



COMHAIRLE CHONTAE CHILL CHAINNIGH  
KILKENNY COUNTY COUNCIL  
TUARASCÁIL BHAINISTÍOCHTA MÍOSÚIL  
MONTHLY MANAGEMENT REPORT  
AIBREÁN - APRIL 2021

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

**16<sup>th</sup> April**

Closing date for receipt of applications for Community & Cultural Facilities Capital Scheme (CCFCS)

**21<sup>st</sup> April**

Closing date for receipt of applications for Small Business Assistance Scheme (SBAS)

**23<sup>rd</sup> April**

Closing date for receipt of applications under the CLÁR Scheme.

**7<sup>th</sup> May**

Closing date for receipt of applications for the Streetscape Scheme.

REPORT AT A  
GLANCE

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HOW TO PROTECT YOURSELF FROM COVID-19 [CORONAVIRUS]  
INFLUENZA & OTHER VIRAL ILLNESS



**IF YOU ARE NOT FEELING WELL**

Check if you have symptoms of coronavirus. These are a cough, shortness of breath, breathing difficulties, loss of taste or smell, fever (*high temperature*).

If you do have symptoms of coronavirus, phone your GP or local Emergency Department [ED] without delay.

**Do not go to your GP or ED.** Phone them first. Tell them about your symptoms. Give them the details about your situation. Avoid contact with other people by self-isolating. If you do not have a GP, phone 112 or 999.

**IF YOU ARE FEELING WELL**

If you are feeling well, carry on with your normal routine.

Follow the advice on how to protect yourself and others from coronavirus and other infections such as flu.

Avoid spending time with people who are ill with a cough, high temperature, or breathing problems.

If you develop symptoms of coronavirus:

- avoid contact with people by self-isolating
- phone your GP or emergency department
- tell them your symptoms and the details of your situation





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	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4	Level 5
 THE IRISH TIMES					
 Visitors	<b>10</b> from 3 households	<b>6</b> from 2 or 3 households	<b>1</b> other household	<b>No</b> visitors permitted	<b>No</b> visitors permitted
 Gatherings	<b>50</b> outside your home or garden	<b>6</b> indoor <b>15</b> outdoor	<b>No</b> social or family gatherings	<b>No</b> indoor gatherings	<b>No</b> Except funerals or weddings
 Weddings	<b>100</b> people can attend	<b>50</b> people can attend	<b>25</b> people can attend	<b>6</b> people can attend	<b>6</b> people can attend
 Indoor events	<b>100</b> Up to 100 can attend indoor gatherings	<b>50</b> But up to 100 in larger venues	<b>No</b> indoor gatherings	<b>No</b> indoor gatherings	<b>No</b> indoor gatherings
 Sports fixtures	<b>100</b> indoor <b>200</b> outdoor	<b>50</b> indoor <b>100</b> outdoor	<b>No</b> matches or events (except elite sport)	<b>No</b> matches or events (except elite sport)	<b>No</b> matches or events
 Bars, cafes & restaurants	<b>Open</b> with protective measures in place	<b>Open</b> 6 people from up to 3 households	<b>Open.</b> Take away or delivery. Outdoor dining only. Max 15 patrons	<b>Open.</b> Take away or delivery. Outdoor dining only. Max 15 patrons	<b>Open.</b> Take away food or delivery only.
 Wet pubs	<b>Open</b>	<b>Open</b> Groups of six from 3 households	<b>Open</b> Additional restrictions	<b>Open</b> outdoor only limited to a max of 15	<b>Only</b> offer takeaway or delivery service
 Domestic travel	<b>No</b> restrictions	<b>No</b> restrictions	<b>Stay</b> in your county/ region apart from work/education/ essential purposes	<b>Stay</b> in your county/ region apart from work/education/ essential purposes	<b>Stay</b> at home except to exercise within 5km from home
 Public transport	<b>Travel</b> off-peak hours or walk/cycle, if possible	<b>Peak hours</b> essential workers/ purposes only; 50% capacity	<b>All hours</b> essential workers/ purposes only; 50% capacity	<b>Avoid</b> public transport; essential workers/ purposes only; 25% capacity	<b>Avoid</b> public transport; essential workers/ purposes only; 25% capacity

Graphic: Paul Scott/IRISH TIMES GRAPHICS



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CORPORATE

ST. PATRICK'S DAY



The St. Patrick's Festival Kilkenny 2021 was programmed and planned in line with COVID-19 Government regulations. This necessitated designing, creating and producing a new 'virtual festival model'. The inputs and resourcing achieved to achieve this was both unprecedented and extensive. The quality programme resulted in record-high viewers and engagement numbers.

For the very first time St. Patrick's Festival Kilkenny 2021 took place virtually on the 16<sup>th</sup>/17<sup>th</sup> March, 2021. Programming the new festival model was extensive and resulted in: 5 broadcasts providing 7 hours of content, involving 20 acts, 19 local businesses, 18 local organisations, 5 schools, 4 twinned-town Mayors, 3 marching bands, 2 presenters and 40 individual and family submissions.

The broadcasts were watched by 6,500 people on the day and nearly 14,000 people in total (including Wolfwalkers in concert with Kíla on other channels). 14 'Get Involved' events took place in the 4 weeks leading up to the festival, involving 11 different organisations and engagement from over 4,000 people (excluding physical Destination Greening and Seanfhocail engagement). The majority

of the events and interaction with the audience were through social media, St. Patrick's Festival website and Youtube.



Since the beginning of St. Patrick's Festival Kilkenny 2021 Facebook videos have been viewed 38,900 times and the Youtube videos have made 37,300 impressions.

Media and Social Media impact: People participated, watched and engaged from around the world. The festival received record national media coverage and online mentions internationally.

All of the social media pages have increased their number of followers/likes and website traffic has increased.

Here are some of testimonials received from people who tuned in:

*"I logged into St Patrick's festival online with my wife to watch her niece's choir not really knowing what to expect. To say that we were blown away by what we saw would be an understatement. We spent the whole day watching the festivities and enjoyed it so much that we logged in again in the evening. I have been involved in tourism in Kilkenny for over 40 years and have taken part in many and I have to say that this was one of the best showcases of Kilkenny that I have ever seen. It was great to see the vast array of talent that Kilkenny has to offer but also to see so many of the antastic locations around the city being used and shown off. It really made me proud to be a Kilkenny-man. The professional*



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manner in which the whole programme of events was put together is something that everyone involved should be extremely proud of." Jim Brennan Clubhouse Hotel.

"Walked the city tonight and it was just beautiful .... Proud to be from Kilkenny" Ciara Murphy via Facebook about the Greening of Kilkenny buildings.

"Kilkenny looks wonderful I wish I could be there". Марічка Панф via Youtube livestream comments.

"Thank you for performing for us! Hope to visit Kilkenny someday. Huge WolfWalkers fan! Wishing a blessed St Patrick's Day from New York!" Lily Page via Youtube livestream comments.

"Congratulations and well done to everyone involved with the St Patrick's Day Festival Committee. Great work." Derek Devoy via Facebook

As a collaborative event, this festival provided an excellent PR opportunity for the Council.

## ROADS

### NATIONAL ROADS

#### N24 Waterford to Cahir Scheme

Phase 1 of the project is now complete. We are awaiting approval from TII to progress to Phase 2 which is imminent. Specific information on the scheme can be accessed on the website [N24waterford2cahir.ie](http://N24waterford2cahir.ie)

#### N25 Glenmore to Waterford Scheme

The scheme is within the concluding stage of Phase 2 - Option Selection. The final report is gone back to the Peer Review Team. We are expecting to announce the preferred route following approval from the Peer Review Team shortly.

#### Castlecomer Footbridge

The contract for construction of Castlecomer Footbridge has been awarded to Kenny Civils & Plant Ltd. The main construction works will be undertaken during the summer months and the bridge is expected to open in November 2021.

#### N77 Pavement Works

Works are ongoing from the Baun Roundabout on the ring road to Hennebry's Cross. Lagan are the main contractors on the project. The project is 3.4km and is expected to be completed by end of April 2021.

#### Capital Maintenance

Additional monies were received outside the roadworks scheme for projects on national routes in March 2021.

- N77 Ballyragget Village Pavement Rehabilitation Works €101,000
- N77 Ardalo -Jeninstown Pavement Rehabilitation Works €140,300

#### National Maintenance/Repairs

Three projects have been submitted for upgrade works along the Ring Road in Kilkenny City. We are currently waiting on final approval of the works.

- Improvement to Steps from Ring Road to Ballyfoyle Road €27,000
- Upgrade of footpath between Hebron and Johnswell Road roundabout €48,000
- Upgrade of footpath between Johnswell and New Orchard Road roundabout €49,600

#### NON-NATIONAL ROADS

Kilkenny received an allocation of €16.8m for upkeep/maintenance and associated works of non-national roads for 2021. The allocation has been divided up between the Municipal districts and the works have been approved by the Elected Members. The full roadworks scheme 2021 is before the Members for consideration at this meeting.



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**Essential Repairs\Pavement Works**

Essential Pavement Works have been taking place over the last 4 weeks in each of the Municipal District areas. Each MD is completing 5/6 roads per week. It is expected that in excess of 20km of pavement improvements on local roads will be completed by end of month.

**Active Travel**

A very welcome allocation has been announced for 2021 totalling €4.3 million covering 26 no projects around the City and County. The focus of the funding is to develop high quality, safe walking and cycling infrastructure in rural towns and villages. €2.46 million is allocated to the rural Municipal Districts with €1.87 million for Kilkenny City. It will be important going forward to have approved Mobility Plans in place in our towns to attract this type of investment.

**PLANNING**

**Development Management**

<i>Planning Summary</i>	<i>Total to March</i>	
	<i>2020</i>	<i>2021</i>
Planning Applications Received	82	123
Planning Applications Granted	51	79
Planning Applications Refused	8	6
Complaints Received	20	29
Warning Letters Issued	23	30
Enforcements Notices Issued	6	2
Cases Closed	23	16

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](mailto:planning@kilkennycoco.ie)

**FORWARD PLANNING**

**City & County Development Plan**

The statutory public consultation on the draft Kilkenny City and County Development Plan concluded on the 12th of March 2021. A total of 460 submissions were received.

These submissions are now being summarised and the Chief Executive will respond to the issues raised in a report to be issued to the Council Members within the statutory 12 weeks.

**Joint Graiguenamanagh/Tinnahinch Local Area Plan**

The Chief Executive’s Report on the Draft Joint Graiguenamangh/Tinnahinch Local Area was approved by Members at the Callan-Thomastown Municipal District meeting on the 10<sup>th</sup> of March. The CE’s report was subsequently brought to the Plenary Council meeting on the 15<sup>th</sup> March, where the meeting resolved to put the Material Alterations out on display for a period of four weeks.

The Carlow CE’s report was discussed at the Carlow Council meeting on the 8<sup>th</sup> March. The Material Alterations are currently being screened for potential impacts on Natura 2000 sites and once that process is concluded, the Material Alterations report and Environmental Reports will be put on display as resolved.

**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 will be presented to Members in the coming weeks before any draft is placed on public display. St. Canice’s Campus and the Fair Green area will recommence after.



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## CONSERVATION

**Built Heritage Investment Scheme:** 19 applications were received, with 14 projects being offered grant funding

**Historic Structures Fund:** 25 applications were received, with a total of 8 projects being selected under the following: the Vernacular Pilot Scheme the Traditional Shopfront Scheme and these have been forwarded to the Department of Housing, Local Government and the Heritage for approval.

Conservation advice to the public and agents, while planning referrals and Sections 57 Declaration continue to be responded to in a timely manner.

### Building Control

Valid Commencement Notices Received to End of	2021	2020
March	48	97

Disability Access Certificate to 31 <sup>st</sup> March	2021	2020
	14	27

### Taking in Charge

The following estates were approved for initiation stage at the March Council meeting:

- Banager Court, Piltown
- Bellfield, Ferrybank
- Newpark Crescent, Kilkenny
- The Green, Ballyfoyle

Works are ongoing at the following estates:

- Friary Walk, Callan
- Brookfield, Ballyhale
- Haven Court, Ballyragget
- Rath Ullord, Kilkenny
- Whitescastle, Knocktopher
- Lakeside, Kilkenny
- Roseleigh, Mooncoin

All non-essential construction works are closed during current Level 5 restrictions. Therefore, the timelines in the agreed programme for Taking in Charge have been adversely impacted due to Level 5 Restrictions.

### 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. The Council continues to implement the Vacant Site Levy in accordance with the provisions of the Act.

## PARKS

### South East Greenway



The rail and sleeper lifting works have now been completed. Final site clearance work will recommence when current Level 5 restrictions are lifted. Current Level 5 restrictions are also impacting on engagement with landowners however we are in the final stages of reaching agreement on accommodation works. The main construction of the 24km Greenway is being awarded in a number of Lots. The first 2 Lots have been tendered. Works are due to commence on 19<sup>th</sup> April, 2021.



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Further contracts will be awarded as the detailed design is finalised and the landowner accommodation works are agreed in each Lot. There will be a number of planning applications progressed in the coming weeks for: an access ramp down on to Greenway from Abbey Road railway bridge; and temporary construction compounds for construction Lots.

The public engagement process for the selection of a suitable site for the proposed Ferrybank Car Park has now concluded. While there is still further investigative work to be undertaken on the preferred site for the Ferrybank Car Park, the Council is satisfied with the solution, especially as it will be accessible from the proposed new Link Road from the Belmont Road to the Abbey Road.

#### **Parks & Playgrounds**

With the coming of Spring weather has improved and with longer days the playgrounds County wide have been extremely busy. It is great to see so many able to play outdoors while social distancing. Probably one of the busiest is the playground at the new park in Ferrybank.

An application has been submitted for a new Multi Use Games Area for Ferrybank Park as the ground is suffering wear and tear due to usage. If we are successful in this application to the Sports Capital Fund a new all-weather ball games area will be installed facilitating ball games year-round.

The local Tidy Towns group in Ferrybank has very kindly come together to assist the Parks Department in picking litter in the park and playground. The litter situation has been very challenging so we are grateful for this assistance. In addition, a local waste disposal company Kollect have sponsored some bins for the park and are emptying them on a weekly basis free of charge. We hope this generous sponsorship plus the efforts of Parks Department staff and Tidy Towns volunteers will enable us to maintain the park litter free.

In April a new General Operative will be commencing work with the Parks Department. This new role will cover a number of sites across the County including the Moat Field in Callan, Silaire Wood in Graiguenamanagh and Ferrybank Park. The new staff member will also team up with our other General Operative as required to assist in many miscellaneous jobs in parks and playgrounds.

The annual playground repair programme is well under way across the county with the focus on the older playgrounds where play equipment is showing signs of wear and tear. The Thomastown playground has just been repainted and shortly a new piece of equipment will be installed. Woodstock playground will also be painted and we will be installing a new piece of equipment in Castlcomer Discovery Park playground as Covid restrictions allow. Repairs have also been carried out in Kells playground and shortly works will commence on the playground in Windgap to improve ground conditions.

Works will also commence on Piltown playground as soon as the Covid restrictions permit construction works to recommence. The site, located to the rear of the old Garda Station, on the Main Street, is an attractive riverside location. 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. Included in the proposal is a sensory garden which will be of great interest to those with sensory processing issues such as autism but also be an attractive place to sit and enjoy the space beside the river.

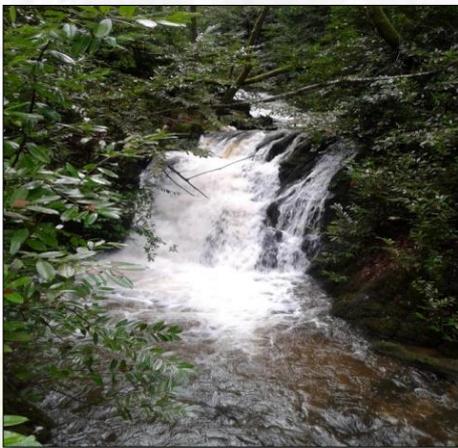
#### **Woodstock Gardens & Wider Estate**

An application to National Parks and Wildlife has recently been made for a management plan for the control of Cherry Laurel in Woodstock. This is an extremely aggressive evergreen shrub which out competes other native vegetation by creating a very dark forest floor and under which little else



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grows. If successful we intend to work with Coillte who own the wider woodland to develop a plan to work towards the eradication of this invasive species and make conditions favourable for native species to thrive again. This will be an ongoing programme over many years as it is a very persistent shrub and highly adapted to the woodland setting.



Kilkenny County Council recently received funding of €200,000 under the Outdoor recreation Infrastructure Scheme (ORIS) for phase two development works of the Woodstock Loop Walks project. This funding will be used to continue the development of the very successful Loop walks to the Waterfall in the south east of the estate with connections back to the gardens via 'The American Road'. This project will offer a further 2km approx. of loop walk options, travelling for some of its length along the South Leinster Way and connecting to the woodland walks within the more formal gardens.

Easter weekend and additional daylight hours will see the opening hours at Woodstock extended to 7pm. The refreshment service from the coffee van will also be available at weekends until June after which we will have a facility on site 7 days per week. As soon as Covid restrictions allow we will open our new and improved tea rooms housed in the conservatory.

In celebration of St Patricks Day, Woodstock 'went green' with the entrance lit up for the festive period.



*The front entrance to Woodstock Gardens was lit up green to celebrate St Patrick's Day*

#### **Amenity Grants**

The Amenity Grant Scheme was advertised in February and the closing date for receipt of applications was 12<sup>th</sup> March 2021. 182 applications have been received, an increase of 16 on 2020. The main objective of the scheme is to encourage and aid small-scale works to improve the local environment and encourage community involvement in the upkeep and maintenance of public amenities. In 2021 there will be an increased focus on supporting pollinators through projects which are funded. Community groups will be encouraged to manage amenities in a more sustainable manner in line with the pollinator plan which the council has adopted and in line with actions set out in the Council's Climate Action Policy. This is already evident from the applications being received.

The applications are currently being assessed by Parks Staff and a recommendation will be brought to the May Council meeting.

#### **Sustainable Grassland Management**

The Parks Department is working with the Heritage office and the Area offices to reduce mowing where possible across the County in an effort to increase the biodiversity of grass verges and parklands providing a valuable source of food and habitat for insects in particular our



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pollinators. The Kilkenny Ring Road will now be cut on the city side of the city only with the exception of maintaining sightlines at roundabouts.

The large meadows at Dukesmeadows and Bishopsmeadows have been managed with an annual cut yearly 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 in fact many residents' groups are approaching the Parks Department with a view to managing their estates in a more sustainable manner. The Parks Department are happy to provide advice to resident's groups to assist in pollinator projects.

**Walking Trails**

In partnership with Trail Kilkenny the Parks Section assisted with the upgrade of a section of trail which is part of the Nore Valley Walk. The large volume of people using this walk, which is an extension of the River Nore Linear Park at Lacken, coupled with a sustained wet period of weather at the end of last year, has meant the surface had deteriorated in recent months. The new surface will better withstand inclement weather and help absorb the impact of many visitors using the walk. The upgrades were funded by the Department of Rural and Community Development under the Walks Scheme.



*The new surface following upgrade work*

**Kilkenny Biodiversity & Recreation  
Countryside Park**



A funding application to the Department of Rural and Community Development under the Outdoor Recreational Scheme (ORIS) was unsuccessful. Subsequent feedback on the application from the Department was positive and a second application will be submitted when the next call for Measure 3 ORIS applications is announced later this year. Other alternative funding streams to this deliver this project will also be investigated to maximise the potential of securing funding for same.



*The poor surface of the Nore Valley Walk at Lacken*

**ENVIRONMENT**

**Recommended Minimum Criteria for Environmental Inspections (RMCEI) Plan**

The Council's RMCEI Plan for 2021 has been submitted to the EPA for review. Environment



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staff will again endeavour to carry out as many inspections as possible whilst adhering to Government and HSE guidelines.

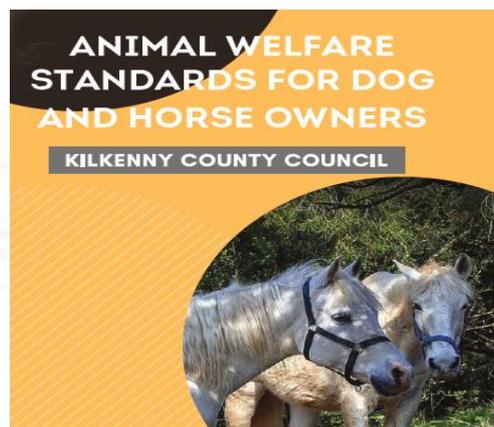
### Horse Bye Laws

Kilkenny County Council Control of Horses Bye Laws were adopted at the March Council meeting and will come into effect from 1<sup>st</sup> May 2021. The new Bye-Laws provide that horse (owners as before), excepting in limited circumstances, will be required to have a licence to keep a horse. This is to control the number of horses and prevent them causing a nuisance, annoyance or injury to the public or damage to property. The new Bye-laws also update the provisions on how horses should be kept, stabled and cared for and the procedure for seizure of horses where they are not under adequate control.

The main new provision in the revised Bye-laws is the introduction of horse exclusion zones in identified areas in the central core of Kilkenny City, as a public safety and animal welfare measure. The streets around the City core such as Dean Street and Green's Bridge are not exclusion zones, so horse owners have alternative routes to get from one side of the City to the other. The Gardai have confirmed support for the introduction of the exclusion zones. As part of the consultation process on the new Bye-laws, the Gardai reported a number of incidents where they had to respond to public safety, traffic and animal welfare concerns involving horses in the City Centre in the last 2 years.

The issue of horse control generally and in particular the drafting of the new Bye-laws has also been a regular topic of discussion at Joint Policing Committee (JPC) Meetings in recent years. The Council also launched the revised "Animal Welfare Standards for Dog and Horse Owners" Booklet developed by the Council's Animal Welfare Standards Committee. The Committee was established by the Council to advise and make recommendations to address issues relating to the welfare of dogs and horses. The Standards Booklet provides advice and

guidance on responsible dog and horse ownership.



### Casual Trading Bye Laws

Kilkenny County Council has seen a sharp increase in the demand for spaces under the Casual Trading Bye Laws. These Bye Laws are currently being reviewed. As part of this process the Council is also keen to highlight the opportunities that may be available in relation to Casual Trading along the South East Greenway once it opens. The public will be afforded the opportunity to submit their views once the Public Consultation period begins.

### Decarbonisation Zone

The Government's Climate Action Plan 2019 provides that each local authority should develop a Decarbonisation Zone (DZ) similar to the demonstrator/pilot in Portlaoise. A Decarbonising Zone (DZ) has been defined as "a spatial area identified by the local authority, in which a range of climate mitigation, adaptation and biodiversity measures and action owners are identified to address local low carbon energy, greenhouse gas emissions and climate needs to contribute to national climate action targets."

The Department of Environment, Climate and Communications have issued a Circular requiring all local authorities to designate a DZ by the end of this month (April) and then put in place an implementation plan (to include proposed projects) by year end. The DZ must be either within an



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urban area of not less than 5,000 population OR a rural area of not less than 4km<sup>2</sup>. This matter has been briefly discussed at the recent meetings held of both SPC1 and SPC4. The Council will designate a DZ in accordance with the Dept Circular and develop an implementation plan for the DZ with the relevant SPCs for approval of the Council before the end of the year. It should also be noted that a new Climate Action Bill is being progressed by Government that when enacted (*expected later this year*) will require local authorities to put in place Climate Action Plans outlining how they plan to reduce carbon emissions in line with the programme for Government commitment of 7% per annum by 2030.

#### 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 453 cases logged to date compared with 346 for the same period last year (an increase of circa 30%). The nature of these complaints range from littering, illegal dumping and water quality through to abandoned cars. However, the vast majority continue to be related to littering and illegal dumping. Despite the restrictions imposed due to Covai-19, our Enforcement Officers remain very active on the ground while adhering to Government and HSE guidelines.

#### Graveyard Grants

The closing date for receipt of applications under the Graveyard Grants Scheme was 26<sup>th</sup> March last. Following a recommendation from SPC 4, the Council approved amendment to the criteria for the scheme to include the cost of insurance costs 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).

The applications are being currently assessed.

#### Bag It, Bin It Campaign

Kilkenny, Carlow, Wexford and Waterford City and County Councils have jointly launched the “Bag It, Bin It” campaign. This collective collaboration is to promote a simple message that dog walkers must be responsible and bag and bin their dog waste.



The campaign will run over a 12-month period and has a series of elements including social media adverts, radio campaigns and a primary education pack to be launched in the autumn. Over the summer, a number of pilot community initiatives will also be rolled out to help foster public participation. The campaign logo will soon become a familiar sight throughout the county.

#### National Spring Clean

An Taisce continued to accept registrations for the National Spring Clean from individuals and family units who wished to litter pick within their 5km area as per Covid-19 restrictions. Registrations can be still be completed online via [www.nationalspringclean.org](http://www.nationalspringclean.org). As at the end of March, over 100 registrations were recorded for County Kilkenny, and this is mirrored by the high volumes of calls being received in the Environment Section from community members seeking litter picking supplies and requesting the Council to dispose of bags of litter. Litter picks like the one in Gowran represents the types of activity which is being seen across the county.



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**Online Community Courses in Collaboration with The Heritage Office**

The Heritage Office collaborated with the Environment Section to deliver a “Sustainable Gardening” course throughout March which was primarily aimed at Tidy Town groups as it was identified as being especially beneficial to groups who want to strengthen both their Sustainability and Biodiversity competition categories. Due to the success of the course, with full attendance every week, the participants will be offered a place on the next course, which is a step-by-step guide to growing a sustainable vegetable garden: topics covered will include growing from seed, pricking out seedlings, taking cuttings and much, much more. Both courses fall under initiatives in the All Ireland Pollinator Plan, the Council’s Waste Prevention Programme and Kilkenny’s Climate Change Adaptation Strategy.

**Waste Prevention Grant 2021**

This grant scheme aims to support and encourage communities to take steps on waste prevention, re-use and repair activities and encourages partnership between local businesses, schools, charities and voluntary groups. Funded as part of the Council’s Waste Prevention Programme, it supports the policy objectives with our Climate Change Adaptation Strategy. This grant scheme will be advertised in early April and the max funding per application is €500.

**LAWPRO Update**

LAWPRO’s catchment scientists were scheduled to commence local catchment assessments in 11 Priority Areas for Action (PAA’s) in 2021 but this work is now delayed due to COVID 19 restrictions.

**Green GAA Initiative with LAWPRO & Irish Water**

The GAA Green Clubs programme will see 45 clubs and two regional venues participate in a 12-month initiative to assist the GAA, LGFA and Camogie Association develop a sustainability toolkit for all their units. LAWPRO and Irish

Water are providing support on the water theme of the initiative. Two clubs in the SE Region are participating, including James Stephens.

**Climate Action - Woodland Creation Scheme**

Under the 2020 Programme for Government (PFG) the Climate Action Regional Offices (CAROs) have been tasked to work with public bodies to review land availability for planting. This initiative is being progressed in partnership with the Department of Agriculture, Food & the Marine (DAFM) and Local Authorities. Kilkenny County Council is very keen to be involved in this initiative and the Environment Section identified a number of potential sites through a desk top survey for consideration under the Woodland Creation Scheme. A Working Group comprising of various members across the organisation was formed to review the suitability of the lands identified. The Environment Section and a Forestry Advisor from Teagasc have inspected the potential sites and a report detailing the findings and recommendations will be prepared.

**Decarbonisation Zones**

The National Climate Action Plan (CAP) provides that each local authority should develop a Decarbonisation Zone (DZ) similar to the demonstrator/pilot in Portlaoise. According to the CAP, a Decarbonising Zone (DZ) is “a spatial area identified by the local authority, in which a range of climate mitigation, adaptation and biodiversity measures and action owners are identified to address local low carbon energy, greenhouse gas emissions and climate needs to contribute to national climate action targets.” Local authorities must designate a DZ by the end of April and then put in place an implementation plan (to include proposed projects) by year end. The DZ must be located either within an urban area of not less than 5,000 population or a rural area of not less than 4km<sup>2</sup>.

**ISO 50001**

In March, the Council received formal notification from the National Standards Authority of Ireland (NSAI) that following an intensive audit process



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it had been successful in attaining ISO 50001 accreditation. ISO 50001 is an internationally recognised energy management standard and those organisations that have achieved the standard must provide evidence that they have put in place rigorous energy efficiency systems and procedures. Kilkenny County Council over the years already had in place good systems that was a huge help in securing accreditation. The Council has a well established Energy Team with membership drawn from right across the organisation and had achieved the 33% public sector energy efficiency target by the end of 2019. ISO 50001 will help the Council achieve the more ambitious energy efficiency targets going forward.

## COMMUNITY

### CLÁR

This scheme was announced on Monday 15<sup>th</sup> March by Minister Heather Humphries. The CLÁR scheme is a targeted investment programme for rural areas that aims to provide funding for small infrastructural projects in areas that experience disadvantage through rural depopulation. The Scheme was advertised by Kilkenny County Council on 24<sup>th</sup> March, 2021. Closing date for receipt of applications is 23<sup>rd</sup> April, 2021.

### CLÁR Eligible Electoral Districts

- Coolaghmore
- Killamery
- Kilmaganny
- Kilmanagh
- Scotsborough
- Boolyglass
- Muckalee
- Tubbrid
- Tullahought
- Attanagh
- Clogharinka
- Kilmacar
- Mothell
- Jerpoint West
- Listerlin
- Tiscoffin
- Castlebanny
- Castlegannon
- Kilkeasy
- Pleberstown
- Ullard
- Balleen
- Ballyconra
- Baunmore
- Clomantagh
- Galmoy

- Muckalee
- Brownsford
- Dysartmoon
- Glashare
- Lisdowney

### Community & Cultural Facilities Capital Scheme (CCFCS)

The scheme is open to groups operating within the Community Sector who have a recognised legal structure, operate on a 'not for profit' basis, demonstrate a policy of inclusion and demonstrate the capacity to manage and operate the proposed facilities. Examples of projects eligible for support could include the development of open spaces, walks and parklands, play areas, community hall upgrades, community sensory gardens and projects that conserve the build and natural heritage of the county.

The closing date for receipt of applications for the above scheme is Friday 16<sup>th</sup> April, 2021.

### Streetscape Scheme 2021

The purpose of the scheme is to assist with the cost of painting the front façade of buildings and traditional signage throughout the county. The scheme will offer a grant of €450 or 50% of the cost of the work – whichever is the lesser – to each applicant who is successful in the application process. Applications are invited from owners and/or occupiers of Commercial Properties.

The closing date for receipt of applications for the above scheme is Friday 7<sup>th</sup> May, 2021.

Further information on all of the above schemes is available on

[www.kilkennycoco.ie/eng/Services/Community\\_Culture/Grants](http://www.kilkennycoco.ie/eng/Services/Community_Culture/Grants)

### Kilkenny Town & Village Renewal Scheme Community Health Checks

The Community Section in conjunction with Turley Planning Consultants has launched an exciting Health Check consultation to inform new Town Plans for six towns and villages including Castlecomer, Urlingford, Johnstown,



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Goresbridge, Thomastown, and Mullinavat. The Town / Village Health Check will also seek to establish Town Teams in each location to shape and take forward these plans.

The series of Health Checks will seek to gather information concerning the current economic, social, environmental and physical situation of the town. The study will analyse the strengths and weaknesses of each settlement based on factors such as the range and quality of activities in the town, its mix of uses, its accessibility to people living in the area, and its general appearance and safety.

A series of dedicated online information events will be held in early April to discuss the project with each of the communities in the towns and villages. In light of COVID-19 restrictions, the sessions will take place digitally via Zoom.

The website below has all the information with regards the Town and Village health check process [www.mykilkennytown.ie](http://www.mykilkennytown.ie).

#### **Estate Management Grants Scheme**

The 2021 Estate Management Grant Scheme (*Social Housing Estates*) closed on the 26<sup>th</sup> March 2021, 42 completed applications were received. As part of this year's scheme applicants had the option to apply online. The Estate Management Grants Scheme focuses on providing funding to assist resident groups in Kilkenny County Council Social Housing Estates.

#### **Pride of Place 2021**

Four projects will be put forward to represent Kilkenny at the 2021 National Pride of Place Awards.

The projects include:

- Windgap (*Village Category*),
- KCAT Callan (*Creative Space*)
- Kilkenny Catwalk (*Community Tourism*),
- Community responses to Covid 19 (*Community Wellbeing*).

#### **Kilkenny Recreational Sports Partnership**

Tenders are currently being compiled for the development of the new Kilkenny Recreation and Sports Partnership Strategy (2022-2026).

#### **Town & Village Renewal/Rural Regeneration Promotional Campaign**

A promotional interactive document and a social media campaign will promote a sample of projects that have received funding under the Rural Regeneration and Town & Village Renewal Schemes in County Kilkenny. This campaign will run throughout April and May 2021.

### HERITAGE

#### **Crinniú na nÓg Grants Awarded**

7 projects have received funding from Kilkenny County Council to host online events for Crinniú na nÓg on 12<sup>th</sup> June (National Day of free creativity for children and young people): traditional song workshop (Aileen Lambert); drama workshops (Tada Theatre School); theatre workshops (Dreamstuff Youth Theatre); robotics workshop (Calmast/WIT); theatre workshops (Barnstorm); craft village (Design & Crafts Council of Ireland); creative writing & poetry (Kilkenny Library). A total of €15,000 was awarded from the Creative Ireland Programme. National programme will be launched on the 4<sup>th</sup> May.

#### **Grants submitted to Irish Walled Towns Network**

2 applications were submitted to the Irish Walled Towns Network for projects on Kilkenny City Walls: Conservation and repair of Black Friars Arch and Information plaques for key sections of the City Walls.

#### **VIDEO: Top tips for Creating a Wildflower Meadow**

Do you want to create a wildflower meadow in your community, school or garden? This new short (8 min) video gives practical advice.



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<https://youtu.be/DY2tMCr0NR8> If you'd like more information a longer (20min) video is also available. <https://youtu.be/DE4eRwX6cuc>.

The videos were produced by the All-Ireland Pollinator Plan with funding from Kilkenny, Kildare and Wicklow County Council's, and the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage.

### Tune in or Listen back to "The History Fix"

**The History Fix programme airs every Tuesday (6-7 pm, KCLR).** Topics covered so far include: the story of a Kilkenny native on the Titanic; Kilkenny woman Mabel Cahil, 5 times US Open Tennis Champion; Cromwell in Callan.

The programme funded by the Kilkenny Creative Ireland Programme and Decade of Centenaries Programme. Listen back at

<https://kclr96fm.com/the-history-fix/>

### Pledge your Garden for Pollinators

The National Biodiversity Data Centre, with support and funding from the Local Authority Heritage and Biodiversity Officers are asking you to Pledge your Garden for Pollinators, and have produced a brochure to help you. If you would like a hard copy of this leaflet email [heritage@kilkennycoco.ie](mailto:heritage@kilkennycoco.ie) or download a copy at <https://pollinators.ie/pledge-your-garden-for-pollinators/>

### New All Ireland Pollinator Plan

The National Biodiversity Data Centre has launched a new All-Ireland Pollinator Plan for 2021-2025 to help our bees, other pollinating insects and our wider biodiversity. To find out more [https://www.biodiversityireland.ie/new-ambitious-plan-to-save-our-bees-creates-a-buzz/?fbclid=IwAR3StM4UDxdKNWIIWQn9EuF\\_1WrkMGy\\_DetMbVr2-IPID9bf7Mhkw9WG\\_fY](https://www.biodiversityireland.ie/new-ambitious-plan-to-save-our-bees-creates-a-buzz/?fbclid=IwAR3StM4UDxdKNWIIWQn9EuF_1WrkMGy_DetMbVr2-IPID9bf7Mhkw9WG_fY)

## LEO/ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

### STUDENT ENTERPRISE PROGRAMME

The Local Enterprise Office Kilkenny has announced the winners from 3 schools who will represent Kilkenny at this year's Student Enterprise Programme Virtual National Final on Friday 14th May. For the first time, the County Final took place virtually on Tuesday 23rd March on social media platforms in partnership with KCLR96FM. 538 students from 13 County Kilkenny based schools took part in the programme this academic year with 80 students representing 9 schools in the County Final.



Going forward to represent Kilkenny in the Senior Category will be Tara McGuire of Presentation Secondary School with her mini-company 'Slates by Tara'. Tara's impressive slate art business sells decorative hand painted artwork on 100-year-old recycled Blue Bangor slates. In the Junior Category, Noah Cahill, Ian McDonald and Thomas Deegan from Coláiste Éamann Rís, Callan will represent Kilkenny with their business 'Parcel Trust' which manufactures high-quality secure outdoor storage boxes designed particularly with online deliveries in mind.

In the 'My Entrepreneurial Journey' competition at intermediate level, Mark Srouji from Coláiste Éamann Rís will go forward to the National Final. Mark interviewed Anne Neary of Ryeland House Cookery School as his case study and also outlined his entrepreneurial journey having set



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up a business called “Mark’s Productions” making themed table centrepieces. In the ‘Most Creative Business Idea’ competition which is open to senior students, Rachel Brennan of Loreto Secondary School came out on top with her Covid-19 related business idea “Counting after Covid” and will go forward to the Final. Rachel’s idea involved the development of customised framed money box containing imagery to motivate people to save for trips, adventures, etc. after Covid.

#### START YOUR OWN BUSINESS

The Local Enterprise Office Kilkenny offers practical training in the form of Start your Own Business Courses to budding entrepreneurs who are considering setting up a new business. We have just completed a pilot programme with the Kingsriver Community, whereby 8 participants completed a Bespoke Start Your Own Business Course. Currently the Local Enterprise Office is also hosting a Regional Start your Own Food Business Programme for food start-ups business across the South East alongside our regular Start Your Own Business Courses. For further information, visit

<https://www.localenterprise.ie/Kilkenny/Training-Events/Online-Bookings/>.

#### SPRING TRAINING SCHEDULE

The Local Enterprise Office Kilkenny has scheduled the following programmes during the month of April:

- Your Responsibility as a Company Director - 12/04/21
- Your Responsibility as a Company Secretary - 15/04/21
- Search Engine Optimisation and Google Analytics - 19/04/21
- Building a Strong Brand - 20/04/21
- Re-assess your Business Finances - 22/04/21
- Google Adwords - 26/04/21
- Kilkenny Retail Support Workshops: Reboot and Re-energise - 26/04/21

- EHAI Primary Course in Food Safety Level 2 - 13/04/21
- Start Your Own Business Course - 13/04/21
- Building a Strong Brand - 20/04/21
- Kilkenny Retail Support Workshops: Reboot and Re-energise 26/04/21
- Media Skills - 27th & 28th/04/21

For further information visit

<https://www.localenterprise.ie/Kilkenny/Training-Events/Online-Bookings/>

#### FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

A total of €137,000 in direct financial assistance was approved for 5 manufacturing /export service businesses located throughout the County since the start of the year. This assistance is linked to the projected creation of 36 jobs over the next three years.

- €44,500 in Business Expansion Grant assistance awarded to 2 existing businesses with a forecasted job creation of 7 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 businesses with start-up investment costs.
- €15,000 was awarded in Feasibility/Innovation Grants.
- Technical Assistance for Micro Exporter Grants awarded totalling €2,500. This scheme supports businesses to consider their export market opportunities.
- Grad Start funding was awarded totalling €30,000.

If you are aware of business who are manufacturing or internationally trading and require support to grow their business, please visit [www.localenterprise.ie/kilkenny](http://www.localenterprise.ie/kilkenny) or contact (056) 7752662 to speak with one of our Business Advisors.



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### GREEN FOR MICRO

Launched in early March, the objective of '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. This is a free programme, available to businesses with up to 10 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 a national web portal at [www.localenterprise.ie/green](http://www.localenterprise.ie/green) or contact (056) 7752662 to speak to one of our Business Advisors.



### LUNCH & LEARN



Thirty three businesses attended an online briefing on the range of supports available through the Local Enterprise Office and the Council's Small Business Assistance Scheme for Covid (SBASC) held on March 24<sup>th</sup>. The aim of the event was to promote the wide range of services available from the LEO including financial but also programmes such as LEAN, Green and mentoring as well as providing information on the newly announced SBASC Scheme for businesses.

### LEAN FOR BUSINESS

During March, 5 businesses attended a one to one clinic on how LEAN could help their business. In 2021, 3 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. There are two types of LEAN support available to Kilkenny based businesses.

**LEAN START:** this programme is more focused for smaller companies with targeted LEAN needs and wanting to adapt their current business into the LEAN Processes. Businesses are eligible to receive support for a maximum of 3 consultancy days. Lean Start is available to all businesses across sectors in Kilkenny.

**LEAN FOR MICRO:** Businesses will be eligible to receive support for a maximum of 5.5 consultancy days. Lean for Micro is available to eligible companies who employ up to 10 employees in the manufacturing sector and/or have the potential to export / internationally trade.



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## HOUSING

### Housing Capital Delivery 2021

The Capital Schemes programmed for delivery in 2021 are outlined in the table below: -

	Scheme Type	Project Name	Number of Units	Project Status
1	AHB CALF Turnkey	Cois Na Bearu, Graignamanagh [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 St, Mooncoin	6	Works on Hold
8	AHB CALF Turnkey	Nuncio Road Phase 3	22	Site Closed as at 31/03/21 due to Level 5 restrictions
9	SHIP CONSTRUCTION	Ayrfield, Kilkenny City	8	Onsite
10	SHIP CONSTRUCTION TURNKEY	Blackwater Grove, Lower Kilmacow, Co. Kilkenny	16	Onsite
11	SHIP CONSTRUCTION TURNKEY	Pennefeather Court Hebron Road Site 2, Kilkenny City	8	Site Closed as at 31/03/21 due to Level 5 restrictions
12	CAS CONSTRUCTION	"Woodville", Belmont Rd., Ferrybank	4	Completed
13	CAS AHB B & R	25 a & b Green St., Kilkenny	2	Onsite
			198	

### Other Units 'Under Construction' at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2021 - 83 units

- 58 units at Pennefeather Green, Hebron Road, Kilkenny (Turnkey)
- 2 Units at Shanganny, Jenkinstown (KCC Direct Build)
- 23 Units at New Orchard, Kilkenny City [AHB Calf Turnkey - Cluid]

*Note that these 3 sites were closed under Level 5 restrictions as at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2021 but are due to recommence on 12<sup>th</sup> April 2021*



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**KCC Turnkey Projects due to start in April / May 2021**

- 17 Units at Limegrove, Belmont, Ferrybank
- 4 Units at Main Street, Piltown

**CAS Projects due to start April/May 2021**

- 12 Units Brother Thomas Place, Church Lane, Kilkenny Good Shepherd Centre.

**KCC Direct Build Projects - to go to tender in April 2021 [37 Units]**

- 6 units at Golf Links Road, (Mulhalls Shop) Kilkenny (KCC direct build)
- 25 Units at Ladywell, Thomastown (KCC direct build)
- 2 Units at Inchacarron, Mullinavat (KCC direct build)
- 2 Units at Old Fire Station, Graignamanagh (KCC direct build)
- Reconfiguration of 1 apt to 2 units- Ayrfield, Granges Road

**Pre Tender Stage [90 units]**

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



*Blackwater Grove, Kilmacow, nearing completion*



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HOMELESS SERVICES SUMMARY 2021	March 2021
<b>Homeless Presentations</b>	26
<b>Homeless Assessment Outcomes</b>	
Prevention & Interventions	17
Emergency Service	6
Not eligible / Did not avail of service	6
<b>HAP Placefinder Service</b>	
No of tenancies @ 1 <sup>st</sup> day of month	78
No of tenancies created during month	0
No of tenancies in place @ last day of month	0
Number of tenancy breakdowns	0

**As at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2021**

2 households in Emergency Homeless Hotel accommodation (2 families).

10 households in Transition Emergency Accommodation (1 family).

SOCIAL HOUSING SUPPORT APPLICATION SUMMARY	
Number awaiting Social Housing Support at March 31 <sup>st</sup> (Gross Need)	1,919
Number awaiting Social Housing Support at March 31 <sup>st</sup> (Net Need)	834
No. of Social Housing Applications received in March	85
No. of applications incomplete / awaiting further information / clarification	45
No. of applications validated and ready for assessment during the month	44
No. of applications assessed during March	35
<b>No. of applications awaiting assessment as at March 31<sup>st</sup></b>	<b>50</b>

HOUSING ASSISTANCE PAYMENT SUMMARY	
<b>Number of active HAP tenancies to 31<sup>st</sup> March</b>	854
<b>New HAP tenancies set up</b>	51
<b>HAP tenants allocated Social Housing</b>	24
<b>Closed HAP Tenancies</b>	17
<b>HAP Rent Reviews</b>	55
<b>Other tenancy amendments</b>	195
<b>HAP Calls Received</b>	751



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**MARCH MONTHLY STATISTICS**

LA/RAS/Leasing allocations up to end of March ( <i>offers made</i> ):	<b>15</b>
Number of LA tenancies surrendered in:	<b>1</b>
Tenant Liaison Officer cases in March:	<b>20</b>
Maintenance Calls for March:	<b>467</b>
Maintenance Calls year to date	<b>1,457</b>

**Housing Loan Activity 1<sup>st</sup> January 2021 to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2021**

Loan Type	No. Received	No. Approved	Amount Approved	No. Paid	Amount Paid
Rebuilding Ireland Home Loan	16	2	€266,518	2	€645,518
Reconstruction Loan	0	0	€0	0	€0
Caravan Loan	0	0	€0.00	0	€0
<b>Total</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>€266,518</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>€645,518</b>

**Private Grants**

Kilkenny County Council approved a budget of €1.5m for all three private grants (HOP/MAG/HGD). The Council recoups 80% of all eligible expenditure from the Department. The position at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2021 is as follows:

**Grants Approved & Committed up to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2021**

Scheme	No.	Amount
HGD - Housing Adaptation Grant	55	€568,125
MAG - Mobility Aid Grant	18	€77,912
HOP - Housing Aid for Older Persons	89	€546,525
<b>Total</b>	<b>162</b>	<b>€1,192,562</b>

**Grants Paid out up to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2021**

Scheme	No.	Amount
HGD - Housing Adaptation Grant	16	€126,474
MAG - Mobility Aid Grant	10	€42,866
HOP - Housing Aid for Older Persons	22	€148,522
<b>Total</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>€317,862</b>



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## TOURISM

Kilkenny County Councils' Tourism Department continue in its efforts to support the tourism and hospitality sector during the current level 5 lockdown. Looking forward to brighter days ahead, we continue to work with the sector locally to prepare to re-open the City and County to visitors when it is safe for us to welcome them again.

March brought with it the approval of a grant from the Department of Agriculture to enhance the marketing and PR plans for #tastekilkenny in 2021. We will work on new and improved content for the taste website together with building a bank of up to date material for its social media platforms; Twitter, Facebook and Instagram. We are looking forward to working with our local food producers, restaurants and cafes to showcase the wonderful local food offering available here in Kilkenny for all visitors planning to visit to enjoy.



### Kilkenny Catwalk 2021

Work also continues to develop and deliver additional tourism attractions for the County. Our Kilkenny Catwalk, a tourism and art trail around the City for the second half of 2021, continues to be developed and we are delighted to confirm that Cartoon Saloon has come on board.



### Kilkenny Tourism and visitkilkenny.ie

Kilkenny Tourism continues to promote Kilkenny's Tourism offering in 2021. The Spring 2021 campaign continues to keep Kilkenny to the forefront of the domestic visitors' mind for when they are able to travel again. By showcasing Kilkenny's wonderful outdoor activity offering alongside all that the City and County has to offer for families, we are aiming for Kilkenny to be top of the visitors "must see" destination for their 2021 staycation. Check out [www.visitkilkenny.ie](http://www.visitkilkenny.ie) for further details and up to date blogs.

"More to Explore" competition was also launched in March, offering followers an opportunity to win a staycation here in Kilkenny over the summer months. The campaign is proving to be a great success. We reached 547,584 people on Facebook in March. On Instagram we reached 392,157. This is up 80%. If you look at all our social accounts we nearly reached 1 million people 999,882. We got over 1,000 new followers on Facebook. Reactions to posts are also up 85%.

### Outdoor Dining Scheme

Kilkenny County Councils Outdoor Dining Scheme for businesses was launched on Monday 12<sup>th</sup> April 2021.

Our Outdoor Seating and Accessories Grant Scheme for local Tourism and Hospitality Businesses is now live.

The Aim of the scheme is to provide support to individual hospitality and tourism businesses towards the cost of equipment to provide additional outdoor seating and facilitate these businesses to increase their outdoor dining capacity for the Summer of 2021 in a regulated and accessible manner.

The scheme is funded by Failte Ireland and administered by Kilkenny County Council.

Applicants can apply for a grant of up to €4,000 (for up to 75% of the ex-VAT cost of equipment purchased). Eligible expenditure - tables, chairs, umbrellas, electric heaters, screens/windbreaks,



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## KILKENNY COUNTY COUNCIL

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### MONTHLY MANAGEMENT REPORT

### AIBREÁN - APRIL 2021

plant stands and wooden platforms. Expenditure must be incurred between the 1<sup>st</sup> April, 2020 and 30<sup>th</sup> September 2021.

Applications are now being accepted for the scheme and businesses are being invited to apply for supports at the link below;

<https://kilkennycoco.ie/eng/Services/Economic-Development/Outdoor-Seating-and-Accessories-Grant-Scheme-for-Tourism-and-Hospitality-.html>

#### **Kilkenny Tourism Recovery Taskforce**

Fáilte Ireland in partnership with the Kilkenny Destination Tourism Recovery Taskforce has developed a suite of business development supports to be delivered over the months of April and May to help local businesses sustain themselves in the current climate, adapt it to meet domestic consumer needs, build digital skills to help target new customers in 2021 while operating safely and efficiently, and remaining financially viable. The launch kickstarts a range of development supports for tourism businesses in Kilkenny to drive demand across all sectors and to Kilkenny as a whole.

Fáilte Ireland's goal for 2021 is to sustain businesses, supporting survival in the short term to thrive in the long term.

The work of the Taskforce is on-going and is being led by Kilkenny County Council, Fáilte Ireland and key tourism stakeholders locally with their role being to deliver a roadmap within Kilkenny to move towards re-opening, recovery, and growth.

Modules will include:

- The Business of Tourism
- New Experience Activation
- Marketing on a Shoestring
- Networking and Collaboration Event
- Google Analytics
- Driving Traffic to your websites



## **FIRE SERVICES**

### **Capital Projects**

Part 8 Planning application for the new fire station in Urlingford has been submitted. Work is ongoing to identify and purchase a new site for Kilkenny City Fire Brigade.

Capital funding approval has been received from the Department for the replacement of an Emergency Tender for Kilkenny City Fire Brigade. Tenders have been received and assessed for the purchase of 42. 300 bar breathing apparatus cylinders and covers.

### **Fire Safety Certificates**

16 applications for fire safety certificates were received to-date.

### **Fire Services Acts 1981 & 2003**

- 6 Licence Applications were processed under Section 24 of the Fire Services Acts 1981 & 2003.
- 3 Dangerous Substance Licence applications were received and assessed to date.
- 15 Fire safety inspections of premises have been carried out to date during level 5 -Covid-19.

### **Community Fire Safety**

Home fire safety visits have been postponed due to level -5 Lockdown.

## **ARTS**

### **Literature**

#### **Short Story Online workshops with Emmaleene Leahy**

Our five-week short story online workshops with poet and tutor, Emmaleene Leahy finished on 23<sup>rd</sup> March and was very well received by all the participants.

#### **Broadsheet 20 Workshops**

Our Broadsheet poetry online workshops on 13<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> March, with our 2021 editor Jessica Traynor, had 21 participants.



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## Digital Upskills sessions for Kilkenny Art Practitioners

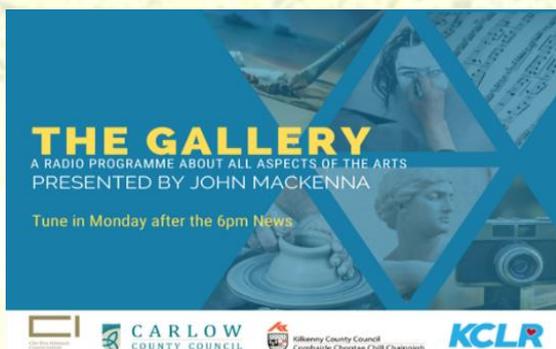
We have organised a programme of seven Digital Upskilling Workshops for Kilkenny's art practitioners, with Michael Fortune, visual artist and folklorist and they commenced on Monday 5<sup>th</sup> April. Sessions will include how to create quality images and film using your mobile phone, how to edit, add text and sound to videos, how to broadcast and host events using Facebook Live and Zoom etc.

## wednesday weeklies

Following the success of our Wednesday Weeklies last year and requests for more sessions we have a programme of seven online meetings commencing on 14<sup>th</sup> April aimed at artists and other creatives in Kilkenny to explore ideas around dealing with the ongoing Covid 19 Restrictions. Informal sessions led by experienced practitioners will support and guide the participants through these difficult times.

## New KCLR Arts Show - The Gallery

An insight into the world of the arts will be highlighted in a new radio series titled "The Gallery" which started on KCLR Monday 29<sup>th</sup> March @ 6pm. Presented by playwright and novelist, John MacKenna, the show will bring updates on what is going on in the arts locally, will explore what makes artists tick, bring you book reviews, examine the role of the arts within our community and so much more. This series is funded by the Kilkenny and Carlow Creative Ireland programmes.



## Knitted Together 2 - 2021

Funding has been secured under the Creativity in Older Age stream, Creative Ireland, our Knitted Together 2 project has been initiated and publicised far and wide.



This project is enabling us, once again, to work with a diverse range of groups and individuals both in residential care homes and the public at large to create a number of blankets which will be distributed to various charities across the County. This project is a natural progression and development of our 2020 Knitted Together project which was very successful and engaged with over 180 groups and individuals across the county and beyond. This project is enabling us to:

- build upon the success of the 2020 project in engaging with a whole new cohort of individuals and groups across the county, further building and strengthening existing relationships
- ensure continuity of engagement with the individuals and communities that engaged with us in 2020
- engage with new communities through nursing homes and residential care facilities
- support positive ageing and mitigate the negative impact of social cocooning and social distancing



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LIBRARY

March 2021

Door to Door  
Library Service



295

Deliveries made in March



1,030

Items delivered in March

293

Phone calls made in March



School Deliveries



Our driver Tom visited St John of God NS, Mooncoin NS, Glenmore NS, Kilmacow NS, Bennettsbridge NS, St Canice's Co-Ed and St. John's Senior School recently. Teachers and pupils were delighted to receive sets of class novels and books to support their students learning. Schools and teachers can register to borrow up to 40 books at a time for a 12-weeks.



\* New online memberships & their use of online services is not reflected in these figures

Online Services use:



1,627

eBooks borrowed  
▲ 52% on 2020

976

eMagazines borrowed  
▼ 26% on 2020



7,013

eNewspapers borrowed  
▲ 94% on 2020

882

Songs accessed  
▲ 3166% on 2020



2,150

eAudiobooks borrowed  
▲ 80% on 2020

5,461

Online Course sessions  
▲ 260% on 2020



59

Language sessions  
▼ 20% on 2020



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## Grow It Forward Campaign Launched

The National Grow it Forward Campaign was launched this month, partnering Libraries with GIY to support people to live healthier and more sustainable lives by growing some of their own food. This project is part of a national programme to support Ireland's Resilience and Recovery Plan. Starter growing kits with 5 different seeds are available while stocks last and can be posted to your home. To register, email/phone your local library. We ask all participants to Grow It Forward by sharing seedlings, plants or the produce at harvest time to other people to encourage more people to begin growing food.



## ASD Sensory Resources



As part of our Encouraging Minds Literacy Project, Staff and students at 18 ASD and Language units all over Kilkenny received specialist motor skills resources and sensory books, carefully researched and chosen by Library Staff. The School of The Holy Spirit Kilkenny and Saplings School were thrilled to receive their deliveries recently! This is part of our ongoing development of literacy resources under the National Right to Read Literacy Programme for County Kilkenny and our commitment to supporting children and families with ASD needs.



## Digital Engagement

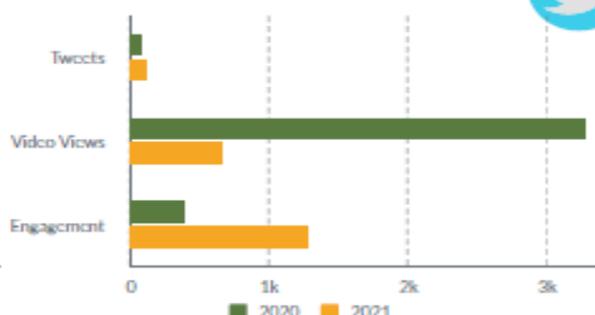
Our staff have prepared, recorded, edited and published **416** posts on our social media platforms in March. Our videos were viewed **11,924** times.



Facebook March 20 v 21



Twitter March 20 v 21





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FINANCE

The expenditure by service division to the end of March is set out in table 1. Total Expenditure for the period was €19.5m compared with the annual budget of €89.9m.

Table 1	Actual YTD February 2021	Budget Full Year 2021
	€'000's	€'000's
Housing & Building	5,479	20,085
Road Transport & Safety	4,473	25,500
Water Services	1,676	7,115
Development Management	2,236	10,679
Environmental Services	2,664	11,748
Recreation & Amenity	1,378	6,647
Agriculture, Education, Health, Welfare	127	672
Miscellaneous Services	1,430	7,516
<b>OVERALL TOTAL</b>	<b>19,463</b>	<b>89,962</b>

The bank overdraft facility was un-utilised for the year to 31<sup>st</sup> March, 2021. The unaudited Annual Financial Statements for 2020 will be brought before the members at the April Council meeting.

### Rates Revaluation

Further to Revaluation 2017, 197 customers with a total rate demand value of €4.5m appealed their new valuation to the Valuation Tribunal. To date, 184 appeals have been completed. 144 of the 184 appeals have resulted in a decrease in rates. 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 made by the Tribunal.

### Rates Waiver 2021

On the 27<sup>th</sup> 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 Department has further extended the waiver to cover quarter 2 providing a total of six months credit in lieu of commercial rates for eligible businesses. The 2021 Rates Waiver Scheme has modified criteria and accordingly is a separate standalone waiver scheme from the scheme that applied in 2020. Credit in lieu of commercial rates will be applied to the rate accounts of all eligible businesses closed by or badly impacted by Level 5 Restrictions and the Rates Section will communicate with eligible and ineligible businesses this month.



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**Small Business Assistance Scheme (SBAS)**

The Department of Enterprise Trade & Employment has recently launched the Small Business Assistance Scheme for COVID (SBASC) which is intended to target those businesses with operating costs that do not qualify for the COVID Restrictions Support Scheme (CRSS) operated by the Revenue Commissioners. The key eligibility criteria of the are:

A business must:

- Be a sole trader, a company, self-employed, or a partnership;
- Have a minimum turnover of €50,000 for each ratable premises;
- Not be owned or operated by a public body;
- Not eligible for/be in receipt of CRSS for the period for which the grant covers or eligible for Fáilte Ireland's Business Continuity Scheme or the Music Entertainment Business Assistance Scheme (MEBAS) of the Department of Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport and Media.
- Operate from a building, or similar fixed physical structure on which business rates are payable (mobile premises, or premises which are not permanently fixed in place, do not meet the definition of business premises nor do premises on which no rates are payable);
- Must have a current eTax Clearance Certificate from the Revenue Commissioners.
- The turnover of the business over the claim period 1st January to 31st March 2021 is estimated to be no more than 25% of the average weekly turnover of the business in 2019; or the estimated average weekly turnover of the business in 2020, for businesses that commenced after 1st November, 2019 and
- The business intends to resume trading in full once Government restrictions are eased.
- Have 1 - 250 employees and a projected turnover of less than €25 million in 2021;

In relation to the verification of the €50,000 turnover requirement, applicants will be required to upload their most recent financial or trading accounts or the relevant section of their most recent Revenue income tax Form 11, which verifies turnover in excess of €50,000.

The scheme covers the period 1 January 2021 to 30 June 2021. Each eligible applicant will receive a payment of €4,000 with an additional payment of €4,000 from May 2021 to applicants continuing to meet the scheme eligibility criteria. The closing date for applications for the initial grant under SBASC is 21<sup>st</sup> April, 2021 and businesses can apply on line at [www.kilkennycoco.ie](http://www.kilkennycoco.ie).