



Kilkenny County Council
Comhairle Chontae Chill Chainnigh



CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S REPORT

JUNE 2021

To: Each Member of Kilkenny County Council

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

REPORT AT A GLANCE

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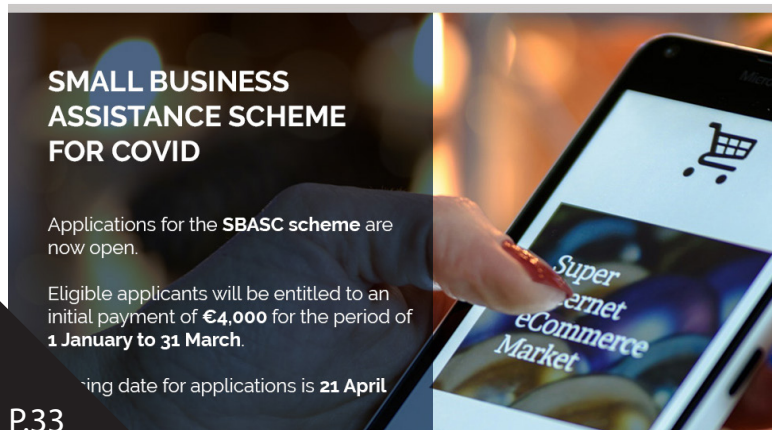
SMALL BUSINESS ASSISTANCE SCHEME FOR COVID

Applications for the **SBASC scheme** are now open.

Eligible applicants will be entitled to an initial payment of **€4,000** for the period of **1 January to 31 March**.

Closing date for applications is **21 April**.

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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

1ST JULY, 2021

#YourCouncilDay

11TH JULY, 2021

National Commemoration Day Regional Ceremony.

16TH JULY, 2021

Closing date for applications third call for Category 2 applications under the Rural Regeneration and Development Fund

21ST JULY, 2021

Closing day for Small Business Assistance Scheme (SBAS)

COMMUNICATIONS

Press Releases

A total of 12 press releases were issued by the Communications Unit during May, 2021.

Engagement

The Communications Unit worked with various Departments on communications and engagement strategies for a number of projects in the month of May including Public Consultation on N24 Waterford to Cahir Roads Project and Social Media Campaign on Housing Delivery Programme.

#YourCouncil Day

#YourCouncilDay National Social Media campaign is planned again this year for 1st July and it is proposed nationally to tie it in to efforts to promote the sector as an 'Employer of Choice' and focus on the people working in local authorities, and the range and value of their work.

We hope this will generate positivity both internally and externally. The Communications Team will be planning for #YourCouncilDay over the next few weeks and will plan a social media campaign to highlight the work and achievements of the Council year-round.

#OurRuralFuture

Over the coming weeks local authorities we will be highlighting, through our social media channels, how the funding provided through the Town and Village Renewal Scheme - Accelerated Measure was utilised focusing on the benefits that the funding is now having for towns and villages in adapting to COVID-19, socialising outdoors etc. This is a national campaign and will be using the #OurRuralFuture hashtag as part of any such social media activity. www



ROADS

National Roads

N24 Waterford to Cahir Scheme

Phase 2 Route option has started on this scheme. It will take 24 months to complete. A preferred corridor will be identified at the end of the process. All the information on the scheme is available on the website [N24waterford2cahir.ie](https://www.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](https://www.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

Breagh Valley Link Road

This road is approximately 850m in length and is designed to connect the existing Waterbarrack roundabout at the western end of Dean Street, to the new roundabout at the junction of the Circular Road and the Kilmanagh Road (constructed as part of the Western Environs Phase 1 Infrastructure Scheme). Environmental Impact Assessment and Appropriate Assessment Stage 1 screening reports have been completed. A Natura Impact Statement is currently being prepared with an expected completion date of June 2021.

Kilkenny Western Environs Phase 1 Infrastructure Scheme

The expected completion date is now August 2021. This scheme will facilitate the construction of approximately 3,000 housing units in the coming years. To date in the immediate area of the scheme, a Strategic Housing Development (SHD) application for 104 housing units has been submitted. A planning application for 183 housing units and

and a primary school is expected to be lodged in 2021. A planning application for 77 housing units has been submitted to Kilkenny County Council. Further planning applications are also in the pipeline including two new secondary schools and significant housing developments.

Loughmacask Link Road (Freshford Road to CBS)

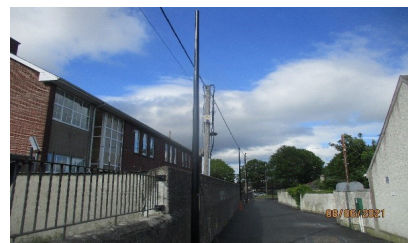
The Part 8 Planning process for this scheme was advertised on April 23rd and has completed the public display phase. Roads staff in consultation with Planning staff are preparing the planning report for consideration by the Elected Members at the July

Kilkenny City

The Roadworks Programme is continuing in Kilkenny City with surface dressing on a number of roads including the Dunningstown and Kilkiernan Roads and preparatory works commenced on Wolfe Tone Street.

Other Works

- Re-pavement works funded under the URDF and Active Travel funding continues on Parliament Street.
- A new footpath was provided on the Circular Road connecting Roberts Hill to Dean Cavanagh Place.
- Minor safety works were completed in Keatingstown, and,
- Public lighting was provided on the lane adjacent to CBS primary school and the lane from Bishop Birch Place to the Dublin Road to important active travel links.
- Flower planting was carried out throughout the City in May / June



PLANNING

Development Management

PLANNING SUMMARY	Total to May	
	2020	2021
Applications Received	67	104
Applications Granted	27	83
Applications Refused	2	3
Complaints Received	32	57
Warning Letters Issued	31	53
Enforcement Notices Issued	9	11
Cases Closed	28	44

The Planning Department continues to remain 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 Department at 056 7794010 or by email to planning@kilkennycoco.ie.

The number of planning applications being received this year continues to increase with the number received in May of this year up 55% compared to the same month last year.

Forward Planning

City & County Development Plan:

The submissions received on the Draft City and County Development Plan were considered by the Elected Members at a Special Meeting held on 8th June. The material amendments to the Draft Plan agreed at the meeting will now be placed on public display for a minimum period of 4 weeks. The Elected Members will consider any submissions received and it is envisaged that the Plan will be considered for adoption at a Special Meeting of the Council at the end of August.

Joint Graigueanamanagh/Tinnahinch Local Area Plan

The Screening reports and Material Alterations report were put on public display on 10th of April with a closing date for submissions of 7th of May 2021. The Chief Executive's report is currently being prepared.

Masterplans:

Work is continuing with the preparation of Masterplans for the areas of Loughmacask, St Canice's Campus (the former St. Canice's Hospital) and the Fairgreen area of the City. These were also impacted by Covid 19. Loughmacask is the furthest advanced. A Draft Master Plan for Loughmacask has been prepared and is being internally reviewed and is expected to be presented to the Elected Members and then placed on public display. St. Canice's Campus and the Fair Green area will recommence following shortly after that.

Taking in Charge

The following estates were agreed by the members for initiation stage at the May Council meeting:

- Brookfield, Ballyhale, Co. Kilkenny
- Haven Court, Ballyragget, Co. Kilkenny

Initiation stage will also be considered by the members at the June Council Meeting for:

- Rath Ullard, Kilkenny City (Phase 1);
- Friary Walk, Callan (Phases 1 & 2).

Works are substantially complete for final taking in charge at the June Council Meeting for:

- Banagher Court, Piltown;
- Bellfield, Ferrybank;

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 for a total of 23 sites, with total outstanding levies amounting to €1,453,131.
- Owners had an opportunity to appeal the payment demands to An Bord Pleanála and we have received notice of 2 valid appeals to date.



Conservation

Conservation Grants

Site inspections and planning consents for Built Heritage Investment Scheme and Historic Structures Fund conservation grant projects are currently underway.

Historic Towns Initiative

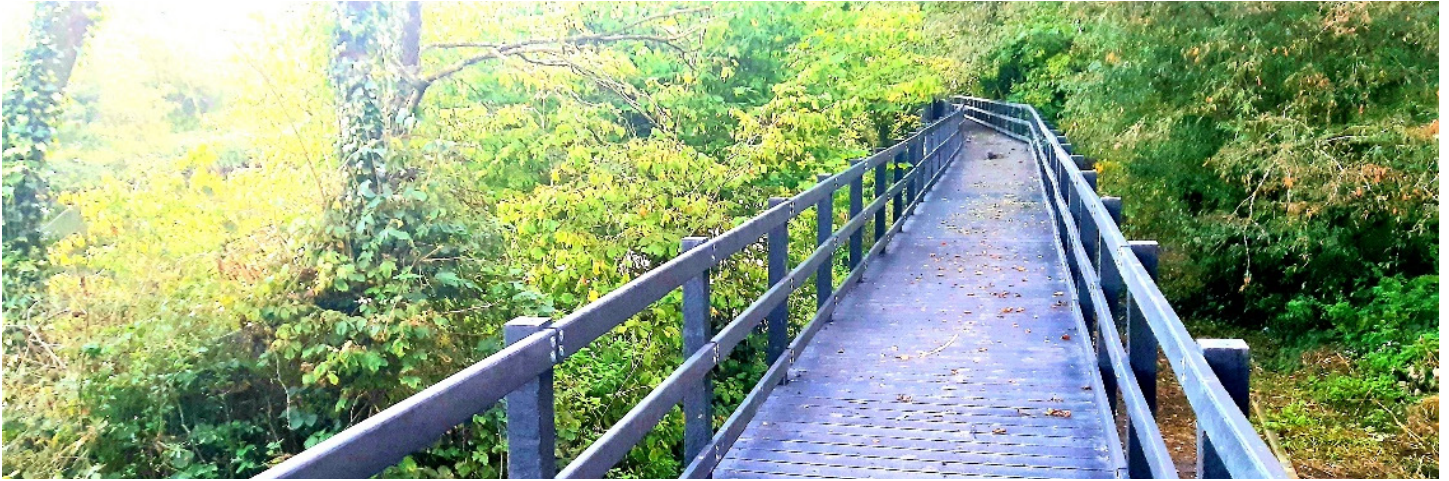
Phase 1 - works for repair and conservation of 19th century wrought iron railings and masonry elements at St. Mary's Church Graveyard, Green Street, Callan are complete.

Phase 2 – Ironworker contractor has been appointed and on-site commencement date set.

Building Control

VALID COMMENCEMENT NOTICES RECEIVED	END OF MAY		
	2021	2020	2019
Number of Valid Applications Received	175	171	156

Valid Part M (DAC) applications received	END OF MAY		
	2021	2020	2019
Number of Valid Applications Received	33	33	34



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 increasing trend (experienced during 2020) in the number of complaints being received by Environment staff for investigation is continuing for 2021, with 621 cases logged to date compared with 642 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.

Graveyard Grants

The first phase of applications have now been assessed and they will be presented for approval at the June 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).

Historic Landfills

Following the recent easing of Level 5 COVID-19 Restrictions Site Investigation works has commenced at Mallardstown and Sheastown. Work has also recommenced at Dungarvan.

Columbarium Wall – St Kieran's Cemetery

Following a presentation to the Kilkenny Municipal District Meeting in March 2020 and the positive feedback received therein, it is proposed to proceed with Part 8 Planning for the provision of a Columbarium Wall Garden at St. Kieran's Cemetery.

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



Recently Opened Columbarium Wall Garden Killarney (December 2020)

ENVIRONMENT

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

The following provides an indicative timeline for the project:

- Conclude Pre-Planning & Screening Process by end June 2021;
- Commence Part 8 Planning Application in July 2021;
- Conclude Part 8 Planning by end November 2021;
- Progression of project to Tender in December 2021, subject to Council Decision on the Part 8 Planning. It is intended to phase construction subject to funding.

Bring Centres

The Council provides and manages 46 Bring Centres across the City and County and year to date (YTD), a total of 1,310 tonnes of recyclables were collected from our Bring Centres. This represents a 30% increase on the same period in 2020. Loughboy Shopping Centre (with 79.2 tonnes collected YTD), LIDL Loughboy (with 79.0 tonnes collected YTD) and Newpark Shopping Centre (75.8 tonnes collected YTD) are the busiest bring centres in the City Environs while ALDI Graignamanagh (59.8 tonnes collected YTD) and LIDL Thomastown (56.6 tonnes collected YTD) are the busiest in the County. 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. This is proving particularly challenging as the main service provider is also contracted to a number of other Local Authorities who are also experiencing a similar trend.

Anti-Dumping Initiative

Kilkenny County Council has received **grant funding in the amount of €91,940 for nine projects under the Anti-Dumping Initiative (ADI) in 2021**. The ADI aims to reduce incidents of illegal dumping nationally by providing funding for projects aimed at tackling the problem, using a collaborative approach involving local authorities, communities and other State Agencies.

In 2021, the focus of the ADI remains on four key areas:

- Prevention
- Abatement
- Education and
- Enforcement



The below table outlines the projects approved under the ADI in County Kilkenny for 2021:

Project No.	Project Title	Amount Approved
1	Continuation of the Bikes for Africa Scheme	€ 8,440.00
2	Bulky Waste Collection day.	€ 26,000.00
3	Works commenced in May on the rehabilitation of the Abbey Hall grounds in Graiguenamanagh. The completion of this project will bring a much needed public amenity in the heart of the town back into use as a recreational facility for public enjoyment. Works will be undertaken over three levels and consist of the following:	€ 9,000.00
4	Clean up of River Barrow at Rose Kennedy bridge	€ 16,000.00
5	Clean up of Bishops Mountain, South Kilkenny	€ 5,000.00
6	Clean up of Stroan Fountain area at Kilfane	€ 11,000.00
7	Clean up of Fairways Estate	€ 9,500.00
8	Clean up of Fairways Estate	€ 5,000.00
9	Clean up of Fairways Estate	€ 5,000.00
TOTAL		€91,940.00


BRING CENTRE

Ionad Fág Anseo

ST.CANICES CHURCH CAR PARK / ST.CANICES CHURCH CAR PARK






Help create an Ireland where pollinators can survive and thrive!
Cabhairigh le héirtín a chruthú
ait ar féidir le pollinators maireachtáil agus rath!



“Working towards a cleaner environment for Kilkenny”

“Ag oibriú i dtreo timpeallacht níos glaine do Chill Chainnigh”

Household use only

If these banks are full or require cleaning please contact:

Free phone litter line 1800 200 156 or bringcentre@kilkennycoco.ie (These provide details of the location)

Uaidé tí amháin

Má bhíonn na bainc seo tén nó má theastaíonn glanadh uathu, déan teagmháil, le do thoil, le:

Take home your bags and boxes

Those who litter will be prosecuted

Tabhair abhaile bhur málaí agus boscaí

Ionchúiseofar iad siúd a chaitheann bruscaí

Saorghlao na Líne Bruscair 1800 200 156 nó bringcentre@kilkennycoco.ie (Tabhair sonraí, le do thoil, faoin áite)

PARKS AND SPECIAL PROJECTS



Abbey Hall Recreational Area – Rehabilitation Scheme

Works commenced in May 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 as a recreational facility for public enjoyment. Works will be undertaken over three levels and consist of the following:

Main Street Level / Lower Level:

Replacement of the defective tennis/soccer court surface with a multi-games 3G Sports surface. Structural interventions to the concrete retaining walls and render to match Abbey Hall, replacement of existing defective low-quality railing along top of retaining wall with ornate protective railing and replacement of existing poor chain-link fencing with visually unobtrusive netting.

Mid-Level

Removal of failed macadam surface and the creation of a new footway and landscaped area. The planting theme within the green areas will be pollinator friendly with age friendly seating to be incorporated at two separate locations. The landscaped area and existing monument to be up-lighted from the new footpath.

Upper Level

Replacement of existing defective low-quality railing along top of retaining wall with ornate protective railing and replacement of defective surface on the access and maintenance routes. The works also include the restoration of the Abbey Hall town clock and installation of a replica bell which were completed in May.

This project is being part funded under the LEADER Programme with match funding from the Council and the local community.



Before



After

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 well advanced and it is anticipated that this project will be **substantially complete by the end of June.**

The lands required to facilitate the construction of this road were the subject of a CPO by the Council in 2014. Included in the works contract is the provision of car and coach parking along with 20 hardstanding serviced campervan pitches. The completion of this project will allow 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. Outdoor Recreational Infrastructure Scheme (ORIS) 2020



Pedestrian Bridges over the River Barrow

Following a competitive tender process, consultants were appointed to prepare a Feasibility Study and Design Options Report for two new pedestrian bridges over the River Barrow as identified in the 2019 Graiguenamanagh/ Tinnahinch Tourism and Recreational Project Concept Study.

The consultants are currently gathering information and liaising with key stakeholders such as Waterways Ireland, National Parks and Wildlife Service, the Flood Relief Capital Office and Inland Fisheries.

This project is being part funded under the LEADER Programme with match funding from the Council and Trail Kilkenny.



PARKS AND SPECIAL PROJECTS

Outdoor Recreational Infrastructure Scheme (ORIS) 2020

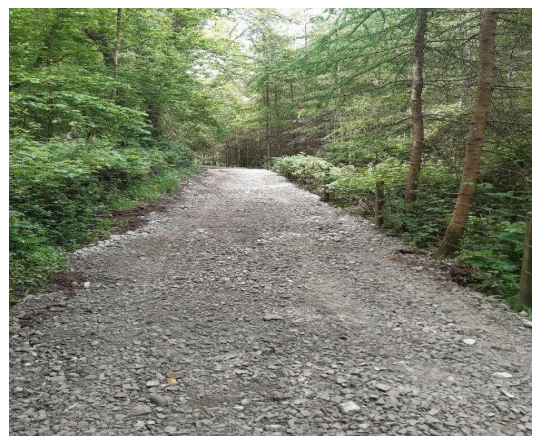
Works are progressing well to deliver the projects funded under our ORIS 2020 applications:

Measure 1 Projects	Description	Status
Goresbridge - Cois Bearbha	Riverside Looped Walk Upgrade.	Contractor appointed and due to commence in mid-June.
Freshford Loop Walk	Trail Enhancement Works.	Works substantially completed in May.
Brandon Hill	Brandon Hill Summit Walk - Walking trail signage upgrade.	Tenders issued for supply and erection of signage – return date mid-June. Note: new 20 bay carpark was recently constructed at Raheendonore and the existing carpark at Deerpark was increased to cater for 18 cars. Works undertaken by Coillte.
Nore Valley Walk	Signage and furniture upgrade along trail.	Tender submissions currently being assessed.
Woodstock Promotion	Social media marketing campaign to promote Gardens and Trails within the Estate.	Promotion campaign reactivated in May with relaxation of Covid-19 Restrictions. Minimum of three updates / features issued through various social media platforms weekly.

Measure 2 Projects	Description	Status
Woodstock Estate	Enhancement of 2.7km of original Victorian estate paths and removal of invasive species.	Tender process for plant and materials to reconstruct trails finalised and works are expected to commence in early July. Tenders for removal of invasive species, namely laurel and rhododendron, at key locations within the estate are due back in mid-June.
Moate Field Callan – Phase 2	Completion of the second and final phase of the looped walk which when complete will provide for a 1.8km trail.	Planning approval in place. Awaiting Camphill Communities of Ireland to finalise arrangements to put lease in place with Council. Thereafter, consultancy services tender will be issued for detail design, tender documents and contract administration.



**Freshford Loop Walk
Before & After**



PARKS AND SPECIAL PROJECTS

Parks and Playgrounds

Park and playground maintenance is continuing across the county to ensure all our parks and playgrounds are safe and clean for the coming outdoor summer. Repairs have recently been carried out in Thomastown, Graiguenamanagh, Kells and Windgap.

A new employee has commenced work in the Parks Department. Mr Gary Dawson has many years of landscape maintenance experience and will be invaluable member of the Parks Team. This new role will cover a number of sites across the County including the Moate Field in Callan, Silaire Wood in Graiguenamanagh and Ferrybank Park. This new staff member will also team up with our other staff as required to assist in many miscellaneous jobs in parks and playgrounds around the County.

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 are planning a series of outdoor activity events this coming summer in Ferrybank Park to encourage children to partake in active and fun exercise. A large area of Ferrybank Park is being managed for Pollinators. No wildflower seed required as the wildflowers occurring naturally in the soil have been allowed to flower.

Works have commenced on the construction of a new playground in Piltown. The site, located to the rear of the old Garda Station, which is a protected structure, is on the Main Street and immediately adjacent to the River Pil. The playground will be developed by the local community with assistance from the Parks Department and funding from the Community and Cultural Capital Facilities Scheme.



Piltown playground construction underway



Repairs underway in Windgap

PARKS AND SPECIAL PROJECTS

South East Greenway

The main construction of the 24km Greenway is being awarded in a number of Lots. The first 2 Lots have been recently awarded and contractors, Glas Engineering, from Tipperary, have commenced works on site in Rosbercon. They will shortly also commence works in the Ferrybank urban area. Further contracts will be awarded as the detailed design is finalised and the landowner accommodation works are agreed in each Lot.

A Part 8 Planning Application for the temporary construction compound and temporary access ramp at Abbeylands and Rathculliheen will be considered by the Elected Members at the June meeting of the Council. This compound is critical to the access to the Greenway in Ferrybank. The site is on the boundary of the unfinished section of the Clover Meadows Estate, abutting the boundary hedge with nearby Bellfield Estate.

A Business Development Executive, namely, Alan Fitzhenry, was appointed in May and commenced in his position on 8th June.

Woodstock Gardens and Wider Estate

A funding application to National Parks and Wildlife to undertake a Management Plan for the control of Cherry Laurel in Woodstock was successful.

We are keen 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. We welcome the funding which will guide us as to the most appropriate control techniques.

Since the opening up of restrictions the gardens have been extremely busy, particularly at weekends. Extra staff were required at busy periods to manage the numbers. The refreshment service from the coffee van is now available during the week as well as at weekends and will be fully manned soon following a recruitment process. As soon as new staff are available we plan to open our new and improved tea shop housed in the conservatory.

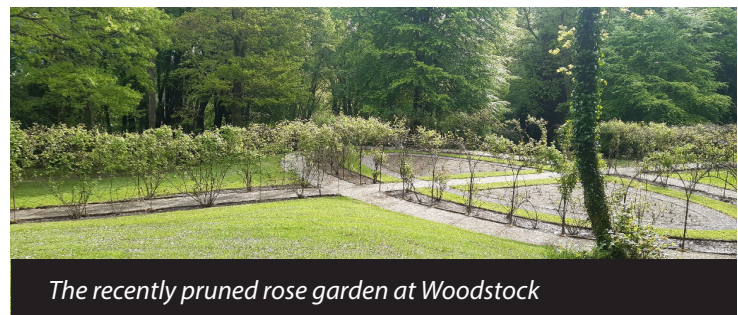
Recently a large stretch tent was erected in the gardens to accommodate outdoor dining and provides shelter in inclement weather. We expect a busy season as most Irish people will stay at home for their annual holidays.



The tent erected in Woodstock has been popular for picnics and outdoor dining



Wild garlic flourishing under the trees in the arboretum at Woodstock



The recently pruned rose garden at Woodstock

PARKS AND SPECIAL PROJECTS

Pollinator Friendly Projects

In line with actions identified in the All Ireland Pollinator Plan which Kilkenny signed up to, the Parks Department is working with the Heritage Office and Area offices to manage open spaces in a more sustainable way.

We are reducing mowing where possible across the county in an effort to increase the biodiversity of grass verges and parklands, which provides a valuable source of food and habitat for insects, in particular our pollinators. The large meadows at Dukesmeadows and Bishopsmeadows have been managed with an annual cut for some years now, providing an incredible habitat in the city centre. Short mown paths are cut through the longer meadow grass to allow access for the public.

Other areas are being examined for this approach in consultation with residents many of whom are embracing the less maintained appearance recognising the benefits 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 in pollinator projects.

Recently planted pollinator planting at the Fair Green, and Turf Market, Graiguenamanagh



Repairs underway in Windgap

TOURISM

Kilkenny County Council's Tourism Team continue in its efforts to support the tourism and hospitality sector as businesses prepared for re-opening and got ready to welcome visitors back to Kilkenny City and County for the summer months and beyond.

Capital Investment in our Outdoor Spaces

Throughout May, Kilkenny County Council developed plans to deliver continued capital investment in Public Realm throughout the City.

Two applications have been made to both Fáilte Ireland and to the Department of Arts, Tourism, Culture, Gaeltacht, Sport and Media to develop two outdoor spaces in the City for citizens and visitors alike to enjoy.

The Watergate public park will deliver a high quality outdoor live performance space for use by local artists and musicians along with our festivals and events organisers to use. When not being used for live performance the space will transform to a lively outdoor seating area for all to enjoy.

The Market Square outdoor dining area will be further enhanced with weatherproofing furniture installed and additional improvements made to the seating area.

A successful response to this funding application will provide an opportunity for businesses in the City core to facilitate year-round outdoor dining.



Kilkenny Catwalk 2021

Work continues to develop and deliver additional tourism attractions for the County. Our Kilkenny Catwalk, a tourism and art trail around the City from Quarter 3 of 2021, continues to be developed. Artists will soon have their model 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

Kilkenny Catwalk Social Media:

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

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

Instagram: [KilkennyCatWalk](https://www.instagram.com/KilkennyCatWalk)



TOURISM

Kilkenny Tourism and visitkilkenny.ie

Kilkenny Tourism introduced us to Kilkenny's new Tourism Ambassadors for 2021. Five new high-profile ambassadors from the world of movies, TV, food and social media are set to showcase some of Kilkenny's best adventure and outdoor holiday experiences for visitors this Summer. Among the line-up includes Oscar nominated Director, Tomm Moore, Cartoon Saloon, celebrity chef Edward Hayden; Blogger and Influencer Sinead De Butleir; former Miss Ireland and influencer Holly Carpenter and Blogger Niamh de Brun.

All the ambassadors have diverse backgrounds, but a deep-rooted history with Kilkenny. Check out www.visitkilkenny.ie for further details and up to date blogs.



"More to Explore" marketing campaign continues to run through May, highlighting various itineraries available for visitors here in Kilkenny when they visit over the summer months. The campaign is proving to be a great success and will work in close alignment with Fáilte Ireland's upcoming "Keep Discovering" Campaign.

Kilkenny Tourism Recovery Taskforce

Fáilte Ireland launched its 5 million domestic marketing campaign on the 1st June "Keep Discovering" with Kilkenny featuring heavily in its print content.

Fáilte Ireland's goal for 2021 is to sustain businesses, support survival in the short term to thrive in the long term. Focus of the campaign is on the domestic visitor and to encourage the "staycation" and multiple trips around Ireland for 2021.



LOCAL ENTERPRISE OFFICE/ ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

National Success at Student Enterprise Awards

Students from County Kilkenny have been successful at the National Final Student Enterprise Programme held virtually on 14th May, scooping awards across the different categories.

A formal presentation to the winners took place on 27th May by Cathaoirleach Cllr Andrew McGuinness. Mark Srouji, from Coláiste Éamann Rís, Callan was the recipient of first prize in the 'My Entrepreneurial Journey' competition at Intermediate level. Mark set up a business called "Mark's Productions" making themed table centrepieces and as part of the competition he interviewed Anne Neary of Ryeland House Cookery School as his case study. Last year, Mark and his twin brother Evan were successful in winning a Special Merit Award in the Intermediate Category of the main Student Enterprise Programme. Also, from Coláiste Éamann Rís, Callan; Noah Cahill, Ian McDonald and Thomas Deegan who participated in the Junior Category of the main competition were presented with the Best Adaptability Award in the Covid era.

In the 'Most Creative Business Idea' competition which is open to senior students, Rachel Brennan of Loreto Secondary School was awarded a Special Merit Award for her Covid-19 related business idea "Counting after Covid". Rachel's idea involved the development of customised framed money box containing imagery to motivate people to save for trips, adventures, etc. post Covid.

#LookForLocal Training Partnership with Google Digital Garage

To complement the training and mentoring that the Local Enterprise Office is engaged in to assist their clients with the reopening, the national network of LEOs have agreed a partnership with Google Digital Garage to deliver a series of FREE webinars over the course of June and July. These five expert led webinars will cover a range of topics that are vital to businesses online success and enable them to best position their business online as the economy continues to reopen.



Google Digital Garage

Local Enterprise Office
Making It Happen

GET MORE BUSINESS
THIS SUMMER
WHAT'S YOUR STRATEGY?

Series of 5 Webinars • Supporting #LookForLocal



LOCAL ENTERPRISE OFFICE/ ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Webinar 1 - Digital Marketing Strategy
Webinar 2 - Get your Business Visible online
Webinar 3 - Get Started with Search Engine Optimisation
Webinar 4 - Make your Website Work for You
Module 5 - Get Started with Analytics

Further information and booking details available on our website

<https://www.localenterprise.ie/Kilkenny/Training-Events/Look-for-Local/>

Financial Assistance

- A total of €224,471 in direct financial assistance was approved for 11 manufacture /export service businesses throughout the County. This assistance is linked to the projected creation of 44 jobs over the next three years.
- €82,957 in Business Expansion Grant assistance awarded to 4 existing businesses with a forecasted job creation of 12 jobs. Business Expansion grants assist businesses trading greater than 18 months to make investment in growing their businesses and employment numbers.
- €45,000 awarded in Priming Grant assistance to start-up businesses with a forecasted job creation of 29 jobs. Priming grants assist qualifying businesses with start-up investment costs.
- €30,000 awarded in Feasibility Study grants to 2 businesses.
- 1 Technical Assistance for Micro Exporter grant awarded - €2,500. This scheme supports businesses to consider and explore their export market opportunities.
- 2 Grad Start Grant awarded of €60,000
- 2 Green for Micro Grants awarded totally €4,014. This scheme supports businesses to becoming Green and environmentally friendly.

Evolve – Small Business Management Development Programme

During May, eight Kilkenny businesses completed this management development training which had commenced during Enterprise Week 2021 and ran over 12 weeks. This programme was delivered by Local Enterprise Office Kilkenny in conjunction with Local Enterprise Office Carlow.

Local Enterprise Office Stimulus Fund

Under this scheme, 52 Kilkenny based manufacturing / 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, 5 businesses have commenced projects on Lean for Micro mentoring programme in order to assist them to review their processes to become more competitive and innovative.

Green For Micro Initiative

The objective of 'Green for Micro' programme 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.



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



HOMELESS SERVICES SUMMARY MAY 2021

Homeless Presentations	42
Homeless Assessment Outcomes	
<i>Preventions and Interventions</i>	24
<i>Emergency Service</i>	5
<i>Not Eligible/Did not avail of the Service</i>	13
HAP Place Finder Service	
<i>Number of tenancies at first day of the month</i>	81
<i>Number of tenancies created during the month</i>	4
<i>Number of tenancies in place at the last day of the month</i>	85
<i>Number of tenancy breakdowns</i>	0
Households in Temporary Emergency B&B accommodation	0
Households in Temporary Emergency B&B accommodation with families	0
Households in Transition Emergency Accommodation (OFD)	9
Households in Transition Emergency Accommodation (OFD) with families	0

SOCIAL HOUSING SUPPORT APPLICATION SUMMARY MAY 2021

Number awaiting social housing support at April 30th (Gross Need)	1,872
Number awaiting Social Housing Support at April 30th (Net Need)	832
No. of Social Housing Applications received in April 30th	97
No. of applications incomplete / awaiting further information / clarification	70
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

HOUSING ASSISTANCE SUMMARY MAY 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	1,320

May Monthly Statistics

LA/RAS/Leasing allocations up to end of May (offers made):	46
Number of LA tenancies surrendered	10
Tenant Liaison Officer cases	64
Maintenance Calls	450
Maintenance Calls year to date	2,343

Housing Loan Activity to 31st May, 2021

	Annuity/ RI Home Loan	Reconstruc tion Loan	Caravan Loan	TOTAL
Received	28	0	0	28
Approved	8	0	0	8
Amount Approved	€978,077	0	€0	€978,077
No. Paid	7	0	0	7
Amt. Paid	€1,080,018	€0	€0	€1,080,018

Private Grants

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

GRANTS APPROVED 31ST MAY 2021

Scheme	No.	Amount Approved
HGD: Housing Adaptation Grant	69	€ 665,996
MAG: Mobility Aid Grant	22	€ 98,791
HOP: Housing Aid for Older Persons	109	€ 605,232
Total	200	€1,415,019

GRANTS PAID OUT UP TO 31ST MAY 2021

Scheme	No.	Amount Approved
HGD: Housing Adaptation Grant	30	€272,413
MAG: Mobility Aid Grant	13	€ 52,679
HOP: Housing Aid for Older Persons	45	€263,454
Total	88	€588,546



Hoban Park Housing Estate, Callan, Co. Kilkenny



Blackwater Grove, Kilmacow, Co. Kilkenny



Glebeside Housing Estate, Castlecomer, Co. Kilkenny

COMMUNITY

Town & Village Renewal

Thomastown Recreational Amenity/ Community Park Facility.

Funding was awarded under 2020 Town & Village Scheme. Works are well in progress in the development of the new Thomastown Recreational Amenity located behind the Community Centre in Thomastown. It is envisaged that this project will be **completed by the end of July 2021.**

Freshford Outdoor Activity Hub

The Town and Village Renewal funding allocated to Freshford has been approved to be used in the development of an Outdoor Activity Hub. The project is a demonstration of real partnership between a number of Kilkenny County Council Departments, Freshford.ie Community Group, Freshford Playground, the local GAA Club and of course the Department of Rural and Community Development. It is hoped to have the project commenced in the coming months.

Health Checks (Town & Village 2019)

A series of community workshops were held over the month of May. The workshops were well attended and have guided the next step in the health check process which is the formation of Town Teams and the production of a Town Plan for Thomastown, Castlecomer, Johnstown, Urlingford, Mullinavat and Goresbridge. These are expected to be finalised in June for dissemination.

Town & Village 2021

The Department of Rural and Community Development has announced the Town and Village Renewal Scheme for 2021. Funding is at 90% for 2021. **The Council has advertised for expressions of interest from community groups – closing date 18th June, 2021.**

The Department also announced a new initiative under Town and Village Renewal – Connected Hubs. **The closing date for receipt of applications is 17th June, 2021.** Eligible applicants must be BCPs or as existing hubs which provide or will provide remote working facilities.

Town & Village Renewal and Rural Regeneration projects promotional campaign.

This on line document with videos promoting County projects is now live and can be read on mobile phones, tablets, and home computers. The document incorporates promotional videos that showcase completed projects with a County wide spread. We have had a significant reaction to the document and videos in Kilkenny since it went live four weeks ago with an extensive reach county wide.

See Link to RRDF /T&V interactive promotional document with build in videos.

<https://indd.adobe.com/view/461c8182-032a-4cb5-9f5d-4881d3baf071>

Kilkenny LCDC Community Enhancement Scheme (CEP) Grants

Kilkenny LCDC have been allocated €136,319 for the 2021 CEP Grant Scheme. The scheme was announced in mid-May and provides funding to communities across Ireland to enhance facilities in disadvantaged areas. The CEP is funded by the Department of Rural and Community Development and administered by the Local Community Development Committees (LCDCs) in each Local Authority area. Locally based community and voluntary groups in disadvantaged urban and rural areas, and, Not-for-Profit organisations are the eligible recipients for this grant. Small scale project applications are being accepted for grants up to €3,000. A limited number of medium scale applications are being accepted for grants of up to €10,000.

The closing date for receipt of applications is Friday 18th June, 2021 .

Round 4 Healthy Ireland Fund (HIF)

The work programme under Round 3 of the HIF is well underway with projects adapting to the Government Restrictions and engaging both the wider population and targeting groups of people that experience health inequalities in Healthy Ireland activities.

The LCDC Healthy Kilkenny Sub-group have been proactive and have met to review the Healthy Kilkenny Community Plan and identify key priorities and gaps for programme development under Round 4 HIF. The programme has had a great impact across the community and will play a key role in post Covid supports for people experiencing both physical and mental ill health as an outcome of the pandemic.

Kilkenny Recreation and Sports Partnership [KRSP] Strategy

KRSP is presently commencing consultations for the development of the 2022–2025 KRSP strategic plan. A strategy committee has been established to facilitate this process. Following a tendering

process the consultations will be carried out by S3Solutions.

Callan Town Team/ Regeneration Projects

A promotional campaign/interactive document is presently being developed that will focus on Callan Town and will showcase regeneration and work completed over the last few years in Callan. This document will also showcase the work completed by the Town Team in Callan and the actions completed under the Town Team Plan which was facilitated by Kilkenny County Council.

Rural Regeneration Fund

The third call for Category 2 applications under the Rural Regeneration and Development Fund has been announced. The Fund seeks to provide investment to support rural renewal, strengthen and build resilience in rural communities and assist in the regeneration of towns and villages with a population of less than 10,000, and outlying areas.

The closing date is the 16th of July 2021.



HERITAGE



Adult barn owl feeding chick (Photo credit Richard Mills)

Kilkenny Barn Owl Survey

The Barn Owl, with its brilliant white feathers and screeching call, is a source of myth and legend in Ireland. Sadly, Barn Owl numbers have declined and they are now under threat. BirdWatch Ireland, in partnership with Kilkenny County Council are undertaking a survey of Barn Owls in County Kilkenny this summer and we're looking for your help. You can help the survey and conservation efforts by reporting any information that you have on Barn Owls in the county by visiting <https://birdwatchireland.ie/our-work/surveys-research/research-monitoring/raptors/barn-owl-survey/>

This project is co-funded by Kilkenny County Council and the National Parks and Wildlife Service through the National Biodiversity Action Plan Fund. For further information email heritage@kilkennycoco.ie

Wetlands Survey 2021

A programme of wetland surveys has been commissioned in County Kilkenny. Wetlands are one of the most biodiverse habitats we have and are essential to buffer against the impacts of climate change. They can range in size from springs and ponds, to rivers, lakes and bogs. The survey will commence in July, and builds on the wetland audit undertaken in 2020. The data gathered will inform future policies. The project is co-funded by Kilkenny County Council and the Heritage Council under the County Heritage Plan funding 2021.

Search for Kilkenny's nesting swifts – we need your help this summer!

Birdwatch Ireland, in partnership with Kilkenny County Council are coordinating the first county wide Swift survey in Kilkenny this summer. We are asking the public to help by reporting sightings of Swifts in their area to swifts@birdwatchireland.ie or heritage@kilkennycoco.ie.

This project is co-funded by Kilkenny County Council and The Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage, through the National Parks and Wildlife Service's National Biodiversity Action Plan Fund. It is also kindly supported by the Heritage Council.



Swift with dark underside, and short forked tail (left); swallow with white underparts and long forked tail (right). (photo credit, Eden Channel UK TV)

Create a Buzz – Enter the Local Authority Pollinator Award 2021

Tidy Towns groups are encouraged to create a buzz in their community and enter the Local Authority Pollinator Award in the national Tidy Towns competition. The award, with a €10,000 prize fund, encourages Tidy Towns groups to implement pollinator-friendly actions. There is also a new 'Best Newcomer Award' in 2021, with a prize of €1,000. The Local Authority Pollinator Award supports the All-Ireland Pollinator Plan and is sponsored by the Heritage Offices & Biodiversity Offices of Local Authorities across Ireland, in partnership with the National Biodiversity Data Centre.

The closing date is July 23rd 2021. For details see <https://pollinators.ie/communities/tidytowns-pollinator-award/enter-the-2021-local-authority-pollinator-award/> For advice contact heritage@kilkennycoco.ie



Community Heritage Grants awarded in Kilkenny

Four Kilkenny community/not-for-profit groups have received funding from the "Community Heritage Grant Scheme 2021" totalling €26,370. They are Butler Gallery, Windgap Tidy Towns, Castlecomer Discovery Park & Kilkenny Archaeological Society. Congrats to everyone involved.

Kilkenny receives grants for City walls

Kilkenny County Council is delighted to have been awarded grants from The Irish Walled Towns Network for repairs to Black Friars Arch on Abbey Street, one of the seven gates in Kilkenny city's medieval walls; and also for information plaques on the City walls. Works will commence in the coming months.

Webinar series for Heritage Week organisers

The Heritage Council is running a series of free webinars to support communities and people who are organising events for National Heritage Week.

- Tuesday, 22nd June, 1pm – 2pm: Welcome to National Heritage Week 2021. Learn about this year's approaches and key dates. [Register here](#).
- Tuesday, 29th June, 1pm – 2pm: Taking your project online. Learn about the methods and benefits of digital heritage sharing. [Register here](#).
- Tuesday, 29th June, 3pm – 4pm: Communicating your project. Learn about how to share your project widely over social media and local media outlets. [Register here](#)

ARTS

Knitted Together 2 project – Crochet Tutorials

Our 3 crochet online tutorials were rolled out in May. Textile designer, artist and tutor Jacqui Kelleher facilitated the tutorials. Our newbie participants learned how to crochet some basic stitches i.e. chain, double crochet, treble crochet and slipstitch. They learned how to crochet a granny square using the foundation stitches they had learned.

Social online get togethers

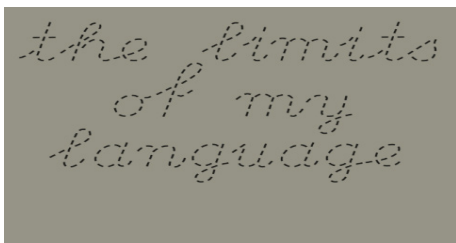
Our online social get togethers, as part of our Knitted Together 2 project, commenced in May and will continue throughout June and July. We invited participants to join Carrie Lynam, Kilkenny based visual artist, from the comfort of their homes, to bring whatever they were working on, to connect with others involved in this project and possibly pick up a few tips or share some of their wisdom regarding their craft. These are proving to be very successful and enjoyable sessions for the women involved.

wednesday weeklies

Our Wednesday Weeklies, a series of online meetings aimed at artists and other creatives in Kilkenny, commenced in April. They explored various themes, on an informal basis, but were led by experienced practitioners who could support and guide the participants through these difficult times. A total of seven sessions were held altogether with two hundred and twenty-seven in attendance over all sessions.

The limits of my language

The limits of my language is a group exhibition with artists Chloe Brenan, Elaine Grainger and Johanna Nulty. A conversation commences; a dialogue through structure, sound and film in an attempt to articulate tacit knowledge, haptic memory and subconscious experience. This was the 3rd and final exhibition curated by Rachel Botha, our 2020 emerging curator in residence and this is what she had to say of her experience.





KILKENNY COUNTY COUNCIL
ARTS OFFICE

POETRY PHONE



FREEPHONE 1800 272994

Welcome to the Poetry Phone
To listen to a poem please pick a number between 0 and 9
All of the poems were written by Kilkenny poets and
published in Kilkenny Arts Office's Poetry Broadsheet

Enjoy

This project is brought to you by Kilkenny County Council Arts Office
as part of our current Kilkenny community wellbeing initiative

FIRE & RESCUE SERVICES

Capital Projects

At the May Monthly meeting the Elected Members approved the Chief Executive's Report relating to Part 8 Planning permission for a proposed new Fire Station in Urlingford. The design of the new fire station is at an advanced stage and documents are being prepared for the tendering process which is anticipated to begin during July 2021. It is anticipated that construction of the new Fire Station will start during Q3 2021 and the construction works should be completed by September 2022.

Work is ongoing to identify and purchase a new site for Kilkenny City Fire Station.

Kilkenny Fire Service have taken the delivery of 80,300 bar breathing apparatus cylinders. Funding for these such cylinders was approved from the National Directorate for Fire and Emergency Management. These cylinders are integral to the use of breathing apparatus in Kilkenny Fire and Rescue Service which is both an operational imperative and is also needed in order to maintain compliance with the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act 2005.

Fire Safety Certificates

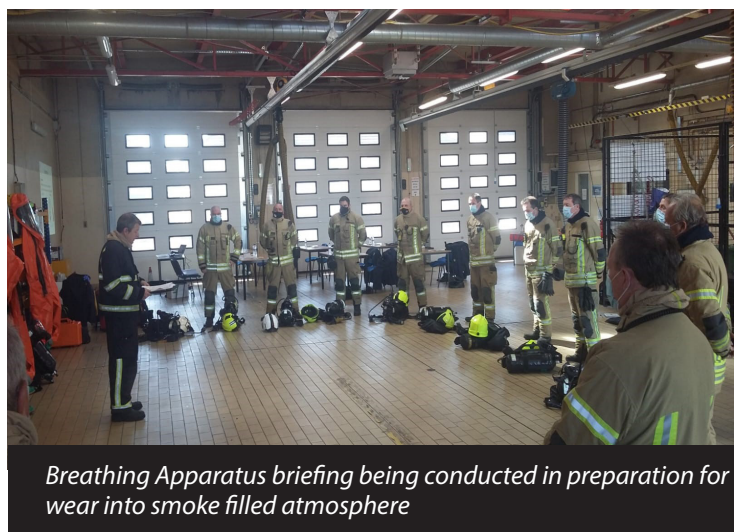
- 48 applications for fire safety certificates were received to 19th May 2021.

Fire Services Acts 1981 and 2003

- Fire Prevention staff made targeted inspections of premises both to provide advice and to enforce legislation.
- 8 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.
- 27 Fire safety inspections of premises have been carried out to date during level 5 -Covid-19.

Training

Personnel in our stations were trained as Working at Heights Instructors by Industrial Safety and Rescue Techniques (ISRT). The aim of this course is to provide personnel with the knowledge and skills required to be able to train and refresh others to work safely at heights.



Breathing Apparatus briefing being conducted in preparation for wear into smoke filled atmosphere

LIBRARY SERVICES

May 2021



13,757
Items borrowed



Online Services use:



2,036
Book and Browse appointments



2,164
eAudiobooks borrowed
▲ 33% on 2020



208
Contact and Collect appointments



1,432
eBooks borrowed
▼ 18% on 2020

892

eMagazines borrowed
▼ 20% on 2020



766

Songs accessed
▲ 5371% on 2020



5,441

eNewspapers borrowed
▼ 62% on 2020

1,212

Online Course sessions
▼ 77% on 2020



66

Language sessions
▼ 27% on 2020



Keep Well: Dial -A -Story



Dial A story line continues to prove popular, with a new selection of stories added in May. With titles such as Consistently Good Gravy and The Cottage At The End Of The Road, there is something for everyone.

Stories were written by Local authors from Loughboy and Thomastown Library Creative Writers Groups. To listen, Freephone 1800 - 300 309

LIBRARY SERVICES

Keep Well Switching off and being creative



The Art of Writing: Stationery Kits

500 Stationery kits have been developed for our Door to Door library users to promote the craft and pastime of letter writing and to provide creative opportunities and encourage people to stay connected with friends until they can safely meet again in person.

Keep Well folders, notepads, pens, quotations, envelopes and stamps are being distributed in May and June.

Bealtaine at Your Library : May



We held another exciting Bealtaine festival this year, with a range of online events for people to enjoy from the comfort of home. Our Bealtaine videos had over 1,000 views across facebook and YouTube.

Most popular events were Planting, sowing and Flower arranging with Eva Holmes and Kilkenny Carlow ETB Community Education, followed closely by with Decluttering and Coping with grief talks. These can still be viewed through our facebook page under [videos/kilkennylibrary.ie/](https://www.facebook.com/kilkennylibrary) Kilkenny County Council's YouTube Channel.

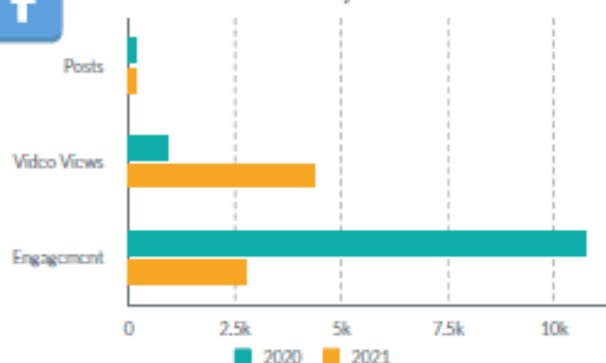


Digital Engagement

Our staff have prepared, recorded, edited and published **466** posts on our social media platforms in May. Our videos were viewed **5,633** times.



Facebook May20 v 21



Twitter May 20 v 21



FINANCIAL REPORT



FINANCE REPORT

The expenditure by service division to the end of May is set out in table 1. Total Expenditure for the period was €39.3m compared with the annual budget of €89.9m.

Table 1	Actual YTD May 2021 €'000's	Budget Full Year 2021 €'000's
Housing & Building	8,949	20,085
Road Transport & Safety	9,538	25,500
Water Services	2,791	7,115
Development Management	4,078	10,679
Environmental Services	4,305	11,748
Recreation & Amenity	2,521	6,647
Agriculture, Education, Health, Welfare	245	672
Miscellaneous Services	6,877	7,516
OVERALL TOTAL	39,304	89,962

Finance update

The Covid-19 restrictions in place for the first five 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.

Income from car parking is also significantly below budget with only 15% of the annual budget figure received to the end of May.

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

FINANCIAL REPORT

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 five month period to the end of May 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.

Budget 2022

On June 2nd 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. It is proposed to include this item on the agenda for the July Council meeting following the completion of the two week statutory consultation period which will commence on June 23rd.

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 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 the business suffered severe impact due to the pandemic.

A total of 35 applications were received by the closing date of 14th May. 20 applications were eligible for inclusion in the scheme.

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. Business currently eligible for waiver will continue to be eligible for the waiver. The Rates Section awaits formal direction from the Department and will commence the application of the Q3 waiver on receipt of same.

Queries in relation to the Rates Waiver 2021 can be made on line at rateswaiver@kilkenny-coco.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 Q1 of the scheme was the 21st April, 2021. To date Kilkenny County Council has received 147 applications which are currently being processed.

Phase 2 of this scheme has been expanded to include those businesses that had previously been ineligible and covers the period 1st April to 30th June, 2021. Businesses working from non-rateable premises are now eligible to apply subject to other eligibility criteria and will receive a grant of €4,000. Businesses with a turnover between €20,000 and €49,999 are also now eligible to apply subject to other eligibility criteria and will receive a grant of €1,000.

Closing date for this scheme is 21st July 2021

FINANCIAL REPORT

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 184 appeals have been completed. 144 of the 184 appeals have resulted in a decrease in rates. The total income lost to date stands at €832,784. 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.



Kilkenny County Council
Comhairle Chontae Chill Chainnigh



Údaráis Áitiúla Éireann
Local Authorities Ireland



Rialtas na hÉireann
Government of Ireland

SMALL BUSINESS ASSISTANCE SCHEME FOR COVID

Applications for the **SBASC scheme** are now open.

Eligible applicants will be entitled to an initial payment of **€4,000** for the period of **1 January to 31 March**.

Closing date for applications is **21 April 2021**.

Visit your **local authority website** to find out more and apply.

