



Kilkenny County Council
Comhairle Chontae Chill Chainnigh



CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S REPORT

JULY 2021

**To: Each Member of
Kilkenny County Council**

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

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

23RD JULY, 2021

History Ireland Hedge School Podcast: Kilkenny in the Revolutionary Decade (Launch July 23rd)

History Ireland Hedge School podcast, part of the Kilkenny County Council Decade of Commemorations Programme 2021, will be launched on 23rd July and shared on Kilkenny County Council's social media. The podcast will explore events and activities in Kilkenny during the evolutionary decade. The Decade of Centenaries Programme is funded by the Commemorations Unit of the Department of Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport and Media.

OFFICIAL OPENING OF RIVERSIDE GARDEN AND SKATEPARK

The Official Opening of the Riverside Garden and Skatepark at the Abbey Quarter, Kilkenny, took place on Wednesday, 9th June, 2021. The project provides a riverside walk from the Tea Houses at Bateman Quay to Greensbridge, with a temporary walkway provided in the area of the planned new Urban Park around St. Francis Abbey.

The Riverside Garden project incorporates the newly completed skate park, which opened to the public on Saturday 1st May, 2021. The Skatepark is well used by skaters of all abilities and ages.

The completion of this stage of the project will provide members of the public with their first opportunity to access the former Brewery site and is the first of a number of projects that will integrate the former Brewery Site into the City.

Whilst the Riverside Garden project provides a significant extension to the riverside walkways through the City, plans to extend this further to provide connectivity under Greens Bridge, connecting with the Linear Park at Bishops Meadows/Riverside Drive are also currently being progressed with funding from the Urban Regeneration and Development Fund. A feasibility study will be undertaken and if found viable, we will move ahead to design and planning for this connection.



SOUTH EAST FIRST CITIZENS FORUM MEET WITH MINISTER EAMON RYAN ON KEY SOUTH EAST INFRASTRUCTURAL ISSUES

On Tuesday 22nd June, a grouping representing the South East First Citizens' Forum met with Minister Eamon Ryan - Minister for Transport, the Environment, Climate and Communications. Up for discussion were key infrastructural needs for the region including the development of the N24 from Waterford to Limerick, optimising the economic and renewable energy opportunities from Rosslare and Waterford ports, and growing the network of South East Greenways for the benefit of locals and visitors alike. In a full and frank discussion, the group impressed the importance of these three key areas for the future economic and sustainable development of the South East.

The Forum brings together the First Citizens from Carlow, Kilkenny, Tipperary, Waterford and Wexford with the key goal of addressing the structural challenges faced by the South East. The five First Citizens in the Region that were present at the meeting were: Cllr. Fintan Phelan, Carlow; Cllr. Fidelis Doherty, Kilkenny; Cllr. Michael Smith, Tipperary; Cllr. Damien Geoghegan, Waterford; and Cllr. Ger Carthy, Wexford.

ELECTION OF NEW CATHAOIRLEACH AND CHAIRS OF MUNICIPAL DISTRICT

At a socially distanced Annual General Meeting of the Council held on Friday, 8th June, 2021 in the Watergate Theatre, Kilkenny, Cllr. Fidelis Doherty was elected Cathaoirleach of Kilkenny County Council for 2021/2022. Cllr. Michael McCarthy was elected Leas Cathaoirleach.



ELECTION OF CHAIRPERSON & DEPUTY CHAIRPERSON OF MUNICIPAL DISTRICTS

Following the Annual Meetings of the Municipal Districts the following were elected as Chairperson & Deputy Chairperson:

| MUNICIPAL DISTRICT | CHAIRPERSON | DEPUTY CHAIRPERSON |
|---------------------------------------|--------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| Piltown 2nd June, 2021 | Cllr. Pat Dunphy | Cllr. Fidelis Doherty |
| Callan - Thomastown 9th June, 2021 | Cllr. Michael Doyle | Cllr. Joe Lyons |
| Kilkenny City 11th June, 2021 | Cllr. Andrew McGuinness, Mayor | Cllr. Martin Brett, Deputy Mayor |
| Castlecomer 21st June, 2021 | Cllr. Pat Fitzpatrick | Cllr. Mary Hilda Cavanagh |

ROADS

National Roads

N24 Waterford to Cahir Scheme

Phase 2 has started on this scheme. It will take 24 months to complete and will identify a preferred corridor at the end of the process. 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 up to Q2 2022 with advancement through the statutory processes from Q2 2022 to Q1 2023. All the information on the scheme is available on the website N25waterford2glenmore.ie.

N77 Ballyragget to Ballynaslee Improvement Scheme

Compulsory Purchase Order Confirmation was made by Kilkenny County Council in May 2021 for this scheme. Kilkenny County Council has received a further information request from An Bord Pleanála on the planning application for the scheme. We are currently preparing the further information request for submission.

Non-National Roads

Kilkenny Ring Road Extension

Kilkenny County Council is currently preparing a brief for consultants to prepare a Strategic Assessment Report (SAR) to submit to the Department for consideration to proceed with the design and planning of this important strategic project for Kilkenny City.

Kilkenny Western Environs Phase 1 Infrastructure Scheme

The expected scheme completion date is August 2021. This scheme will facilitate the construction of approximately 3,000 housing units in the coming years.

For the attention of the Members: Kilkenny County Council intend to go to Part 8 in regard to the Outdoor Performance Area in the site adjacent to the Watergate Theatre on Parliament Street. This matter was discussed at the June Meeting of Kilkenny Municipal District.

Loughmacask Link Road

Roads in consultation with the Planning Department is preparing the planning report for consideration by the Elected Members at the July 2021 Council meeting.

Other Works

R887 Wolfe Tone Street Resurfacing Works



Before

After

Flower Planting throughout the City



PLANNING

Development Management

| PLANNING SUMMARY | Total to May | |
|----------------------------|--------------|------|
| | 2020 | 2021 |
| Applications Received | 80 | 89 |
| Applications Granted | 57 | 86 |
| Applications Refused | 11 | 11 |
| Complaints Received | 47 | 74 |
| Warning Letters Issued | 40 | 67 |
| Enforcement Notices Issued | 6 | 13 |
| Cases Closed | 30 | 52 |

The Planning Department is open for business subject to Covid-19 recommendations for social distancing and other safety measures for the protection of customers and staff. Visits to the Planning Office are by pre-booked appointment. Appointment can be made by telephoning the planning office at 056 7794010 or by email to planning@kilkennycoco.ie

Forward Planning

City & County Development Plan:

The Proposed Material Alterations to the Draft City and County Development Plan, and their accompanying Environmental Assessments are on public display from the 30th June until the 28th of July.

There are two key components to this stage:

- An invitation to make submissions on the Proposed Material Alterations and,
- A telephone consultation clinic for any interested parties from 9.30am to 1pm on the 7th, 8th, 14th and 15th of July – to make an appointment phone 056 7794010 and quote Material Alterations.

Joint Graigueamanagh/Tinnahinch Local Area Plan

The Material Alterations to the Draft, and the Screening reports, were put on public display from the 9th of April until the 7th of May 2021. A total of 8 submissions were received and the Chief Executive's report on Submissions has been prepared and is listed for consideration by the Elected Members at the July Council meeting.

Masterplans

Notice of the public consultation period for the preparation of a Masterplan for St. Canice's Campus was given in the Kilkenny People on the 30th June. An Issues Paper is now available on the

Council's consultation portal, consult.kilkenny.ie. Submissions are invited from the 2nd July, 2021 until Friday 30th of July, 2021. An online public consultation evening is being held on the 14th July 2021 at 7pm; to register, browse Eventbrite and search - "St. Canice's Masterplan".

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

Taking in Charge

The following estates were passed for initiation stage at the June Council meeting:

- Friary Walk, Phase 1 & 2, Clashacollare, Callan, Co. Kilkenny
- Rath Ullord, Phase 1, New Orchard, Kilkenny

The following estates were approved at the June Meeting for the final step in the taking in charge process:

- Banagher Court, Main Street, Piltown, Co. Kilkenny
- Bellfield, Abbeylands, Ferrybank, Co. Kilkenny
- The Green, Ballyfoyle, Co. Kilkenny
- Newpark Crescent, Golf Links Road, Kilkenny

Vacant Sites

- There are currently 32 sites on the Vacant Sites Register, two of which are under appeal to An Bord Pleanála.
- The number of cancelled entries due to site activation or improvement now stands at 16 sites.
- Payment demands were issued on May 10th
- Owners had an opportunity to appeal the payment demands to An Bord Pleanála and we have received notice of 9 appeals.
- Valuations have just been completed for the (6) 2021 sites, and owners will be notified of their valuations shortly.

PLANNING

Conservation

The Conservation Office is responsible for the presentation of 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. The following funding streams continue to be managed by the Conservation Office:

Built Heritage Investment Scheme:

The total funding assigned for 14 projects in Kilkenny is **€117,600**. Applicants have noted challenges in acquiring trades people as a result of pandemic. The Conservation Officer is working continually with applicants and agents to deliver the projects by DHLGH deadline.

Historic Structures Fund:

The total funding assigned for 6 projects in Kilkenny is **€312,000**. Applicants have noted challenges in acquiring trades people as a result of pandemic. The Conservation Officer is working continually with applicants and agents to deliver the projects by DHLGH deadline.

Historic Town Initiative:

Funding of **€57,000** secured from the Heritage Council's Historic Town Initiative for Phase 2 of St. Mary's, Callan boundary repairs. The railings have been removed for repairs, while masonry works will commence shortly.

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.

Building Control

| VALID COMMENCEMENT NOTICES RECEIVED | END OF JUNE | | |
|---------------------------------------|-------------|------|------|
| | 2021 | 2020 | 2019 |
| Number of Valid Applications Received | 226 | 171 | 156 |

| Valid Part M (DAC) applications received | END OF JUNE | | |
|--|-------------|------|------|
| | 2021 | 2020 | 2019 |
| Number of Valid Applications Received | 34 | 50 | 38 |

As of 1st July, 2021 DAC applications can only be made via the BCMS service online.





Recommended Minimum Criteria for Environmental Inspections (RMCEI) Plan

The Council's RMCEI Plan for 2021 has been submitted to the EPA for review. Environment staff will again endeavour to carry out as many inspections as possible whilst adhering to Government and HSE guidelines.

Environmental Complaints

The number of complaints received by Environment staff for investigation from January to June 2021 is 724 cases compared with 722 for the same period last year. The nature of these complaints range from littering, illegal dumping, water quality and abandoned cars. However, the vast majority 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.

Casual Trading Bye-Laws

At the recent SPC (Strategic Policy Committee) Meeting for Environment Policy, the members of the Committee were advised that Kilkenny County Council has commenced a review of the Casual Trading Bye-laws for the County to complement the review of the Casual Trading Bye-laws for Kilkenny City which was completed earlier this year. There has been an increased interest in casual trading since the onset of COVID restrictions with more people now enjoying the great outdoors. A casual trading licence is required from the Council for the selling of goods in public places designated as casual trading areas. Under the Council's Bye-Laws a number of locations in towns and villages across the County are currently designated as

casual trading areas. These are currently located in Graiguenamanagh, Thomastown, Inistioge, Hugginstown, Kells, Castlecomer, Kilmanagh, Gowran and Glenmore. The current bye-laws can be viewed on the Council's website at: www.kilkennycoco.ie/eng/Services/Environment/Casual-Trading

The main purpose of the review of the Casual Trading Bye-laws is to assess whether or not the number and location of casual trading areas across the County is sufficient. The Council's Executive will engage with each of the Municipal Districts in the coming months to ascertain their views. Draft Bye-Laws will be presented to the SPC at their meeting in September for consideration before being presented to the Council. The draft bye-laws will then go for public consultation.

In advance of the public consultation, the Council are now welcoming the views of local communities on the location of casual trading areas across the County. Ideas on locations setting out why you think the area in question is suitable are welcome for consideration by emailing: environment@kilkennycoco.ie

Decarbonisation Zone (DZ)

Kilkenny County Council awaits feedback from the Department of Housing, Planning & Local Government on the potential DZ area put forward at the end of April. In the interim the Council will form an Implementation Working Group of key staff and relevant stakeholders, including the Three Counties Energy Agency (3CEA), to develop an Implementation Plan by year end. The DZ Implementation Working Group will develop a range of climate mitigation, adaptation and biodiversity measures to address low carbon energy, greenhouse gas emissions (GHG) and

ENVIRONMENT

climate needs to contribute to climate action targets. The overall objective will be to achieve a minimum average of 7% per annum reduction in overall GHG emissions by 2030 (i.e. a total of 51% reduction by the end of the decade.) The Ferrybank area of the County has also been included in the potential DZ nominated by Waterford City & County Council.

Graveyard Grants

The first phase of applications (totalling 19 out of 36 applications received) were approved by the Elected Members at the June Council Meeting. The remaining applications will be presented for approval at the July Council Meeting. Following a recommendation from SPC 4, the Council approved an amendment to the criteria for the scheme to include the cost of insurance as an eligible expenditure item for inclusion in grant claims. The grant contributes towards the cost of:

- Graveyard maintenance, including appropriate works to help pollinators;
- Graveyard recording schemes;
- Heritage studies of graveyards; and
- Costs associated with providing Public Liability Insurance (from 2021).

Lifeguards

There are thirteen Lifeguards employed by Kilkenny County Council on a temporary basis for the summer months, June, July and August 2021.

Lifeguards are 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
- Graiguenamanagh

Duties of the Lifeguards involve advising swimmers regarding safety issues and other issues at the swimming areas. River Lifeguards are trained to the highest level and will carry out rescues and provide first aid if required. In addition to other duties, the Lifeguards pick up litter around their areas and the Council arrange for collection of this during the summer months.



A Lifeguard Supervisor is also employed by Kilkenny County Council to supervise Lifeguards, manage the roster and other duties at the swimming areas during the summer months.

Ringbuoys

There are approximately 110 ringbuoys in Kilkenny City and Environs. Approximately 70 of these ringbuoys are within the City area and are inspected on a regular basis by staff of Kilkenny County Council. The remaining ringbuoys are inspected by Kilkenny Water Safety.

The ring buoys are inspected every week throughout the year. Any ring buoys that are reported missing are replaced immediately. Vandalism of ring buoys was very prevalent some years ago, especially along the Canal Walk but following a successful court conviction, vandalism has significantly reduced.

In the Environs of the City, Kilkenny Water Safety has reported very few missing ringbuoys over the last number of years. From time to time, boat users will retrieve ring buoys, when areas are flooded and ringbuoys get washed away and tangled up in briars, or get caught in currents down river. These ring buoys are upgraded or replaced, as required. The Area Offices also check ringbuoys in their areas and are supplied with ring buoys and boxes for new areas or as replacements, as required.

Details regarding missing ringbuoys can be reported on www.ringbuoys.ie. Information on all the locations of the ringbuoys in Kilkenny City and County are on this website and people can pinpoint exactly where one is missing and an email is then generated to the Water Safety Officer. This allows for the missing ring buoy to be identified and replaced. Any reports of damaged or missing ring buoys are immediately dealt with.

ENVIRONMENT

Dunmore Civic Amenity Site (CAS)

There has been over 1,353 tonnes of waste taken at Dunmore CAS so far this year (i.e. to end May, 2021). This is broken down between Mixed Municipal Waste and Dry Bulk Waste. This is up over 6% compared to the same period in 2020.

Total recycling tonnages for the same period year to date are over 677 tonnes (i.e. an increase of over 16% compared to the same period last year.) Recycling is made up of paper, cardboard, plastic, tetra, metal, timber, green waste, food waste, Haz waste, oil, WEEE, bottles and cans.

Customer numbers to the site for the first 5-months this year stand at 35,900 approx., compared to 29,900 approx. for the same period in 2020 (i.e. an increase of over 16%).

Environmental Social Media Campaigns

The Environment Section are liaising with the Council's Communication Team to promote three national campaigns over the summer months as follows:

My Waste Ireland is promoting eco picnics, providing tips to help you make the most of your picnic experience without unduly impacting on the environment.



WEEE Ireland is reminding people that any household electrical item operated by a plug or battery can be recycled for free at Local Authority Recycling Centres.

The EPA Stop Food Waste Campaign joined 10 Local Authorities this summer to collaborate with celebrity chef Catherine Fulvio to show you how to make the most of BBQs without food waste. A fact often overlooked is that around a third of all food produced is lost or wasted contributes between 8 and 10 per cent of global greenhouse gas emissions. Irish households produce over 250,000 tonnes of food waste per year, at a cost of €700 per household.



Castlecomer Discovery Park "Going Green"

The Castlecomer Discovery Park is working with Kilkenny County Council on an environmental project which will see the park tackling different aspects of their operations. It includes educating their visitors what they can do before they arrive on site and during their visit to help the environment.

The first element of the project was launched in June, as the Park signed up to the conscious cup campaign, with both cafes on site offering 20 cents off a hot drink on the presentation of a reusable cup. A Green Charter has been adopted by its Board and more greening projects are in the pipeline.



Deenview Inclusive Garden, Castlecomer

Deenview Inclusive Garden based in Castlecomer was funded via the Council's Waste Prevention Programme to complete a series of composting workshops which reviewed its current composting system which was not working successfully. After some guidance of the tutor, a new system will be established and an open day for the community (when covid restrictions allow) will take place to demonstrate the centres learnings.

Litter Infrastructure Support Grant Scheme

Kilkenny County Council received notification from the Department of the Environment, Climate and Communications of a once off grant scheme to assist with the provision of new litter bin infrastructure and the replacement of existing bin infrastructure. County Kilkenny's allocation is €75,000. The Environment Section has been liaising with the Area Offices to determine the optimal use of the funds.

PARKS AND SPECIAL PROJECTS



Barrow Valley Outdoor Activity Hub

Works to construct an access road to service the Barrow Valley Outdoor Activity Hub in Graiguenamanagh are now substantially complete.

This project will allow the local social enterprise, i.e. the Barrow Valley Community Development Committee, generate much needed income to sustain and develop the area into the future, while also providing a much needed boost to the local economy. The delivery of this project was also identified as a key objective in the 2019 Graiguenamanagh - Tinnahinch Tourism and Recreational Project Concept Study. The remaining works include the installation of a safety barrier, road signage and boundary fencing and it is anticipated that same will be completed shortly and the road opened to the public. The completed works will also provide for 20 serviced campervan pitches along with car and bus parking for this facility. As part of the arrangement the Council agreed to provide technical expertise and oversight during the design and construction stages of this project.

Abbey Hall Recreational Area – Rehabilitation Scheme

Works commenced in May 2021 on the rehabilitation of the Abbey Hall grounds in Graiguenamanagh. The completion of this project will bring a much loved public amenity in the heart of the town back into use for public enjoyment. Works will be undertaken over three levels and the main focus of the works over the month of June was on the preparation of a sub-base for the multi-games 3G Sports surface on the lower level along with the rehabilitation of the retaining walls to ready same for plastering. Lighting ducts were also installed along the middle tier and shuttering installed along the middle and upper tier walls to ready same for capping and the new ornate railing installation. As part of the arrangement the Council has taken charge of the project design and contract administration.



The Graiguenamanagh Men's Shed

In April 2021 a contract to retro-fit and refurbish the disused toilet block on the Convent Road to facilitate a new workshop for the Graiguenamangh Men's Shed was signed.

Whilst the main purpose of the project is to repurpose the existing building into a workshop, it also provides for a new green living roof to help our pollinators and enhancement works to the area in front of the heath centre and local library. The latter will include both hard and soft landscaping and the installation of age friendly seating.

The Graiguenamangh Men's Shed are currently finalising a long-term lease agreement with Kilkenny Council County for the use of this building.



PARKS AND SPECIAL PROJECTS

South East Greenway

Construction of the South East Greenway has commenced along the Urban Lot sections of the project in New Ross and Ferrybank. The Part 8 Planning for the temporary construction compound for Lot 2 (urban section through Ferrybank) was approved by the Elected Members at the June Council Meeting. Waterford City & County Council (WCCC) has also commenced the Part 8 Planning for the access ramp from the Greenway to the Abbey Road.

The Ferrybank Car Park Options Report undertaken by Malachy Walsh & Partners (MWP) along with the Connect The Dots (CTD) process on public engagement have now been published on the project website <http://southeastgreenway.net/project-timeline-page/>. MWP are preparing preliminary design of the car park which will be a trailhead to include toilets and coach parking. A Part 8 planning application will now be progressed. A portion of these lands will also be required for the proposed URDF funded Belmont Link Road that will cross over the Greenway.

Regarding the assessment of links to the villages Slieverue and Glenmore for the Greenway, Roadplan has been approved to carry out a preliminary assessment of a number of options in the case of each village. Engagement with landowners and relevant stakeholders will now commence to be followed by a public consultation (subject to Covid restrictions) on these options when they have been further investigated.

Parks and Playgrounds

Parks and playgrounds across the county are in top condition. Our playground inspector and maintenance team are busy ensuring all our parks and playgrounds are safe and clean for use for the summer months. Repairs have recently been carried out in Castlecomer, Thomastown, Garringreen, Paulstown, Graiguenamanagh and Windgap.

An application for funding for playground enhancement made to the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth was successful and tenders are currently being sought for a zipline to add to the play offering in Kells playground.

The Kilkenny Recreational and Sports Partnership,

in association with Kilkenny Leader Partnership are running a series of outdoor activity events this month in Ferrybank Park to encourage children to partake in active and fun exercise.

Works are close to completion on the construction of a new playground in Piltown. The site is located on the Main Street behind the old Garda Station and immediately adjacent to the River Pil. The playground is being developed by the local community with assistance from the Parks Department and with funding from the Community and Cultural Capital Facilities Scheme.

Assistance is being given by the Parks Department to the Freshford Playground Group to prepare a planning application for a playground and outdoor amenity hub adjacent to the GAA complex in Freshford. We look forward to working with the committee to deliver this exciting project for the community. Funding for the project has been awarded under the Town and Village Renewal Programme

Outdoor Recreational Infrastructure Scheme (ORIS)

In April the Department of Rural and Community Development announced that applications under the Outdoor Recreation Infrastructure Scheme 2021 will be accepted from local authorities under the following Measures:

- **Measure 1** for small scale projects requiring funding of up to €20,000 – Maximum of 7 applications per local authority and closing date for same 30th June 2021.
- **Measure 2** for medium scale projects with funding of up to €200,000 – Maximum of 3 applications per local authority and closing date for same 30th July 2021.
- **Measure 3** for large scale projects seeking funding of up to €500,000, – Maximum of 1 application per local authority and closing date for same 30th July 2021.
- **Project Development Measure** funding of up to €50,000 for development costs for strategic large scale projects. – Maximum of 1 application per local authority and closing date for same 30th July 2021. Applications for the following projects were submitted under Measure 1 in June and applications for the other three measures are currently being prepared for submission at the end of July.

PARKS AND SPECIAL PROJECTS

Measure 1 Application Submission 2021

| Measure 1 Projects | Description |
|--|---|
| Community Loop Walk Network | The establishment of a countywide network of community walks. This application includes 4 proposed routes ranging from 2kms to 5kms in length in the villages of Johnstown, Stoneyford and Skeoughvasteen. |
| Kells – King’s River Walk Enhancement | Rehabilitation of a 200m section of walking trail along the King’s River and repairs to the pedestrian bridge over the river which connects the walk to the Kells Augustine Priory. |
| Tory Hill Looped Walk Enhancement Works | Sections of the trail have deteriorated and are in need of significant rehabilitation particularly along the approaches to the summit. The proposal also includes for the supply and installation of interpretative signage to give an enhanced visitor experience by providing walkers with a better understanding of the surrounding landscape. |
| The Bishops Meadows – River Nore Swimming Area | Enhancements to the traditional open water swimming area located on the Nore Valley Park in Kilkenny City. Improvements include facilities for smarter travel, enhanced amenity space and the installation of interpretative signage. |
| Woodstock Estate - Promotion & Marketing | Further development and continuation of the promotion and marketing campaign for Woodstock Estate |
| Outdoor Kilkenny - Promotion & Marketing | Continuation/development of the promotion and marketing campaign for ‘Outdoor Kilkenny’ a new brand and website that promotes all outdoor attractions that Kilkenny City and County has to offer. |
| Silaire Wood – Walking Trail Extension | Extend the existing walking trail by 500m, giving a total trail length of 1.5km. This will make this section of the walk available for use all year round and more accessible for all users |



Newly refurbished playground at Woodstock Gardens (left) and new horse and cart in Thomastown (right)

PARKS AND SPECIAL PROJECTS

Woodstock Gardens and wider estate

The Tea Room conservatory, in Woodstock Gardens and Arboretum, was officially re-opened by the Cathaoirleach of Kilkenny County Council, Cllr. Fidelis Doherty on Friday the 2nd July, 2021. Due to Covid-19 restrictions the Tea Room had been closed to the public and during this time the Parks Department of Kilkenny County Council took this opportunity to undertake a number of significant enhancements works on this much-loved structure. The original construction was designed by Richard Turner, the famous Ironmaster responsible for the glasshouses located in the Botanic Gardens, Dublin and Kew Gardens, London. The construction was completed in 1856 and was described at the time as one of Turner's finest designs. But this original

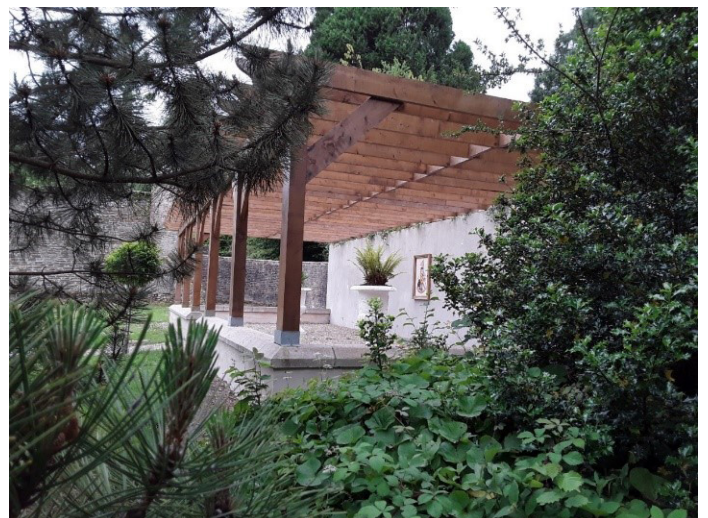


structure was sadly demolished in the 1950's and what you see today is an exact recreation of the original design which was fabricated by the talented Power Foundry in New Ross in 2004. Since that time, it has remained a must see for visitors to the Gardens and is a much photographed location, while also offering the public the opportunity to sit within the beautiful structure to enjoy refreshments during the summer months.

Some of the improvement works undertaken during the closure included sealing of the curved glass roof, painting the ironwork, and the commission of a fantastic vibrant internal mural capturing Woodstock House in its heyday. Other works include the installation of a Victorian style tiled floor, lighting and planting along with the installation of a stone patio area for outdoor dining. All of which builds on the other improvement works which have been completed over the past

number of years, such as enhancements to the main entrance, upgrades and an extension to the playground, the creation of a woodland walk in the gardens, new information plaques at some of our more prominent and champion trees and a Pergola seating area. Going out further beyond the gardens into Woodstock Estate, with Coillte's agreement, by the end of this year the Parts Dept. will have also restored over 6kms of Victorian pathways under the Outdoor Recreation Infrastructure Scheme.

A tender process for the control of cherry laurel in the wider Woodstock area has commenced. Tenders are currently being analysed with the works expected to commence in September 2021 ensuring all works take place outside of the bird nesting season. We are determined to control this highly invasive plant which leaves a detrimental impact on the habitat of the woodland. An extremely aggressive evergreen shrub, it out competes with other native vegetation by creating a very dark forest floor under which little else grows. This will be an ongoing programme over many years as it is a very persistent shrub and highly adapted to the woodland setting.



Newly completed pergola with plaque acknowledging the Tighe Estate the original owners of the Woodstock Estate

PARKS AND SPECIAL PROJECTS

Amenity Grants

A significant proportion of the 181 communities approved amenity grants have begun work on their schemes, while others are drawing down their funds. The range of works involves grass cutting, planting flowers, erecting signage, tree and shrub planting and many other amenity type projects. We have noticed an increase in the number of groups making efforts to manage their areas in a more sustainable way. 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.

Pollinator friendly projects

As partners to the All Ireland Pollinator Plan, the Parks Department is working with the Heritage Office 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. This small measure provides a valuable source of food and habitat for insects, in particular our pollinators. Signage is erected to explain to the general public why grass is not being cut or why certain plants are planted. The two large meadows at Dukesmeadows and Bishopsmeadows, which have been managed with an annual cut for some years now, provide a very valuable habitat in the City centre.



Ox-eye daisies in full bloom in the summer sunshine at Woodstock Gardens

Short mown paths are cut through the longer meadow grass to allow access for the public. Many other areas are now being maintained using this approach with the support of the public. We are all learning to embrace the less maintained appearance recognising the benefits this brings to wildlife. In fact, many residents' groups are approaching the Parks Department with a view to managing their areas in a more sustainable manner. The Parks Department are happy to provide advice to resident's groups to assist with pollinator projects.



Pollinator planting beds at Thomastown Quay car park

LOCAL ENTERPRISE OFFICE/ ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

FOOD ACADEMY PROGRAMME

Andrea Doyle McCabe with her relatively new business 'BeezWize Food Wraps' based in Graiguenamanagh has been accepted to participate on the next Food Academy Programme. This training programme has been developed by the Local Enterprise Offices in conjunction with Bord Bia and Supervalu and is aimed at supporting start-up food and beverage businesses. At the final workshop, participants will get the opportunity to present their product to a panel from SuperValu and if successful, can participate on a trial based in local shops, which could progress over time to a national listing with SuperValu.

BRIGHTSTART PROGRAMME

In June, the LEO Competitive funded BrightStart Programme concluded – this programme was designed to help new start-ups define their business idea, develop an action plan and those with potential were given the opportunity to pitch their idea to funding agencies to apply for grant aid support. The South East Local Enterprise Offices in partnership with Enterprise Ireland, South East BIC and the Ireland South East Office had secured funding under the LEO Competitive Fund to develop this programme. In total, 5 programmes under various themes were run; Female Led, Green and Technology, New Normal, Remote Working and General. The Local Enterprise Office Kilkenny received 36 expression of interests with 13 participants going forward to participate on the relevant programmes; 2 of whom pitched to the funding agencies and continue to avail of supports through the Local Enterprise Office.

FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

A total of €350,296 in direct financial assistance was approved for 17 manufacturing /export service businesses located in throughout the county. This assistance is linked to the projected creation of 51 jobs over the next three years.

€165,285 in Business Expansion Grant assistance was awarded to 8 existing businesses with a forecasted job creation of 19. Business Expansion grants assist businesses trading greater than 18 months to make investment in growing their

businesses and employment numbers.

€45,000 was awarded in Priming grant assistance to a start-up business with a forecasted job creation of 29. Priming grants assist qualifying businesses with start-up investment costs.

€41,111 was awarded in Feasibility Study grants to 3 businesses.

Four Technical Assistance for Micro Exporter grants were awarded totalling €8,900. This scheme supports businesses to consider to explore their export market opportunities.

Three Grad Start Grants were awarded totalling €90,000

Two Green for Micro Grants were awarded totalling €4,014. This scheme supports businesses to consider green and environmental issues for their businesses

LEO STIMULUS FUND

Under the Stimulus Fund, 52 Kilkenny based manufacturing or export type businesses have been appointed mentors in a range of topics covering leadership, innovation, new market development, strategic finance, lean and green. Each business is availing of three days mentoring on one of their nominated topics. This mentoring programme aims to contribute to businesses overall management development and continuous improvement.

LEAN FOR MICRO

In 2021, 6 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

GREEN FOR MICRO

The objective of the 'Green for Micro' programme - a new national initiative from the Local Enterprise Offices - is to help prepare small businesses for the low carbon, more resource efficient economy of the future. During May, a presentation on the scheme was made to Kilkenny Tourism to encourage take-up from the tourism sector within the County. This is a free programme, available to businesses with up to ten employees in County Kilkenny. Business can access 2 days specialised mentoring in a broad range of green related topics to their businesses. Applicants can apply online through the national



OUTDOOR SEATING & ACCESSORIES SCHEME

Throughout June, Kilkenny County Council continued to administer the Outdoor Seating and Accessories scheme funded by Fáilte Ireland. June saw the re-opening of many businesses and wonderful outdoor seating has sprung up throughout the City and County with our support. June also brought a change under the terms of the scheme to allow for businesses not serving food to apply for the grant. Grants are available for individual businesses in the tourism and hospitality sector to increase their capacity to provide outdoor seating at their premises and applications can be made up to 30th September, 2021.



KILKENNY CATWALK 2021

Work continues to develop and deliver additional tourism attractions for the County. Kilkenny Catwalk is a tourism and art trail around the City. Artists will soon have their models delivered to begin work on their bespoke piece of art. The project was launched in April and you can follow its progress online here.



Kilkenny Catwalk website: kilkennycatwalk.ie

Facebook: /Kilkenny-Cat-Walk

Twitter: /WalkKilkenny

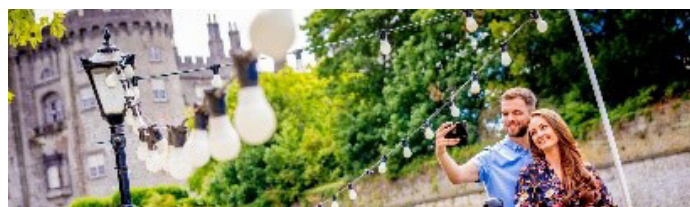
Instagram: KilkennyCatWalk

Kilkenny Catwalk App: available both in Android and iOS.

KILKENNY TOURISM & VISITKILKENNY.IE

Kilkenny Tourism finalised their medium-term marketing strategy for the marketing and promotion of Kilkenny in May. Two workshops were hosted in partnership with Kilkenny County Council and Fáilte Ireland and focused on the priority areas of work for Kilkenny Tourism for the next 18 months as the tourism industry recovers from COVID 19. The Strategy sets out the framework and mechanisms for delivery for the pro-active recovery of the County that is all inclusive of Kilkenny City, towns, communities and business members cross the County. It identifies priorities to support innovation in the sector and to retain and grow our competitiveness in the marketplace. The strategy framework pillars contain four separate and distinct titles, each are interdependent on each other with the ultimate aim to strengthen the appeal of Kilkenny for domestic and international visitors. These are Visitors, Trade Members, Sustainability and the local Community.

“More to Explore” marketing campaign continued to run through June. Kilkenny Ambassador Holly Carpenter visited in June and had plenty of great stories to share with her fans on social media. Check out Hollys recent blogs and posts featuring Kilkenny on <https://www.instagram.com/hollycarpenter/>



LOCAL ENTERPRISE OFFICE/ ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

#TASTEKILKENNY

Kilkenny County Council secured funding from the Department of Agriculture to further promote #tastekilkenny and to showcase the wonderful food and beverage offering here in Kilkenny produced by local food suppliers. May saw “The Two Jackies” take a trip around the County to experience some wonderful local food, drinks and they even learned to barbeque!! This digital and social media campaign will launch later in the summer and will highlight many wonderful food tourism stories from around the County



MADE IN KILKENNY

We extend our congratulations to the Made In Kilkenny group in achieving the status of ‘World Craft City & Region’ for Kilkenny. Kilkenny is one of only four regions to achieve this recognition in Europe. This prestigious internationally recognised award further enhances Kilkenny’s reputation as a centre of craft and creativity. The application, judged by an international panel of jurors, was the result of huge endeavour by MADE in Kilkenny Members, supported by Kilkenny County Council, who demonstrated the region’s craft activities in the areas of craft making, education and training and exhibition spaces leading to the awarding of this elite status to Kilkenny.



HOUSING

Housing Capital Delivery

| | SCHEME TYPE | PROJECT NAME | NUMBER OF UNITS | PROJECT STATUS |
|----|---------------------------|--|-----------------|---------------------------------|
| 1 | AHB CALF Turnkey | Cois Na Bearu, Graiguenamanagh [Cooperative Housing] | 14 | COMPLETED |
| 2 | AHB CALF Turnkey | Margaret's Field, Callan Road, Kilkenny City [Respond] | 40 | COMPLETED |
| 3 | SHIP CONSTRUCTION | Glebeside, Donaguile, Castlecomer | 33 | ONSITE |
| 4 | SHIP CONSTRUCTION | Station road, Ballyragget | 22 | ONSITE |
| 5 | CAS CONSTRUCTION | Grennan Villa, Thomastown [Camphill Communities] | 5 | ONSITE |
| 6 | SHIP CONSTRUCTION | Pairc Nua [The Broguemaker], Kilkenny | 18 | ONSITE |
| 7 | SHIP CONSTRUCTION TURNKEY | New Road & Chapel Street, Mooncoin | 6 | WORKS TO COMMENCE |
| 8 | AHB CALF Turnkey | Nuncio Road Phase 3 | 22 | ON SITE |
| 9 | SHIP CONSTRUCTION | Ayrfield, Kilkenny City | 8 | 6 units completed. 2 at tender. |
| 10 | SHIP CONSTRUCTION | Blackwater Grove, Lower Kilmacow, Co. Kilkenny | 16 | COMPLETED |
| 11 | SHIP CONSTRUCTION TURNKEY | Pennefeather Court, Hebron Road Site 2, Kilkenny City | 8 | ONSITE |
| 12 | CAS CONSTRUCTION | "Woodville", Belmont Road, Ferrybank | 4 | COMPLETED |
| 13 | CAS AHB B & R | 25 a & b Green Street, Kilkenny | 2 | ONSITE |
| | | | 198 | |

Other Units 'Under Construction' at 31st May 2021 – 112 units

- 58 units at Pennefeather Green, Hebron Road, Kilkenny (Turnkey)
- 2 Units at Shanganny, Jenkinstown (Kilkenny County Council Direct Build)
- 23 Units at New Orchard, Kilkenny City (AHB Calf Turnkey – Cluid)
- 12 Units Brother Thomas Place, Church Lane, Kilkenny (Good Shepherd Centre)
- 17 Units at Limegrove, Belmont, Ferrybank (Turnkey)

Kilkenny County Council Projects due to start in June / July 2021

- 4 Units at Main Street, Piltown (Turnkey)
- 6 units at Golf Links Road, (Mulhalls Shop) Kilkenny (direct build)
- Reconfiguration of 1 apt to 2 units- Ayrfield, Granges Road.

Kilkenny County Council Direct Build Projects – out to tender as at 31st May 2021

- 25 Units at Ladywell, Thomastown
- 2 Units at Inchacarron, Mullinavat
- 2 Units at Old Fire Station, Graignamanagh

HOUSING

Kilkenny County Council Direct Build Programme as Pre Tender Stage [90 units]

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

SOCIAL HOUSING SUPPORT APPLICATION SUMMARY June 2021

| | |
|---|-------|
| Number awaiting social housing support at June 30th (Gross Need) | 1,914 |
| Number awaiting Social Housing Support at June 30th (Net Need) | 848 |
| No. of Social Housing Applications received in June 30th | 77 |
| No. of applications incomplete / awaiting further information / clarification | 46 |
| No. of applications validated and ready for assessment during the month | 34 |
| No. of applications assessed during May | 33 |
| No. of applications awaiting assessment as at May 31st | 49 |

HOMELESS SERVICES SUMMARY JUNE 2021

| | |
|--|-----------|
| Homeless Presentations | 37 |
| Homeless Assessment Outcomes | |
| <i>Preventions and Interventions</i> | 27 |
| <i>Emergency Service</i> | 6 |
| <i>Not Eligible/Did not avail of the Service</i> | 5 |
| HAP Place Finder Service | |
| <i>Number of tenancies at first day of the month</i> | 85 |
| <i>Number of tenancies created during the month</i> | 3 |
| <i>Number of tenancies in place at the last day of the month</i> | 88 |
| <i>Number of tenancy breakdowns</i> | 0 |
| Other Social Housing Tenancies created during month | 4 |
| Households in Temporary Emergency B&B accommodation | 1 |
| Households in Temporary Emergency B&B accommodation with families | 0 |
| Households in Transition Emergency Accommodation (OFD) | 12 |
| Households in Transition Emergency Accommodation (OFD) with families | 1 |

HOUSING ASSISTANCE SUMMARY June 2021

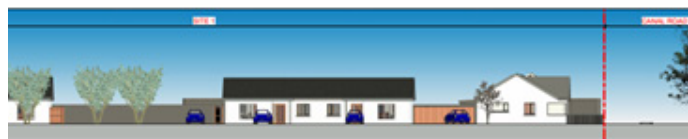
| | |
|--|-----|
| Number of active HAP tenancies to May 31st | 840 |
| New HAP tenancies set up | 78 |
| HAP tenants allocated Social Housing | 58 |
| Closed HAP Tenancies | 27 |
| HAP Rent Reviews | 82 |
| Other tenancy amendments | 266 |
| HAP Calls Received | 376 |

Part 8 Planning-decision due September 2021

20 Units Canal Road, Johnstown (KCC direct build)



View to Canal Road Northward



View to Sites 1 - 4 Westward



2 Contiguous View to Site 5 Northward
S: 1:500

Part 8 Planning Proposal, Contiguous Elevations, Canal Road, Johnstown (Direct build KCC)

June Monthly Statistics

| | |
|--|-------|
| LA/RAS/Leasing allocations up to end of May (offers made): | 38 |
| Number of LA tenancies surrendered | 7 |
| Tenant Liaison Officer cases | 61 |
| Maintenance Calls | 410 |
| Maintenance Calls year to date | 2,753 |

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 30th June 2021 is as follows:

| GRANTS APPROVED 30 TH JUNE 2021 | | |
|--|------------|-------------------|
| Scheme | No. | Amount Approved |
| HGD: Housing Adaptation Grant | 69 | €719,731 |
| MAG: Mobility Aid Grant | 24 | €103,070 |
| HOP: Housing Aid for Older Persons | 113 | €669,836 |
| Total | 213 | €1,492,637 |

| GRANTS PAID OUT UP TO 30 TH JUNE 2021 | | |
|--|-----------|-----------------|
| Scheme | No. | Amount Approved |
| HGD: Housing Adaptation Grant | 32 | €280,589 |
| MAG: Mobility Aid Grant | 15 | €59,445 |
| HOP: Housing Aid for Older Persons | 52 | €296,868 |
| Total | 99 | €636,902 |



House details Glebeside

Housing Loan Activity to 30th June, 2021

| | Annuity/ RI Home Loan | Reconstruc- tion Loan | Caravan Loan | TOTAL |
|-----------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------|------------|
| Received | 30 | 0 | 0 | 30 |
| Approved | 8 | 0 | 0 | 8 |
| Amount Approved | €1,387,077 | 0 | €0 | €1,387,077 |
| No. Paid | 11 | 0 | 0 | 11 |
| Amt. Paid | €1,418,977 | €0 | €0 | €1,418,977 |

Pre-Planning/Design

1 house, Windgap (KCC direct build)



Aerial view of completed scheme at Glebeside, Castlecomer 33 units (KCC direct build)



Completed scheme at Glebeside, Castlecomer



COMMUNITY

Town & Village Renewal/ Rural Regeneration Promotional Campaign

A Town & Village Renewal/ Rural Regeneration promotional campaign ended on the 30th June with 51,000 views on social media. The campaign incorporated community interactive magazine with videos that showcased projects awarded funding in County Kilkenny.

RRDF Call 3 Application

An Application for Callan is presently being developed for submission to the Department on the 30th of July 2021. The Category 2 application will focus on securing predevelopment funding for the Friary and Priory building in Callan and the development of a Masterplan for Bridge, West and Mill Street.

Pride of Place Judging

Judging will now take place for the 2021 Pride of Place competition in the Autumn.

Callan Town Team

A Review of the Callan Town Team Town Improvement Plan is underway. The updated plan will showcase projects completed in Callan and will be promoted focusing on residents in Town and its surrounds.

KRSP

Consultations will commence in July with key stakeholders including Kilkenny County Council for the development of the new Kilkenny Sports Partnership Strategic Plan

Kilkenny Successful as one of seven new Community Development Project Pilots

On the 24th June 2021 Joe O'Brien TD, Minister of State at the Department of Rural and Community Development named 7 applicant organisations to take part in a pilot Community Development Programme. Kilkenny Traveller Community Movement (KTCM) was one of the 7 successful applicants. The application was a collaborative effort between the KTCM, Kilkenny LEADER Partnership and Kilkenny County Council Community Section.

The aim of this €1m national pilot programme is to trial community led interventions that address poverty, social exclusion and inequality, and promote human rights.

Applications to take part in the programme were received from over 120 community development organisations. The projects chosen are based in Donegal, Clare, Dublin, Kilkenny, Longford, Wexford and Meath/Louth and will provide supports to Travellers; women living in poverty, migrants and people with disabilities.

Kilkenny Local Community Development Committees (LCDCs) will have oversight of the administration of funding in respect of the project. The Kilkenny pilot project will present to Kilkenny LCDC for information purposes in the initial 12 months of funding and as agreed locally thereafter.

National Play Day

National Play Day 2021 takes place from 3rd to 10th July with the aim of promoting play and recreation opportunities for children and young people all over Ireland. This year's theme is 'Playful Communities'. Kilkenny County Council is proud to support these play initiatives which are part-funded by the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth.

Kilkenny County Council has worked in collaboration with Kilkenny Children and Young Peoples Services Committee (CYPSC) and HSE Disability Services Kilkenny to provide sensory gift packs for children and young people with disabilities in County Kilkenny. These packs will ensure that the children will have stimulating and comforting toys appropriate to their age and abilities. Kilkenny Civil Defence Volunteers will distribute the free play packs throughout County Kilkenny.

Mill Family Resource Centre Youth Section are holding a Sports day for young people aged between 9 and 12 years. This event will help the young people to develop their social skills and all games are selected for group use, ensuring that all young people, irrespective of their fitness levels will be included in all play activities which will help forge friendships and belonging for this group of young people.

Newpark Family Resource Centre Growing Patch Childcare Centre are holding a play/sports day for young people under the age of 12 years. The activities include obstacle courses, skipathons, soccer blitz etc.

Outdoor play has a positive impact on children's social, emotional, intellectual and physical wellbeing and is even more important after months of public health restrictions. All activities will comply with social distancing guidelines in place at this time.

Community Enhancement Programme – Kilkenny LCDC

Kilkenny received €136,319 under the CEP Grant Scheme for 2021. 30% of the overall funding was to be made available for small grants of €3,000 or less.

Kilkenny ringfenced €41,000 for grants of €3,000 or less and €95,319 was made available for grants up to €10,000.

The aim of the fund is to provide grants to community/voluntary groups to assist them:

- Towards projects or equipment enhancing facilities (similar to previous years and, one-off grants towards costs associated with reopening of a facility or the sustainability of a facility. These include costs such as utility bills etc.

A total of 74 applications was received. At their recent meeting, Kilkenny LCDC approved 28 grants under the smaller category and 29 medium grants to various groups/organisations all across the County for many varied projects.

List of the successful applications can be found at this link [_____](#).

HERITAGE

Funding of €60,000 secured for two key Kilkenny heritage projects

The Abbey Quarter, Kilkenny and St. Lachtain's Church, Freshford have both received funding from the Community Monuments Fund. A Conservation Plan for St. Francis Abbey, St. Francis Well and Evans Turret in the Abbey Quarter will be funded, to guide the future conservation, maintenance and presentation of the monuments. The public will be invited to submit their views on a draft Conservation Plan in the coming months.

St. Lachtain's Church in Freshford has received funding for works to a renewable energy heating system, and to improve interpretative facilities. The 1400th anniversary of the death of St. Lachtain takes place in 2022 and the works will support the planned programme of celebrations.

The Community Monuments Fund is co-ordinated nationally by the National Monuments Service of the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage.

Biodiversity Action Plan Grant Application

An application for funding of a community-based biodiversity training programme has been submitted by Kilkenny County Council & LAWPRO to the National Parks and Wildlife Service under the 2nd round of funding of the Biodiversity Action Plan Grant scheme. Notification is expected shortly.



Our Knitted Together Community Arts project continues to flourish and grow with over 180 individuals and groups knitting and crocheting squares for blankets and many have made full blankets. The groups and individuals include ICA groups, scout groups and knitting groups and our volunteers are knitting and crocheting squares and many will complete full blankets for local charities. We had a stall at the farmers market on Thursday 24th June and distributed yarn, knitting needles and crochet hooks to those



The GALLERY ARTS SHOW on KCLR

Between the end of March and middle of June 2021, KCLR 96FM – KCLR ran a weekly Arts Show, called 'The Gallery'. 'The Gallery' was funded through the Creative Ireland programme and was a collaboration between Kilkenny and Carlow County Councils and KCLR. It was presented by writer and dramatist John MacKenna.

The 'Gallery' was not just pitched at people making money from their art. It explored the intrinsic role of art within the community through interviews with youth groups and community arts schemes. In this way it had a broad appeal and through presenter, John MacKenna's relaxed and personable interviewing style 'The Gallery' provided interesting and engaging content for a broad range of listeners.

Each programme in 'The Gallery' series have been uploaded to the KCLR website.



YOUTH ARTS NOW

Our Youth Arts Now partnership is in the process of recruiting a Researcher & Conference Coordinator for the South East Region. The role will support the partners in the research and future development of youth arts policy and practice in Ireland. This research and development role is funded through the Arts Council. The Lead Partner is Waterford City and County Council joined by Carlow, Kilkenny and Wexford County Councils.

Culture Night 2021

Plans are underway for Culture Night 2021 which will take place on the 17th September. A call out to Kilkenny venues was put out at the beginning of June and a total of 6 venues will be taking part in the Culture Night celebrations in Kilkenny which include; the National Design and Craft Council, The Butler Gallery, KCAT Arts Centre, TADA Theatre Thomastown and Kilkenny Castle.



FIRE & RESCUE 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 received. We are in the process of going to tender for this new vehicle. 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.

Fire Safety Certificates

- 55 applications for fire safety certificates were received to 29th June 2021. 62 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.
- 9 Licence Applications were processed under Section 24 of the Fire Services Acts 1981 & 2003.
- 4 Dangerous Substance licence applications were received and assessed to date
- 36 Fire safety inspections of premises have been carried out to date during level 5 -Covid-19.
-

Operations

- Fire Brigades responded to 314 turnouts up to the 23rd June 2021. The same period last year we responded to 409 turnouts.

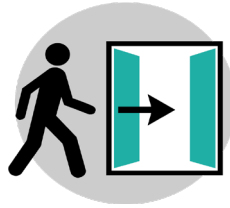


LIBRARY SERVICES

June 2021



13,757
Items borrowed



2,589
Book and Browse
appointments



361
Contact and Collect
appointments

Keep Well: Sending a Smile - A Postcard Project

As part of our Keep Well campaign, we developed Sending a Smile Postcard packs for pre-school children in the each of the 12 creches that our mobile library van normally visits. Children coloured and designed the postcards, then sent them to loved ones as far away as Scotland and Liverpool!

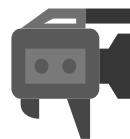
From Muckalee to Kells and Carrigeen to Conahy, the children were delighted to receive 4 postcards each, postage stamps, colours and lots of books to encourage children to enjoy reading and writing as a hobby.

Local artist Clare Brennan worked with us to develop the project. The project promotes creativity and hobbies through writing, colouring and designing.



Our Summer Stars Reading Challenge for is underway again, with **191** children signed up already!

The challenge is to read 6 books over the Summer, and log your books on a reading card. These are available from your local library or online.



Digital Engagement

Our staff have prepared, recorded, edited and published **392** posts on our social media platforms in June. Our videos were viewed **4,484** times.

LIBRARY SERVICES

Online Services usage:



2,004
eAudiobooks borrowed
▲ 25% on 2020



1,181
eNewspapers borrowed
▼ 88% on 2020



1,130
eBooks borrowed
▼ 16% on 2020



1,010
Online Course sessions
▼ 46% on 2020



711
eMagazines borrowed
▼ 28% on 2020



670
Songs accessed
▲ 2381% on 2020

Little Library Bags



As part of a national Little Library Bag project, we have provided over 600 books to over 85 Early Learning Centres across Kilkenny. This initiative was developed to improve access to books and literacy supports for all and encourage regular reading.



Cruinniú na nÓg 2021



We held a range of online workshops for Cruinniú na nÓg including Macrame pot holder making, a drawing workshop, make your own wormery and a Teenage Creative Writing Workshop. All events were very popular.

Online Flower Arranging Workshops



We held 3 online flower arranging workshops with Eva Holmes of Darver House Nursery and Kilkenny Carlow ETB Community Education section, with a floral arrangement, basket and hanging basket. Videos received over 300 views and are still available to view.

FINANCIAL REPORT



Finance Report – July 2021

The expenditure by service division to the end of June is set out in table 1. Total Expenditure for the period was €48m compared with the annual budget of €89.9m.

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 and still remain closed due to Covid. The Government has now announced an extension of the commercial rates waiver for the nine months to the end of September for businesses impacted. The estimated value of this waiver amounts to €5.1m and compensation will be provided by Government for this amount.

| Table 1 | Actual YTD June 2021 €'000's | Budget Full Year 2021 €'000's |
|---|---------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| Housing & Building | 10,572 | 20,085 |
| Road Transport & Safety | 12,412 | 25,500 |
| Water Services | 3,357 | 7,115 |
| Development Management | 4,807 | 10,679 |
| Environmental Services | 5,642 | 11,748 |
| Recreation & Amenity | 3,011 | 6,647 |
| Agriculture, Education, Health, Welfare | 296 | 672 |
| Miscellaneous Services | 7,939 | 7,516 |
| OVERALL TOTAL | 48,036 | 89,962 |

Income from car parking is also significantly below budget with only 21% of the annual budget figure received to the end of June.

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 months 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 six month period to the end of June 2021. The temporary closure of a number of construction projects due to Covid 19 restrictions has had a positive impact on cashflow but this will now change with the resumption of construction activity on all projects.

FINANCIAL REPORT

Budget 2022

On 2nd June, 2021 last the Government announced a number of changes to Local Property Tax (LPT) for the forthcoming year. These changes will require a decision from the Council before the end of August on the adjustment to the base rate. This item is included on the agenda for the July Council meeting. A separate report has been sent to Members setting out the issues involved.

Rates Waiver 2021

On the 27th January the Department of Housing, Local Government & Heritage issued details of a three-month Commercial Rates Waiver to be applied for the first quarter of 2021.

The waiver was further extended to cover quarter 2 providing a total of six months credit in lieu of commercial rates for eligible businesses. Credit in lieu of commercial rates was 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 businesses last month. In total, a waiver of €3.4m was applied. Business that fell into the ineligible category were invited to seek eligibility for inclusion in the waiver scheme where it could be shown that the business suffered severe impact due to the pandemic. The total value of applications determined as eligible for consideration under severe impact was €38,465.

The Government announced a further extension to the Rates Waiver 2021 to cover Quarter 3. The waiver is intended to continue to support eligible business as they adjust to the reopening of the economy and recover from the impact of the pandemic. Businesses currently eligible for the waiver will continue to be eligible. The Rates Section is currently reassessing accounts and will apply the waiver over the coming weeks. Businesses will be notified in writing of eligibility/ineligibility and appeals for severe impact must be received by 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.

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 break-down of SBASC Q1: -

Closing date for this scheme is 21st July 2021

| | |
|--------------------------------|----------|
| 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 are now included in the extension of the scheme. There will be two turnover thresholds i.e. eligible business with a turnover of more than €50,000 will receive a grant of €4,000 and eligible business with a turnover of €20,000 to €49,999 will receive a grant of €1,000. Businesses can apply on line at www.kilkennycoco.ie until 21st July, 2021. Further information is available on line at www.kilkennycoco.ie.

Queries in relation to the scheme can be made by e-mail to sbasc@kilkennycoco.ie or by phoning 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.