland, Kilkenny Branch
Castlecomer Library	Gardening for Pollinators. 1-hour Talk	Friday, 23 rd May at 3pm	Kilkenny Library Service
Thomastown Concert Hall, Marshes Street, Thomastown	Movie. Showing of the 2023 film 'Wilding' based on the book of the same name by Isabella Tree	Friday, 23 rd May 7:30 – 9pm	Thomastown Community River Trust
Mayfair Library Kilkenny City	Gardening for Pollinators. 1-hour Talk.	Saturday, 24 th May at 11am	Kilkenny Library Service
Thomastown Concert Hall, Marshes Street, Thomastown	Biodiversity Seminar. Overview of TCRT's Restoration Island Project with two guest speakers	Saturday, 24 th May 7.30 – 9.30pm	Thomastown Community River Trust
Kenny's Well, Kilkenny City	Citizen Science on the Bregagh. Kick Sampling	Tuesday, 20 th May @ 7pm – 8.30	Nore River Catchment Trust & LAWPRO
Clomantagh/ Urlingford /Johnstown Phone 086-3104008 for Meeting Point	Plant ID and Biodiversity Recording Walk to Ballyspellan SAC with Dr. Fiona MacGowan	Wednesday, May 21 st at 7pm	The Acorn Project www.theacornproject.ie
Graine Native Tree Nursery, Eircode 41ET86	Volunteer Day at Graine Native Tree Nursery	Saturday, 24 th May 11am – 1pm	The Acorn Project www.theacornproject.ie



CIVIL DEFENCE

April was a busy month for Civil Defence volunteers. Continuing on the back of some difficult and prolonged missing person searches, the volunteers continue to respond to requests from the community. Providing First Aid at a number of events including the Streets of Kilkenny 5Km, a days Cross Country equestrian event in Freshford, as well as assisting our colleagues in Laois with First Aid Cover for the Slieve Bloom mountain biking festival. Volunteers completed training in Cardiac First Responder, Manual Handling, Missing Person Search Responder and Swift water responder.

Civil Defence volunteers also completed some necessary hours on the boat, including Kilkenny Civil Defence first ever all female crew.



First Aid Cover for the Slieve Bloom mountain biking festival



Civil Defence volunteers completed training hours on the boat

The expenditure by service division to the end of April is set out in table 1. Total Expenditure for the period was €36m compared with the annual budget of €120m.

Table 1	Actual YTD April 2025	Budget Full Year 2025
	€'000's	€'000's
Housing & Building	9,989	30,784
Road Transport & Safety	5,944	31,383
Water Services	1,765	7,180
Development Management	3,595	15,417
Environmental Services	4,854	18,991
Recreation & Amenity	2,225	9,425
Agriculture, Education, Health, Welfare	106	354
Miscellaneous Services	2,591	6,938
Central Management Charges for Allocation	4,627	
OVERALL TOTAL	35,697	120,472

Rates Invoices 2025

The annual rate invoices for 2025 totalling €24.4 million were issued to 2850 rate customers in February. Commercial rates are payable in full from 1st January 2025. A prompt payment discount of 8.3% (capped at €300 per rate account) is available for customers who pay bill in full before end of May 2025 or enter into a monthly payment plan before April 2025.

Rates Revaluation

Further to Revaluation 2017, 197 customers with a total rate demand value of €4.5m appealed their new valuation to the Valuation Tribunal. To date 191 appeals have been completed. The following is a breakdown of the appeal outcomes to date:

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

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

Finance Update

The bank overdraft facility was not utilised during the four month period to the end April 2025.