

**COMHAIRLE CHONTAE CHILL CHAINNIGH
KILKENNY COUNTY COUNCIL
FEBRUARY MONTHLY
MANAGEMENT REPORT**



FEBRUARY 2017

To: Each Member of Kilkenny County Council

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

EXECUTIVE FUNCTIONS:

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

FINANCE:

Chief Executive Financial Report–(Appendix 1).

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

17th March, 2017 – St. Patrick's Day Parade, Kilkenny City – Civic Event hosted and funded by Kilkenny County Council. Members are invited to the Reviewing Stand.

Amenity Grant Scheme 2017 – Closing Date 31st March, 2017.

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WATERFORD BOUNDARY REVIEW

Following the Special Meeting of Kilkenny County Council held on 13th February, 2017, the Cathaoirleach has written to the Minister for Housing, Planning, Community and Local Government, requesting an urgent meeting to discuss Councillors' concerns with the process, findings and recommendations.

The Boundary Working Group with the Cathaoirleach as Chair will commence their work in the coming week. As requested by Council, the issue will be an agenda item for Council Meeting.

ROADS:

The following serves as an update to Elected Members on some of the Capital projects currently ongoing in County Kilkenny:-

Safety Improvement Programme

Under the 2017 Safety Improvement Programme the Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport has allocated funding in the amount of €249,000 for low cost safety measures on the Regional and Local Road Network, details provided hereunder:-

Road	Location / Townland	Proposed Works	Allocation
R700	Inistioge	Provision of footpath and signalised pedestrian crossing.	€48,000
R693	Freshford Road, Kilkenny City	Traffic Calming Route Treatment from Talbots Inch to the Junction of	€70,000

		the Freshford & Granges Road - Phase 1	
R704/L7497	Rosbercon, New Ross.	Junction Improvements to improve visibility splay and turning radius.	€58,000
R426	Deerpark, Castlecomer to Clogh Road.	Traffic Calming Measures - Provision of driver feedback signs and improved road markings.	€13,000
R448	Ballyhale.	Provision of signalised pedestrian crossing to cater for Scoil Phádraig, Ballyhale National School.	€25,000
R435	Johnstown.	Provision of Driver Feedback Signs and improved road markings at Johnstown National School.	€15,000
R697/L1029	Rogerstown Cross, Dunnamaggin.	Junction Improvements to improve visibility splay	€20,000



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N76 Callan Road Realignment Scheme

The contract for the N76 Callan Road Realignment Scheme was awarded to SIAC Construction Limited on the 21st December 2016. This Scheme has been an objective of Kilkenny County Council for many years and there is no doubt, when completed, will greatly enhance the lives of the residents living along the road, improve road safety and provide for a more attractive approach into Kilkenny City.

The scheme itself extends for 4.38km's from the N76 Callan Road Roundabout, on the Ring Road, to the Brownstown Junction. The Scheme provides for the introduction of on-line footpaths/cycle tracks and public lighting from the Ring Road to Tennypark Cross and an off-line road realignment between Tennypark Cross and Brownstown Junction. It is noted, a significant number of landowners were affected with respect to the acquisition of lands required to deliver this scheme and their co-operation in this respect is acknowledged.

The contractor is currently mobilising, setting up sites offices and a compound, undertaking advance survey works and the anticipated contract duration is 18 months. An information notice was circulated locally by the Council, in January, advising residents and business owners of the appointment of the contractor and the pending works programme. In addition, the contractor will also circulate a notice, at two monthly intervals, advising residents of the planned works along with contact details for on-site personnel.

The total cost of the Scheme is estimated at €8.5 million.

Mechanical Road Condition Survey on Regional and Local Road Network

A tender was recently advertised for contract services to undertake a Mechanical Road Condition Survey of a selected percentage of the Regional and Local Road Network, including

before and after surveys of works completed under the Road Restoration Improvement Programme for the years 2015, 2016 & 2017. In conjunction with this the Road Management Office will also be undertaking a Mechanical Road Condition Survey of the entire Regional Road Network later this year. The collection of this data will provide for a more informed decision making process when determining the network condition and appropriate remedial actions required to retain / bring the network up to a satisfactory condition. Going forward testing of this nature will be carried out on an annual basis. This is a Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport requirement and failure to comply with same may lead to grants being frozen or withdrawn.



Kilkenny County Council recently received delivery of four new sweepers, supplied by Westpark Motors, following a procurement process run in conjunction with the Office of Government Procurement. The sweepers are to be deployed to Callan, Castlecomer, Graiguenamanagh and Thomastown. Pictured at the handover of the keys of the new sweepers at County Hall are:

Nicky Grace (Driver)
Roger Watters, Service Manager, Westpark Motors



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Pat Mullally (TSS Machinery)
Paul Comerford (Driver)
Paul Burke, Sales Director, Westpark Motors
Matt Doran, Cathaoirleach
Colette Byrne, Chief Executive
Eamon Doyle (Driver)
Joe O'Brien (Driver)
Kieran Kelly (Machinery Engineer)

Works on Patrick Street, Kilkenny.

Works started on the 15th of February on the installation of underground ducting to facilitate the removal of overhead ESB power lines on Patrick Street and the installation of new public lighting on Patrick Street and Ormonde Road.

These works will also include a new controlled pedestrian crossing midway up the street, re-configuration of some kerb lines and the introduction of new street furniture. The works will take in the region of 8 weeks to complete.

EVANS HOME DEVELOPMENT:

Following the Elected Members approval of the part 8 proposal for Evans Home the detailed design for the Scheme is currently being advanced.

In parallel a prequalification process has also commenced to shortlist those contractors that are considered suitable to undertake the conservation-like works that the project entails. The closing date for submissions from contractors is 8th March, 2017.

Thereafter, subject to funding, the tender for construction works is scheduled to commence in mid-May 2017 with a view to having a contractor on site by September 2017.

From a funding perspective the Department of Arts have confirmed that a €2million grant, allocated previously to the Butler Gallery for the Scheme, remains in place. Thereafter Kilkenny County Council awaits Failte Ireland's announcement of the Grants Scheme for Larger Tourism Projects 2016-2020 in which a Kilkenny County Council application for €1million support funding for Evans Home is included. The overall estimated value of the project is €4.5 million.

ABBAY QUARTER MASTERPLAN

UPDATE FEBRUARY 2017.

Work on the implementation of the Abbey Creative Quarter Masterplan continues to progress. The Masterplan is divided into a number of individual projects and progress to date on the current projects is summarised as follows :

RIVERSIDE GARDEN PROJECT

- Work on the detailed design and preparation of tender documents for the Riverside Garden Project continues to progress and will be completed in Spring 2017.
- The process for the procurement of a works contractor will commence in Feb 2017.
- An Archaeological Contractor has been appointed to undertake the archaeological test excavations on the site of the Riverside Garden – these works will be undertaken in early March.
- Preliminary site clearance works, including the removal of the trees that were used to screen the former industrial buildings on the site, will be completed by the end of Feb. 2017.
- Public Consultation on the proposed Youth Space in the area between the Central Access Scheme and the River Breaghagh will commence in Spring 2017, in conjunction with the Kilkenny Recreation & Sports Partnership. (KRSP).



BREWHOUSE PROJECT

- Opening up and structural testing works on the Brewhouse building have now been completed.
- Site investigation works have also now been completed.
- The completion of these investigative works now allows the design team to complete the structural design of the building.
- The process for the procurement of a works contractor for the building commenced in early Feb 2017.



MAYFAIR BUILDING

- A Conservation Team for the development of the Mayfair Building and in particular for the conservation of the adjoining City Walls, was appointed in November 2016.
- The detailed design of the project will require archaeological test excavation and site investigation works. These works can only take place following the demolition of the sections of the building that are not being retained. It is expected that these demolition works will commence in April 2017.
- The conservation of the city walls also requires the removal of the vegetation and trees from the area of the city walls – these works will be undertaken before the end of Feb. 2017.



Work is continuing on the preparation of a number of strategies and designs that will facilitate the implementation of the Abbey Creative Quarter Masterplan. These include :

- Low Carbon Energy Strategy
- Parking Options Study
- Urban Design Criteria and Development Code
- Preliminary Utility Services Design
- Archaeological Assessment Strategy

ST. MARY'S MEDIEVAL MILE MUSEUM:

Following the Council Meeting on Monday next, there will be a ceremony to mark the handing over of the keys of the Museum to Kilkenny Civic Trust.

The Museum is on target to open on 28th February, 2017.

CORPORATE SERVICES:

Festivals and Events Grant Scheme 2017.

The application period for the submission of applications for funding under the Festival and Events Grant Scheme, 2017, closed on 10th February, 2017, and it was envisaged to present a report to the Members at the February Council Meeting for approval. However, due to the large number of applications received, 111 no. in total, this item is deferred to the March Council Meeting.

Members are asked to note that the number of applications have increased considerably from 2016, i.e. 78 no. received in 2016, and this will have an impact on the amounts allocated to various events. The total funding to be allocated under the scheme is €105,000.



In order to give some certainty to the Tradfest Festival taking place over the St. Patrick’s Weekend, it is proposed to allocate €5,000 from the fund, similar to 2016 funding.

St. Patrick’s Day Festivities 2017 in Kilkenny City.

Cathaoirleach, Cllr. Matt Doran, launched the St. Patrick’s Day Festivities 2017 on Thursday, 9th February, 2017, in County Hall. At the heart of the festivities is the St. Patrick’s Day Parade which is a civic event, hosted and funded by Kilkenny County Council.

At the launch the Cathaoirleach extended an open invitation to all local community groups and organisations, as well as clubs, schools and businesses in the City and County to take part in what will be a fantastic day of celebration and entertainment.

The Parade will take place on Friday, 17th March, 2017, at 1.00 p.m. This is very much a family oriented community event and a great opportunity for all to showcase their group, business or club.

There are prizes for best float entries and these will be in four categories as follows:

1. Most Creative and Entertaining Group.
2. Best Community Group.
3. Best Young Peoples’ Group
4. Best Rural Entry.

Prize winners will be announced on the festival stage at 4.30 p.m. and will be followed by a special award ceremony later in the month.

Float Entry Application Forms are available at County Council Offices, County Hall, John Street and at City Hall, High Street, Kilkenny, or can be downloaded from the website at www.kilkennytradfest.com.

HOUSING:

Housing Development

Kilkenny County Council has purchased 2.28ha of land at Croker’s Hill, Kilkenny City for the provision of housing.

PLANNING:

Development Management

Planning Summary	Total to January, 2016	Total to January, 2017
Planning Applications Received	41	44
Planning Applications Granted	52	48
Planning Applications Refused	4	5
Complaints Received	1	8
Warning Letters Issued	3	5
Enforcements Notices Issued	3	7

Forward Planning

- Loci Consultants and the Council held a very well attended meeting on the Urban Design Strategy for the Hebron Road on the 1.2.2017. A draft scheme will be formulated and brought to Council for consideration in March.
- A consultant has been recommended for “*Urban Design Criteria and Recommended Development Code for the Implementation of the Abbey Creative Quarter Masterplan*” and work on this will commence immediately
- A register was established for the implementation of the Vacant Sites Levy as required under the provisions of the Urban



Regeneration and Housing Act 2015. A press release was issued and a website page was created in January and work is continuing on the preparation of necessary data for entries to be made to the register.

- Work is continuing on the preparation of a new Local Area Plan for Ferrybank/Belview area. Further consultation with the Transport Infrastructure Ireland in relation to access arrangements to the N29 is progressing.
- Work is also continuing on the preparation of the Draft Castlecomer Local Area Plan for publication through the statutory environmental assessments and compilation of the written plan.
- The National Planning Framework was launched on the 2nd February and the Council will be engaging with stakeholders to encourage submissions from all sectors in the County. The Council will also make its own submission to the process.
- The planning section will be heavily involved in formulating the upcoming Council's submission on the Report of the Waterford Boundary Review Committee.

Conservation:

The Department of Arts Heritage Regional Rural and the Gaeltacht Affairs have announced two conservation grants for remedial works to our built heritage. The two conservation grants are as follows:

1. The Built Heritage Investment Scheme will support remedial works to protected structures and buildings in Architectural Conservation Areas with €88,000 being made available for the eligible projects in County Kilkenny.
2. The **Structures at Risk Fund** with a total (countrywide) funds available of €824,000 will support protected structures and buildings in Architectural Areas which are in **immediate danger of significant deterioration.**

The closing date for receipt of applications for both schemes is 28th February 2017.

For further information and application forms, please see Kilkenny County Council website <http://www.kilkennycoco.ie/eng/Services/Planning/Conservation/>

Application forms can also be collected at the customer service desk in the Planning Department.

Age Friendly Alliance:

In conjunction with all stakeholders including Kilkenny Local Authority, Health Service Executive, Kilkenny Recreational Sports Partnership, An Garda Síochána, Kilkenny Chamber and Kilkenny Seniors Council, the Kilkenny Age Friendly County Strategy 2017-2022 was launched by Chairperson Cllr. Matt Doran in the Parade Tower in December 2016.

This strategy is a 5 year strategic plan which focuses on creating the necessary environment to support active and positive aging. This plan sets out relevant and achievable targets which will be overseen by the Kilkenny Age Friendly Alliance chaired by Chief Executive of Kilkenny County Council.



Two Age Friendly Car Parking Spaces at County Hall located adjacent to Motor Tax Office.



ENVIRONMENT

Environment Quarterly Report

- Works commenced on upgrading the dog shelter at Paulstown with the construction of additional kennels, an isolation unit dog run and an agility area.
- In December 2016, Kilkenny County Council sought tenders for Control of Dogs services. The closing date is 18th January, 2017 and the tenders will be assessed in February 2017.
- Work continued on carrying out improvement works at a number of the Council’s graveyards.
- 245 Environmental Complaints were responded to by the Environment Enforcement Team during Q4 2016
- A Sustainable Energy Action Plan (SEAP) was completed for Co. Kilkenny and submitted to the Covenant of Mayors Office in December, 2016.
- The catchments.ie website won the Excellence in Innovation Award at the Civil Service Excellence and Innovation Awards in December. The website is a joint collaboration between DHPCLG, EPA and LAWCO (for which Kilkenny County Council is joint lead authority with Tipperary County Council)
- The Environment Section launched a new anti dog fouling campaign to highlight the health risks associated with dog poo in September.
- The Environmental Awareness Officer organised the annual green schools information in association with An Taisce and provided assistance to over 35 schools in September. The Cathaoirleach provided an anti litter pack to each primary school last November. The pack included practical items for pupils to keep their school grounds litter free. The 1st pack was presented to Dunnamaggin NS.



- The “Rubbish Monster” completed 11 puppet shows in primary schools in Kilkenny City last November. The educational show taught young children to respect the environment. Mayor Cllr. O’Neill launched the initiative in St Patricks Boys NS.



- The Environmental Awareness Officer (EAO) completed a series of environmental talks throughout autumn providing practical tips on how to “slim your household bin”. Talks were directed at resident association AGM’s and active retirement groups. The EAO also participated in Glan Bia Environment Awareness Week at the their Ballyragget facility.



- Kilkenny County Council participated in the National Re-Use month co-ordinated by the waste regional office in Limerick. Local events held last October included the re-



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launch of “Kilkenny’s Repair Directory” and a Re-Use Exhibition in County Hall.



Environment Report – January 2017

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- Work continued on carrying out improvement works at a number of the Council’s graveyards.
- In December 2016, Kilkenny County Council sought tenders for Control of Dogs services. The closing date was 18th January, 2017 and the tenders will be assessed in February 2017.
- Planning has commenced for the roll out of the Spring Educational Programme, including primary school educational workshops and anti litter murals at two family resource centres.
- Approx. 25 green school assessments will be completed between January-March by the Environmental Awareness Officer as schools prepare to renew their green flags.

Dates to Watch

The draft River Basin Management Plan is due out for public consultation this spring. All members will be alerted when the public consultation period is announced.

TOURISM

Kilkenny County Council has commenced the process of developing and adopting a **Tourism Statement of Strategy and Work Programme** which will underpin the Councils’ support for the tourism industry in Kilkenny over the next five

years. The strategy will set out a vision, goals, objectives, and link with national tourism policy, national initiatives, regional objectives and the objectives of the Council’s adopted Local Economic Community Plan.

It is intended that the Strategy and Work Programme will support the delivery of the objectives of the LECP, support Kilkenny Tourism, and support the consolidation of local tourism initiatives. Kilkenny County Council is arranging a series of local workshops to give people an opportunity to participate in the process of strategy development and delivery.

To date three group workshops have been held; in City Hall on 1st February, in Castlecomer on 10th February and in Mullinavat on 13th February, with enthusiastic engagement by the various attendees. Individual trade related contacts have also been facilitated. Given the tight timeframe and the need to have a written draft programme submitted to Minister O’Donovan by 10th March, it is now proposed to commence the report writing stage with the intention of meeting the deadline and presenting the **Statement of Strategy and Work Programme to Council** at the March meeting.

HERITAGE

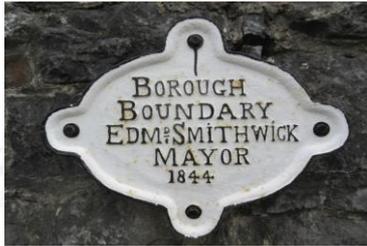
Moments with Monuments – Listen to the Stories behind Kilkenny’s Plaques and Monuments.

What are the stories behind the hundreds of commemorative monuments and plaques around the county? Who are the characters and what was the background to the events that led to their being remembered forever on a street corner, building or road?





Sun Fire Office Insurance Plaque (19th C),
The Parade, Kilkenny



Borough Boundary Marker, erected by Mayor Edmond Smithwick
in 1844

The Heritage Office and KCLR have developed a radio series ‘*Moments with Monuments*’ which highlight these stories. The series will be broadcast every Wednesday at 6.30pm on KCLR's 'The Way It Is'. It focuses on 50 of the 300 sites that were recorded and mapped by the Heritage Office in 2015. The series is funded by the Broadcasting Authority of Ireland's Sound & Vision scheme and the Kilkenny County Council Heritage Office. It will be available for later listening on KCLR.ie and KilkennyHeritage.ie.

To find out more
<http://kilkennyheritage.ie/2017/01/kilkenny-monuments-and-plaques-monuments-and-plaques/>

or contact Dearbhala Ledwidge, Heritage Officer.
Dearbhala.ledwidge@kilkennycoco.ie Tel. 056-7794925.

Local Authorities Pool Resources to Help Pollinators.



The “Local Authority Tidy Towns Pollinator Award” is a successful example of Local Authorities working together to help pollinators. Dearbhala Ledwidge, Heritage Officer, will give a talk about this successful initiative at the All

Ireland Pollinator Plan Conference in **Armagh on 17th February**. The award, established in 2016 by

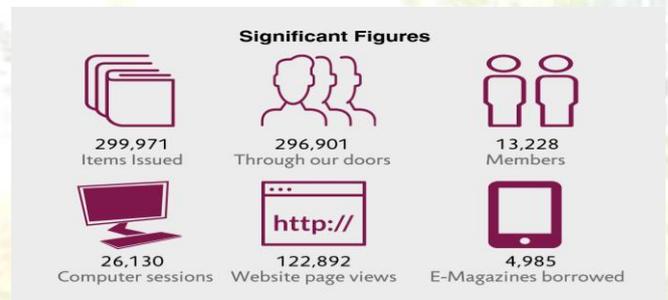
LA Heritage Officers and Biodiversity Officers in partnership with the National Biodiversity Data Centre, helps Pollinators, such as bees and insects crucial to the pollination of plants, trees and vegetables, and which are in serious decline.

A new guidance document for Councils on actions to help pollinators will also be launched. The event is open to all and will be of interest to staff and Elected Members.

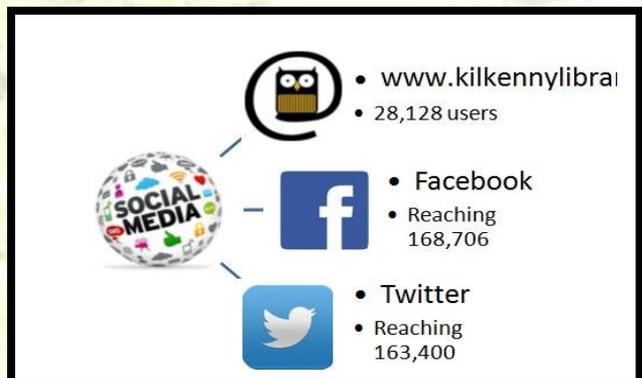
See
http://www.biodiversityireland.ie/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/Feb_2017-Pollinator-Plan-Event-Programme.pdf

LIBRARY

Overview of 2016

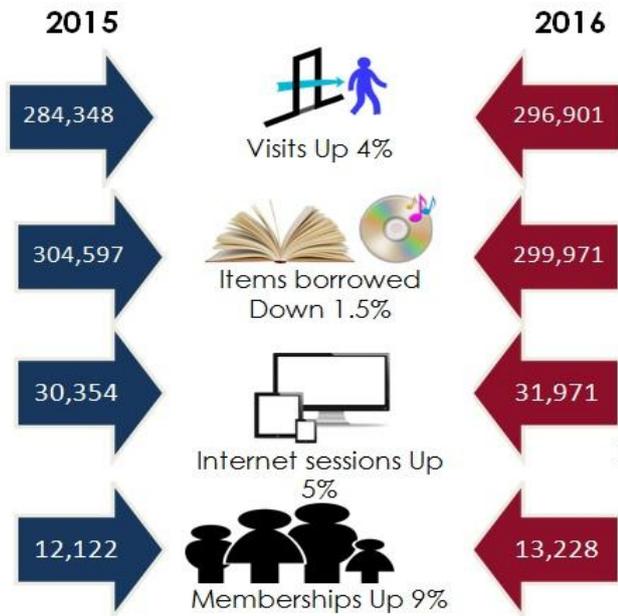


Statistics and performance comparison 2015-2016





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People can now borrow & reserve up to 12 items, get email reminders about returning and collecting materials, and use libraries in other participating counties.

Dates for your Diary (2017)

- World Book Day March 2nd – promotional events across the library network.
- Gulliver’s Travels Comic workshops (tie-in with St. Patrick’s Day Parade) with Oisín McGann March 3rd
- Camino walk information sessions in City & Ferrybank 10th March.
- Jobseekers & Business Information Evening in Graigueanamanagh Library 14th March 6-8pm.

Yulefest:

Kilkenny Library Service participated in our local Yulefest this Christmas, with a fun-filled and busy programme of events for adults, children and families including our 12 Books of Christmas Challenge, Children’s storytimes in all branches, Craft, Christmas Carol service with The Voices of Hope Choir and Customer Coffee mornings.



New Library System

Public Libraries in Ireland are working together to create one joint library collection, using a shared computer system. Kilkenny Library Service joined this system on February 1st, which provides our users with access a much wider range of books, music & films from across the country.



Appendix 1.

Finance Report – February 2017.

The expenditure by service division for one month to the end of January 2017 is set out in table 1. Total Expenditure for the period was €3.55m compared with the annual budget of €70.16m.

Table 1	Actual YTD January 2017	Budget Full Year 2017
	€'000's	€'000's
Housing & Building	1,003	15,962
Road Transport & Safety	731	17,093
Water Services	458	6,778
Development Management	492	7,894
Environmental Services	343	9,061
Recreation & Amenity	470	5,918
Agriculture, Education, Health, Welfare	72	798
Miscellaneous Services	246	6,661
Overall Total	3,815	70,165

The bank overdraft facility has not been utilised during the month of January.

The Annual Financial Statement for 2016 is being finalised but based on preliminary figures, collection levels for Commercial Rates have increased by 2 per cent to 94%. The 2017 Rate Demands have been issued to property owners. Details of the early payment grant scheme as agreed in the last two Budgets has been enclosed to each account holder.

Further to the presentation made to Elected Members regarding the National Revaluation Programme at the September 2016 Council Meeting and subsequent updates, the Valuation Office have informed us that the planned issue date for Proposed Valuation Certificates for Kilkenny is 13th April 2017. Property owners will then have 40 days to make representations to the Valuation Manager. The final Valuation Certificates are to be issued in late August 2017 with the new list scheduled to be published on 16th September 2017. The period for any further appeals to the independent Valuation Tribunal is 28 days from 16th September.

Ratepayers can obtain information on the process by contacting the Valuation Office at 01 8171199 or by sending an Email to ckReval2017@valoff.ie.

Additional Payroll Costs 2017

As an amendment to the Landsdowne Road Agreement it is now proposed to make an earlier payment of the €1,000 increase to staff earning less than €65,000. This increase will be paid from the 1st April, 2017 and was not provided for in the Budget. The financial implication of this increase to Kilkenny County Council is €265,000. There is no indication to date from the Department that any additional funding will be provided in respect of same.