



Comhairle Chontae Chill Chainnigh
Kilkenny County Council

2024

ANNUAL REPORT



ADOPTED AT ORDINARY MEETING OF
KILKENNY COUNTY COUNCIL
HELD ON 28TH APRIL, 2025

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STATEMENT OF AN CATHAOIRLEACH



As Cathaoirleach of the County of Kilkenny, it is a great honour and pleasure to introduce on behalf of Kilkenny County Council, this Annual Report for 2024 which is a very comprehensive record of what Kilkenny County Council has delivered for its customers and the citizens of the County.

Kilkenny County Council is among the largest public service providers in the County, and as such we have a responsibility and an obligation to provide a quality service to all our customers. The range of facilities and services provided by Kilkenny County Council across the County is considerable and the Council continued throughout 2024 to ensure that our citizens received an efficient, trustworthy and reliable service in a cost-effective manner.

My elected colleagues and I worked closely in 2024 with the Council Management to make financial provision for various services and projects in the County in a competitive and challenging operating environment. I was greatly honoured to be elected as Cathaoirleach of Kilkenny County Council on 21st June, 2024 and to represent Kilkenny as its first citizen for the County following the Local Elections.

I wish to sincerely thank the staff of the organisation for the tremendous work they carry out daily for the development of this County. Their dedication and professionalism exemplify the important public service provided by the local authority. I wish to thank our Chief Executive Mr. Lar Power and his Executive team for supporting me and my fellow Elected Members in our work with a united aim of improving the quality of life for all the people of Kilkenny City and County.

The key to achieving a range of infrastructural improvements and service provisions throughout the County was the ongoing collaboration and productivity between the Elected Members, the Council's executive and officials, Oireachtas members, Government Departments and other stakeholders and partners.

I would also like to thank Cllr. Michael Doyle who presided as Cathaoirleach for the first six months in 2024 and also sincerely thank my colleagues on the Council for their support and co-operation during my term as Cathaoirleach of the County with a special word of thanks to my Leas-Cathaoirleach, Cllr Peter 'Chap' Cleere. I wish to pay tribute to the Councillors who decided not to contest the Local Elections in 2024 and would like to wish them well in the future. I welcome all the newly Elected Councillors and wish them the very best in their new roles, and I know that they will play their part in continuing the development and promotion of the County in the years ahead.

Is onóir mhór dom an tréimhse atá caite agam mar Cathaoirleach ar an gContae breá seo. Ba mhaith liom mo bhuíochas a chuir in iúl as ucht an comhoibriú iontach a fuair mé ó fheidhmeannaigh na Comhairle, na Comhairleoirí eile agus pobal na Cill Chainnigh fré chéile. Cé go bhfuil dúshlán mhór romhainn táim cinnte go bhfuil ar chumas an Chontae seo tarraingt le chéile agus oibriú i dtreo todhchaí thairbheach dúinn ar fad.



Cllr. Michael McCarthy
Cathaoirleach

CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S STATEMENT



2024 has seen Kilkenny County Council make great strides in service delivery while continuing to address key challenges in proactive and innovative ways. This progress has been achieved through constructive partnership between all stakeholders including staff, Councillors, Community Groups and Businesses.

Excellent facilities delivered for our community and visitors in 2024 include the Mayfair Library. In October 2024, the Mayfair Library hit an exciting milestone with over 100,000 visitors entering the doors since its opening in April. Other key Infrastructure delivery for Co Kilkenny included the N24 Tower Road and the Southeast Greenway. Kilkenny County Council continue to facilitate Enterprise development and Employment opportunities through initiatives such as the Urlingford Remote Working Hub and the innovative Night-time Economy Plan.

Housing provision remained a top priority in which considerable progress was made in 2024 with the launch of developments at Crokers Hill, College Park Crescent, The Rise, Castleoaks and Cluain Glassan Affordable Homes. The Council's continued focus on diversified tenure types and delivery mechanisms was crucial in our efforts to bring increased residential units on stream. Kilkenny County Council fulfilled its and housing provision targets and continued the implementation of the Housing Capital programme.

Important heritage and Conservation initiatives were undertaken including the Callan Heritage Trail and the formation of the Kilkenny Heritage Forum.

Climate Action and Environmental issues continue to be at the forefront of the national conversation. Kilkenny were proactive in launching our Climate Action Plan 2024-2029. The plan sets out 99 actions which are planned or ongoing to protect and foster the natural beauty and environmental wealth of the County while 22 communities were facilitated to undertake Climate Action Projects across the County.

The Local Elections of 2024 were an important and professionally handled expression of democracy. I would like to once again extend my congratulations to all involved. I would like to thank the Cathaoirleach Michael McCarthy, and his predecessor, Cllr. Michael Doyle and all Members of Kilkenny County Council for their co-operation and support during 2024. I would like to pay tribute to all Council staff for their hard work, commitment and enthusiasm in the delivery of services to the people of Kilkenny. I am confident that the partnership between staff and Elected Members will continue in the years ahead.

I look forward to us building on achievements to date in 2025 while ensuring that Kilkenny remains a vibrant, well-run Local Authority which embraces opportunity and diversity and leads on issues such as Climate Action, Public Transport Improvement, Employment and Housing.

I commend this Annual Report for adoption by the Elected Members.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading 'Lar Power'.

Lar Power
Chief Executive

ELECTORAL REPRESENTATIONS

Kilkenny County Council's membership consists of twenty-four Members, elected for a five-year term of office. The current Council was elected in June 2024 and membership at 31st December, 2024 is as follows:

CALLAN - THOMASTOWN		CASTLECOMER	
	Brian Cleere (FF) <i>Meadowview, Curraghlane Upper, Skeoughvosteen, Co. Kilkenny.</i>		John Brennan (FG) <i>Upper Crutt, Clogh, Castlecomer, Co. Kilkenny</i>
	Deirdre Cullen (FF) <i>Kilkenny Road,, Bennettsbridge, Co. Kilkenny.</i>		Mary Hilda Cavanagh (FG) <i>Whiteswall, Crosspatrick, Via Thurles, Co Kilkenny</i>
	Stephaine Doheny (SF) <i>42, Park Avenue, Friary Walk, Callan, Co. Kilkenny</i>		Michael Delaney (FF) <i>Tullaroan Village, Tullaroan, Co. Kilkenny</i>
	Michael Doyle (FG) <i>Ballinbarna, The Rower, Co. Kilkenny.</i>		Pat Fitzpatrick (FF), <i>Cloghpook, Ballyfoyle, Co. Kilkenny.</i>
	Joe Lyons (FG) <i>Bauntha, Callan, Co. Kilkenny</i>		Michael McCarthy (FF) <i>Buncrusha Street, Freshford, Co. Kilkenny</i>
	Joe Sheridan (FF) <i>Kells, Co. Kilkenny.</i>		Maurice Shortall (NP) <i>9, Lower Acorns, Castlecomer, Co. Kilkenny</i>

Cllr. Brian Cleere was appointed as Elected Member in December 2024 due to the election of Cllr. Peter 'Chap' Cleere to Dáil Eireann.

KILKENNY CITY



John Coonan (FF)
17 Willow Close,
Ardnore,
Kilkenny



Maria Dollard (GP)
Constituency Office,
The Parade,
Kilkenny



David Fitzgerald (FG)
24 Patrick Street,
Kilkenny.



Joe Malone (FF)
11 Maiden Hill
Kells Road,
Kilkenny.



Andrew McGuinness (FF) Constituency Office,
O' Loughlin Road,
Kilkenny.



Eugene McGuinness (NP)
40 Bishop Birch Place,
Kilkenny



Seán Ó hArgáin (LAB)
'Sceilg'
Greenshill,
Kilkenny

PILTOWN



Tomás Breathnach, (Lab)
Forge Road,
Narabane,
Kilmacow,
Co. Kilkenny.



Jenny Catt Slattery (FF)
Main Street,
Mullinavat,
Co. Kilkenny.



Fidelis Doherty (FG)
Ballyfacey,
Glenmore,
Co. Kilkenny.



Pat Dunphy (FG),
Ballygorey,
Mooncoin,
Co Kilkenny



Ger Frisby (FF)
Treanaree,
Slieverue,
Co. Kilkenny.

MEETINGS OF THE COUNCIL

The Council holds Ordinary meetings on a monthly basis. It also holds special meetings to consider and adopt its annual budget. The Council may hold as many meetings as it considers necessary to discharge its functions.

PLENARY MEETINGS OF KILKENNY COUNTY COUNCIL

Number of Meetings held in 2024: 24

Ordinary Monthly Meetings - 11, Workshops – 9 & Special Meetings - 4

- Abbey Quarter Update
- Achievements 2019-2024
- Adoption of Budget
- Adoption of Kilkenny's Traveller Accommodation Programme 2025 – 2029
- Allowance payable to Cathaoirleach & Cathaoirleach's of Municipal Districts
- Amenity Grants 2024
- Annual Financial Statement
- Annual Report 2023
- Appointment of Elected Members to Outside Bodies
- Arts Grants 2024
- Audit Charter & Work Programme 2024
- Audit Committee Annual Report 2023
- Bank Overdraft Facility & Borrowing Approvals
- Briefing from Kilkenny Vintners in relation to Local Festivals
- Callan Local Area Plan
- Chief Executive's Monthly Report
- City & County Development Plan Variation
- Civic Festivals
- Climate Action
- Community and Cultural Facilities Capital Grant Scheme 2024
- Community Event Grants 2024
- Corporate Plan
- Economic Monitor
- Election of Cathaoirleach & Leas Cathaoirleach
- Festival Grants & Events Grant Scheme 2024
- Foreign Travel
- Graveyard Grant Scheme 2024
- LCDC Annual Report 2023
- Local Property Tax
- Naming of Infrastructure
- National Speed Limit Implementation & New Rural Speed Limits
- Part 8 Reports on Various Projects
- Performance Indicators 2023
- Renew Commitment to the EU Covenant of Mayors on Climate and Energy
- Review of the Effectiveness of Kilkenny County Council's Audit Committee
- Road Works Scheme 2024
- Section 183 Disposals
- Section 85 Agreement with other Local Authorities
- Service Delivery Plan 2024
- SPC Scheme 2024-2029
- Taking in Charge
- Thomastown Local Area Plan
- Three Year Capital Programme
- Water European Innovation Partnership Presentation
- Winter Services Maintenance Plan 2023-2024

MEETING OF COMMITTEES

MUNICIPAL DISTRICT OF CASTLECOMER MEETINGS

Number of Meetings held in 2024: 12 Number of Workshops: 2

- Abbott Kilkenny Official Opening & Upgrade of Roads in surrounding area
- Additional Funding for Family Carers
- Road Works Programme 2024
- Ballyragget Masterplan
- Bus Stop Provision – Moneenroe & Castlecomer
- Castlecomer Local Area Plan Review
- Castlecomer Settlement Plan
- Castlecomer Traffic Management Plan
- Community Involvement Scheme & Need for Additional Funding
- Constituency Boundary Change
- County Biodiversity Action Plan
- Driver Feedback Signs
- Election of Cathaoirleach & Leas Cathaoirleach
- Flooding Issues/Drainage Maintenance
- Freshford Flood Relief Scheme
- Freshford Graveyard Provision of Carpark
- General Municipal Allocation / Adoption of Municipal Budget Plan
- Ghost Island to facilitate traffic turning towards Lisdowney off the N77
- Gowran Community Hub
- High Speed Broadband Delivery – Castlecomer Municipal District
- Illegal Dumping
- Illegal Parking in Castlecomer
- Johnstown Public Realm Plan
- Local Improvement Scheme – Eligibility Criteria & Need for Additional Funding
- Low Cost Safety Schemes
- Low Hanging / Dangerous Eir & NBI Wires & Poles
- Outdoor Recreation Infrastructure Scheme 2021 - 2024
- Paulstown Masterplan
- Pedestrian Safety at the Red Barn, Ballyragget
- Pedestrianising Old Bridge, Ballyragget
- Playground & Outdoor Gym Areas
- Private Waste Water Schemes Grants
- Road Works Programme Updates & Roads Related Issues
- Safety Improvement Works
- Severe Weather Preparation
- Signage & Road Markings
- Standing Orders Review
- Taking in Charge
- Town Regeneration – Vacant / Derelict Sites & Buildings
- Traffic Calming – Speed Ramps / Raised Platforms
- Transport Infrastructure Ireland
- Uisce Éireann – Communication Difficulties
- Urlingford Remote Working Hub
- Water & Waste Water Schemes
- Winter Maintenance Plan 2024 – 2025 & Salting Operations



Restoration Improvement Works Coolnacritta



Kanes Bridge Low Cost Safety

MUNICIPAL DISTRICT OF CALLAN - THOMASTOWN

Number of Meetings held in 2024: 11 [including Annual Meeting & Budget Meeting]

- | | |
|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ 2022 – 2024 Multi Annual Programme▪ Active Travel Projects▪ Adoption of General Municipal Allocation (GMA)▪ Adoption of Roadworks Programme 2024▪ Adoption of Schedule of Meetings▪ Adoption of Standing Orders▪ Adoption of Three-Year Restoration Improvement Programme 2025-2027▪ Age Friendly Strategy▪ Biodiversity Action Plan▪ Bridge Rehabilitation▪ Broadband Rollout▪ Callan By-Pass▪ CLÁR Funded Projects▪ Climate Action Projects▪ Community Enhancement Grants Scheme▪ Community events grant scheme▪ Community Heritage Grants Scheme▪ Community Investment Scheme▪ Community Involvement in Roadworks Schemes▪ Community Monuments Fund▪ Community Recognition Funded Roads Projects▪ Creative Ireland Grant Scheme▪ Directional and Road Signage▪ Disabled Parking Bays▪ Discretionary Works | <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Drainage Works▪ Election of Cathaoirleach & Leas Cathaoirleach▪ Flooding Relief Schemes▪ Footpath Works▪ General Municipal Allocation / Adoption of Municipal Budget Plan▪ Hedgecutting▪ Kings River, Callan▪ Local Enhancement Programme▪ Local Improvement Schemes▪ Low Cost Safety Improvement Schemes▪ N76 Callan By-Pass Works▪ Oris Funded Projects▪ Park & Ride Facilities Motorway Junctions▪ Pride of Place Competition▪ Public Lighting▪ Restoration Improvements Works▪ Restoration Maintenance Works▪ Revised Rural Roads Speed Limit▪ Roadworks Programme Updates & Roads Related Issues▪ RRDF Funded Projects▪ Rural Development Updates▪ Speed Limit Review▪ Sports Capital Grants Scheme▪ Town & Village Renewal Schemes▪ Traffic Calming Measures & Speeding▪ Winter Maintenance Programme |
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MUNICIPAL DISTRICT OF KILKENNY CITY MEETINGS

(including Annual Meeting & Budget Meeting)

Number of Meetings held in 2024: 11

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Active Travel Infrastructure Improvement – Cootes Lane Bridge, Pocke, Loughboy Park, Dean Kavanagh to Fatima Place completed ▪ Bus Shelters – Larchfield, Laurel Drive, O’Loughlin Road, Leggettsrath, Cillín Hill, Upper Patrick Street, Dominic Street, Castlecomer Road at McDonagh Junction, St. Luke’s Hospital ▪ Butler Gallery Wall Repairs ▪ Designer appointed for minor improvements to the Parade and Mayor’s Walk ▪ Drainage Improvements – Dunningstown Road, Francis Terrace, Glendine Heights, Riverside Drive, Castlecomer Road ▪ Flood Control – Ballyfoyle Road, Circular Road ▪ Footpath Repairs – Riverside Drive, Lintown Hall, Talbot’s Court, John Street, John’s Bridge, Upper Patrick Street, College Court, Sycamores, De Loughrey Place, Bishop Birch Place, Mother of Fair Love, Kells Road, Ramp at the Cosh, Riverside Drive ▪ IBAL 2024 Kilkenny second out of 40 towns ▪ John Street and John’s Quay Urban Design Masterplan prepared | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ KSUMP – further engagement and development of Plan ▪ Lacken Boardwalk Improvement ▪ Landscaping – Marble City Industrial Estate, Linear Park/Riverside Gardens, Canal Walk, Ring Road Roundabouts, Riverside Walk ▪ NTA agreement to re-route KK2 Bus to facilitate Vicar Street Improvement ▪ Parking Management Amendments ▪ Public Lighting Improvements – Pocke Park, Rose Inn Street, John Street, The Weir ▪ Road Resurfacing/Pavement Repairs – Glendine Heights, High Street, St. Mary’s Avenue, Bohernatounish Road, College Road, Hebron Road, James Green, New Building Lane, St. Fiacre Place, Radestown Lane, Newtown Lane, The Weir, Kells Road ▪ Safe Routes to School – Grange Road completed ▪ St Mary’s Lane Designer appointed ▪ St. Kieran’s Street and Market Square Enhancement tender completed ▪ Taking in Charge – Rioch Court, Burrells Walk, Rath Ullard, Breaghagh Court ▪ Traffic Calming – Glendine, Circular Road ▪ Watergate Urban Park commenced on site ▪ Zebra Crossings – Nuncio Road, Bohernatounish Road, Hebron Road, Granges Road, Freshford Road, Castlecomer Road |
|---|--|



Cootes Lane Bridge



Grange Road SRTS



Zebra Crossing Nuncio Road

MUNICIPAL DISTRICT OF PILTOWN MEETINGS

Number of Meetings held in 2024: 12 [including Annual Meeting and Budget Meeting]

Workshops: 5, Joint Meeting with Waterford Metropolitan District: 1

Joint Meetings with Carrick-on-Suir Municipal District: 2

- Abbey Road/Belmont Road Upgrades
- Active Travel Fiddown Village Improvements
- Adoption of Road Works Scheme 2024
- Adoption of Standing Orders
- Belmont Link Road/Greenway Connectivity
- Biodiversity Action Plan
- BusConnects, Waterford
- Clover Centre, Ferrybank
- Community Involvement Scheme
- Curraghmartin Solar Community Benefit Fund
- Election of Cathaoirleach & Leas Cathaoirleach
- Ferrybank Neighbourhood Park – Sports Capital Programme
- Ferrybank Primary Care Centre
- Ferrybank Shopping Centre
- Ferrybank-Belview Local Area Plan & Joint Retail Strategy
- General Municipal Allocation/Adoption of Municipal Budget Plan
- Glenmore Bus Stop
- Greenway Links to Slieverue & Glenmore
- Hedgecutting
- Invasive Species
- Kilmacow Masterplan
- Listerlin Village Improvement Scheme
- Litter Management Plan
- Local Improvement Scheme
- Memorial Plaque Tower Road Junction
- Mill Road Footpath, Mullinavat
- Multi-Annual Restoration Improvement Programme 2025-2027
- N24 Tower Road Safety Improvement Scheme
- N24 Waterford to Cahir Scheme
- N25 Speed Camera Installation, Glenmore
- N25 Waterford to Glenmore Scheme
- National Broadband Plan
- North Quays SDZ
- Piltown Enhancement Scheme
- Piltown RRDF Scheme
- Pride of Place Awards
- Roadworks Programme Updates & Roads Related Issues
- Roundabouts approaching Waterford City
- Rural Local Roads Speed Limits Implementation
- SEG Interpretation, Wayfinding & Orientation Plan
- South East Greenway
- South-North Link Road, Ferrybank
- Sustainable Transport Bridge – North Quays SDZ
- Taking in Charge Applications
- Traffic Congestion, Ferrybank Soccer & GAA Clubs
- Unfinished Housing Developments
- Waterford Airport
- Waterford Metropolitan Area Strategic Plan (MASP)
- Winter Service Plan, Priority 3



COMMITTEES & SUBSIDIARY BODIES

Corporate Policy Group

The Corporate Policy Group (CPG) is a committee of the Council consisting of the Cathaoirleach of the Council and the Chairperson of each of the five Strategic Policy Committees (SPC's). The CPG links the work of the different SPCs and provides a forum where proposed items for Council meeting agendas and policy matters are discussed. The CPG also monitors the performance of the local authority and plays a key role in the budgetary process. The CPG met on 11 occasions in 2024.

Committees & Subsidiary Bodies

There is a legal obligation on Local Authorities to establish certain Committees such as Strategic Policy Committees. Local Authorities have discretionary authority to establish other Committees to assist them in performing their roles as Elected Members.

Strategic Policy Committees

Kilkenny County Council adopted a Strategic Policy Committee Scheme on 16th September, 2024 for the newly Elected Council 2024 to 2029. The role of the Strategic Policy Committees (SPC's) is to assist the Council in the formulation, development and review of policy. Their composition reflect the major functions of the Council within the broader context, are tailored to the size, membership and administrative resources of the Council and have one third of their membership drawn from sectors relevant to the committees' work.

The SPC's bring together both Elected Members and people actively working with social, economic, cultural and environmental bodies to develop and review policies related to Council's services. The SPC's provide Elected Members with external views as they discharge their strategic role in the development of the local authority, including their policy development and oversight roles within the local authority. The overall configuration and membership of the Kilkenny County Council's Strategic Policy Committees is as follows at the 31st December, 2024:

SPC 1:

Economic Development, Enterprise Support & Tourism, Planning & Development Policy

Elected Members [5]

David Fitzgerald [C]
Michael Doyle
Cllr. Peter 'Chap' Cleere
John Coonan
Maria Dollard

Members from External Sectors [7]

Agriculture/Farming:	Shane Cummins [IFA]
Development/Construction	Brian Crowdle [Chambers Ireland]
Environment/Conservation	Brian Hamilton [PPN]

Main Items Considered:

- | | |
|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">Careers Kilkenny 2024Waterford Metropolitan AreaDigital Assets ServicesFerrybank Local Area PlanKilkenny Craft Working Group & StrategyKilkenny Destination Experience Development PlanLECP Implementation Plan 2023-2024Made in Kilkenny Group PresentationNight Time Economy Pilot Action Plan | <ul style="list-style-type: none">Overview of SPC1 for new MembersOverview on Tourism Planning and Development PolicyAction Plan 2023-2028The Mayfair Library.Three Year Digital StrategyThrive – Town Centre First Heritage Revival SchemeTown Regeneration Officer (TRO)Update on LEO and Economic Development ActivitiesUrban Design Strategy |
|--|--|

SPC 2: Transportation Policy/Mobility Management & Infrastructure

Number of Meetings held 3

Elected Members [5]	Members from External Sectors [7]
Deirdre Cullen [C]	Agriculture/Farming: Brendan Hickey [IFA]
Pat Dunphy	Development/Construction: Michael Duggan [CIF]
Michael Delaney	Social Inclusion: Eileen Ryan [PPN]
Joe Sheridan	Environment/Conservation: Mary Brennan [PPN]
Maurice Shortall	

Main Items Considered:

- Sustainable Urban Mobility Plan - SUMP
- Capital projects City & County
- Accessible Parking County Wide
- Speed Limits
- Road Safety - Engineering
- URDF Projects South Kilkenny
- Strategic Policy Committee Scheme 2024 - 2029
- Overview of Roads & Mobility Management (*Active Travel*)

SPC 3: Housing

Number of Meetings held 3

Elected Members [5]	Members from External Sectors [7]
Andrew McGuinness [C]	Development/Construction: Michael Raggett [CIF]
Fidelis Doherty	Environment/Conservation: Madeline Carroll [PPN]
Pat Fitzpatrick	Social Inclusion: Lisa Morris [PPN]
Joe Malone	Community/Voluntary: John Bourke [PPN]
Michael Delaney	Trade Union: Yvonne Moriarty [ICTU]
Stephanie Doheny	

Main Items Considered:

- Affordable Housing
- Homeless Policy
- Traveller Action Plan 2025-2029
- Choice Based Letting Scheme

SPC 4: Climate Action, Energy & Environmental Protection

Number of Meetings held 3

Elected Members [5]	Members from External Sectors [7]
Eugene McGuinness [C]	Agriculture/Farming: James Murphy [IFA]
Mary Hilda Cavanagh	Environment/Conservation: Mary Rice [PPN]
Joe Lyons	Community/Voluntary: Noel O'Donohue [PPN]
Ger Frisby	
Pat Fitzpatrick	
Seán Ó hArgáin	

Main Items Considered:

- Purpose, Structure and Standing Orders
- Climate Action Plan
- Litter Management Plan
- Burial Grounds Policy
- Noise Action Plan
- CCTV Codes of Practice
- EU Covenant of Mayors for Climate & Energy
- DWWTP Grant
- C&D Waste Regulation

SPC 5: Community, Integration, Cultural, Gaeilge, Heritage & Fire Services
Number of Meetings held....3

Elected Members [5] John Brennan [Chair] Pat Dunphy Michael McCarthy Jenny Catt Slattery Tomás Breathnach	Members from External Sectors [4] Business/Commercial: Vacant Community/Voluntary: Mary Dolan [PPN] Social Inclusion: Guy Jones [PPN] Trade Union: Fergal Canton [ICTU]
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Main Items Considered:

- Creative Ireland Fund 2024 – Proposed Programme & Grants
- Fire Service Policy
- Library Policy
- Community Projects and Grant Schemes
- Overview of SPC for new members
- Biodiversity Action Plan
- Age Friendly Strategy

MEMBERS TRAINING & EXPENSES

ELECTED MEMBER	DATE	CONFERENCE	ORGANISER LOCATION	FEES	EXPENSES	TOTAL
Eamon Alyward	19-21/01/2024	Building for Success	LAMA Donegal	€160	€623	€783
	26-27/01/2024	Elected Members Briefing	AILG Limerick	€85	€254	€339
	22-23/03/2024	Local Election Briefing	AILG Athlone	€85	€312	€397
	Overall Total					€1,519
Tomas Breathnach						€-
John Brennan	19-21/01/2024	Building for Success	LAMA Donegal	€160	€611	€771
	14-16/02/2024	Annual Conference	AILG Wicklow	€170	€415	€585
	12-13/07/2024	Elected Member Induction Training	AILG Cork	€85	€305	€390
	11-13/09/2024	Autumn Training Conference	AILG Monaghan	€170	€496	€666
	11-13/10/2024	Practical Guide to Budget '25	Celtic Carlingford	€130	€570	€700
	17-19/10/2024	Autumn Seminar	LAMA Navan	€170	€516	€686
	01-02/11/2024	Local Authority Finance and Budget Process	AILG Limerick	€85	€378	€463
	Overall Total					€4,261
Martin Brett	19-21/01/2024	Building for Success	LAMA Donegal	€160	€433	€593
	26-27/01/2024	Elected Members Briefing	AILG Limerick	€85	€257	€342
	12-13/01/2024	The Finance Act	Celtic Carlingford	€130	€220	€350
	14-16/02/2024	Annual Conference	AILG Wicklow	€170	€262	€432
	22-23/03/2024	Local Election Briefing	AILG Athlone	€85	€209	€294
	Overall Total					€2,011
Jenny Catt Slattery	12-13/07/2024	Elected Member Induction Training	AILG Cork	€85	€270	€355
	11-13/09/2024	Autumn Training Conference	AILG Monaghan	€170	€553	€723
	17-19/10/2024	Autumn Seminar	LAMA Navan	€170	€492	€662
	01-02/11/2024	Local Authority Finance and Budget Process	AILG Limerick	€85	€272	€357
	15-16/11/2024	A Councillor's Guide to the Home Upgrade Grants	AILG Claregalway	€85	€462	€547
	13-15/12/2024	Health Services Entitlements	Celtic Clonakilty	€130	€220	€350
	Overall Total					€2,994

Mary Hilda Cavanagh	26-27/01/2024	Elected Members Briefing	AILG Limerick	€85	€262	€347
	14-16/02/2024	Annual Conference	AILG Wicklow	€170	€454	€624
	02-03/02/2024	Irish Housing Crisis	Celtic Clonakilty	€130	€380	€510
	12-13/07/2024	Elected Member Induction Training	AILG Cork	€85	€282	€367
	11-13/09/2024	Autumn Training Conference	AILG Monaghan	€170	€316	€486
	04/10/2024	IPB Members Engagement Forum	IPB, Mullingar	€-	€188	€188
	17-19/10/2024	Autumn Seminar	LAMA Navan	€170	€577	€747
	01-02/11/2024	LA Finance & Budget Process	AILG, Limerick	€85	€340	€425
	15-16/11/2024	A Councillor's Guide to the Home Upgrade Grants	AILG Claregalway	€85	€391	€476
	Overall Total					€4,170
Brian Cleere						€-
Peter Cleere	19-21/01/2024	Building for Success	LAMA Donegal	€160	€641	€801
	26-27/01/2024	Elected Members Briefing	AILG Dundalk	€85	€305	€390
	12-13/01/2024	The Finance Act	Celtic Carlingford	€130	€593	€723
	14-16/02/2024	Annual Conference	AILG, Wicklow	€170	€164	€334
	28-29/02/2024	Black & Amber Conference	KCC, Dublin	€-	€403	€403
	12-13/07/2024	Induction Training	AILG, Cork	€85	€420	€505
	13-14/08/2024	Irish American Caucus Meeting	KCC, Dublin	€-	€382	€382
	11-13/09/2024	Autumn Training Conference	AILG Monaghan	€170	€724	€894
	17-19/10/2024	Autumn Seminar	LAMA Navan	€170	€566	€736
	01-02/11/2024	Local Authority Finance and Budget Process	AILG Limerick	€85	€-	€85
	Overall Total					€5,253
John Coonan	19-21/01/2024	Building for Success	LAMA Donegal	€160	€647	€807
	26-27/01/2024	Elected Members Briefing	AILG Limerick	€85	€287	€372
	14-16/02/2024	Annual Conference	AILG Wicklow	€170	€427	€597
	12-13/07/2024	Elected Member Induction Training	AILG, Cork	€85	€305	€390
	11-13/09/2024	Autumn Training Conference	AILG Monaghan	€170	€711	€881
	17-19/10/2024	Autumn Seminar	LAMA Navan	€170	€581	€751
	01-02/11/2024	Local Authority Finance and Budget Process	AILG Limerick	€85	€402	€487
	Overall Total					€4,275

Deirdre Cullen	19-21/01/2024	Building for Success	LAMA Donegal	€160	€582	€742
	14-16/02/2024	Annual Conference	AILG Wicklow	€170	€404	€574
	11-13/09/2024	Autumn Training Conference	AILG Monaghan	€170	€520	€690
	17-19/10/2024	Autumn Seminar	LAMA Navan	€170	€492	€662
	Overall Total					€2,668
Michael Delaney	19-21/01/2024	Building for Success	LAMA Donegal	€160	€613	€773
	14-16/02/2024	Annual Conference	AILG Wicklow	€170	€429	€599
	11-13/09/2024	Autumn Training Conference	AILG Monaghan	€170	€555	€725
	Overall Total					€2,097
Stephanie Doheny						€-
Fidelis Doherty	14-16/02/2024	Annual Conference	AILG Wicklow	€170	€240	€410
	28/09/2024	Overview of Planning System	AILG Tullamore	€85	€202	€287
	Overall Total					€697
Maria Dollard	11/07/2024	Elected Member Induction Training	AILG Mullingar	€106	€85	€191
	Overall Total					€191
Matt Doran	19-21/01/2024	Building for Success	LAMA Donegal	€160	€678	€838
	26-27/01/2024	Elected Members Briefing	AILG Limerick	€85	€257	€342
	12-13/01/2024	The Finance Act	Celtic Carlingford	€130	€220	€350
	07-09/02/2024	Regions in Focus	AIR, Adare	€160	€404	€564
	14-16/02/2024	Annual Conference	AILG Wicklow	€170	€-	€170
	Overall Total					€2,264
Michael Doyle	19-21/01/2024	Building for Success	LAMA Donegal	€160	€658	€818
	14-16/02/2024	Annual Conference	AILG Wicklow	€170	€185	€355
	11-13/09/2024	Autumn Training Conference	AILG Monaghan	€170	€572	€742
	Overall Total					€1,916
Pat Dunphy	19-21/01/2024	Building for Success	LAMA Donegal	€160	€686	€846
	14-16/02/2024	Annual Conference	AILG Wicklow	€170	€120	€290
	12-13/07/2024	Elected Member Induction Training	AILG Cork	€85	€122	€207
	11-13/09/2024	Autumn Training Conference	AILG Monaghan	€170	€735	€905
	Overall Total					€2,248

David Fitzgerald						€-
Pat Fitzpatrick	19-21/01/2024	Building for Success	LAMA Donegal	€160	€610	€770
	26-27/01/2024	Elected Members Briefing	AILG Limerick	€85	€280	€365
	14-16/02/2024	Annual Conference	AILG Wicklow	€170	€429	€599
	17-19/10/2024	Autumn Seminar	LAMA Navan	€170	€463	€633
	02/11/2024	Local Authority Finance and Budget Process	AILG Limerick	€85	€350	€435
	Overall Total					€2,802
Ger Frisby	19-21/01/2024	Building for Success	LAMA Donegal	€160	€688	€848
	26-27/01/2024	Elected Members Briefing	AILG Limerick	€85	€287	€372
	14-16/02/2024	Annual Conference	AILG Wicklow	€170	€416	€586
	22-23/03/2024	Local Election Briefing	AILG Athlone	€85	€369	€454
	12-13/07/2024	Elected Member Induction Training	AILG Cork	€85	€358	€443
	11-13/09/2024	Autumn Training Conference	AILG Monaghan	€170	€795	€965
	17-19/10/2024	Autumn Seminar	LAMA Navan	€170	€689	€859
	02/11/2024	Local Authority Finance and Budget Process	AILG Limerick	€85	€268	€353
	13-15/12/2024	Health Services Entitlements	Celtic Clonakilty	€130	€486	€616
	Overall Total					€5,496
Denis Hynes						€-
Joe Lyons						€-
Joe Malone	11-13/09/2024	Autumn Training Conference	AILG Monaghan	€170	€349	€519
	Overall Total					€519
Michael McCarthy	19-21/01/2024	Building for Success	LAMA Donegal	€160	€625	€785
	26-27/01/2024	Elected Members Briefing	AILG Limerick	€85	€273	€358
	14-16/02/2024	Annual Conference	AILG Wicklow	€170	€432	€602
	22-23/03/2024	Local Election Briefing	AILG Athlone	€85	€271	€356
	12-13/07/2024	Elected Member Induction Training	AILG Cork	€85	€316	€401
	11-13/09/2024	Autumn Training Conference	AILG Monaghan	€170	€712	€882

	17-19/10/2024	Autumn Seminar	LAMA Navan	€170	€579	€749
	01-02/11/2024	Local Authority Finance and Budget Process	AILG Limerick	€85	€376	€461
	02-03/11/2024	Pride of Place Event	Celtic Clonakilty	€130	€570	€700
	Overall Total					€5,294
Andrew McGuinness	12-13/01/2024	The Finance Act	Celtic Carlingford	€130	€611	€741
	19-21/01/2024	Building for Success	LAMA Donegal	€160	€626	€786
	26-27/01/2024	Elected Members Briefing	AILG Limerick	€85	€296	€381
	14-16/02/2024	Annual Conference	AILG Wicklow	€170	€300	€470
	22-23/03/2024	Local Election Briefing	AILG Athlone	€85	€386	€471
	12-13/07/2024	Elected Member Induction Training	AILG Cork	€85	€404	€489
	17-19/10/2024	Autumn Seminar	LAMA Navan	€170	€588	€758
	01-02/11/2024	Local Authority Finance and Budget Process	AILG Limerick	€85	€396	€481
	Overall Total					€4,577
Eugene McGuinness	19-21/01/2024	Building for Success	LAMA Donegal	€160	€593	€753
	11-13/09/2024	Autumn Training Conference	AILG Monaghan	€170	€515	€685
	Overall Total					€1,438
Seán Ó hArgáin	12-13/07/2024	Elected Member Induction Training	AILG Cork	€85	€291	€376
	Overall Total					€376
Patrick O'Neill						€-
Joe Sheridan	12-13/07/2024	Elected Member Induction Training	AILG, Cork	€85	€277	€362
	13-15/12/2024	Health Services Entitlements	Celtic Clonakilty	€130	€220	€350
	Overall Total					€712
Maurice Shortall						€-

OVERSEAS EVENTS ATTENDED BY ELECED MEMBERS IN 2024

TITLE	DATE	MEMBERS ATTENDED
St. Patrick's Day, New York	March 2024	Cllr. Michael Doyle
Moret-Sur-Loing Twinning	May 2024	Cllr. Matt Doran

The total cost incurred in 2024 by Kilkenny County Council in respect of attendance by Councillors at overseas events is €4,057.11.

PAYMENTS TO ELECTED MEMBERS

Elected Member	Number of Meetings	Salaries [Taxable]	Annual Allowance	Local Representational Allowance	Cathaoirleachs / Leas Cathaoirleach Allowance	Municipal District Chair	SPC Chair Allowance	Total	Expenses Paid From Outside Bodies
<i>E. Alyward</i>	13	€13,547.28	€1,873.26	€255.27			€2,874.75	€18,550.56	
<i>T. Breathnach</i>	41	€29,925.61	€4,928.37	€1,272.60				€36,126.57	
<i>J. Brennan</i>	32	€29,721.61	€3,932.43	€3,205.33			€3,177.01	€40,036.39	
<i>M. Brett</i>	25	€13,547.28	€1,432.86	€620.45			€2,874.75	€18,475.34	
<i>J. Catt Slatery</i>	15	€16,381.79	€2,508.44	€631.04				€19,521.27	
<i>MH Cavanagh</i>	39	€29,925.61	€4,563.59	€3,408.93		€3,154.01		€41,052.13	€1,316.78
<i>B. Cleere</i>	0	€	€-	€				€	
<i>P. Cleere</i>	18	€27,936.35	€3,275.46	€3,168.53	€1,855.17	€2,713.76		€38,949.27	
<i>J. Coonan</i>	26	€29,925.61	€3,126.25	€483.51	€1,916.50			€35,451.87	
<i>D. Cullen</i>	35	€29,925.61	€3,311.77	€4,200.00		€2,874.74	€3,177.01	€43,489.13	
<i>M. Delaney</i>	30	€29,925.61	€3,271.57	€4,195.54		€2,874.74		€40,267.46	
<i>S. Doheny</i>	15	€16,381.79	€1,727.96	€631.04				€18,740.79	
<i>F. Doherty</i>	29	€29,925.61	€5,030.32	€2,989.75				€37,945.68	€835.03
<i>M. Dollard</i>	25	€29,925.61	€3,126.25	€4,200.00				€37,251.86	
<i>M. Doran</i>	16	€13,547.28	€2,121.86	€263.88			€2,874.75	€18,807.77	
<i>M. Doyle</i>	33	€29,925.61	€4,512.81	€2,172.71	€4,791.25			€41,402.38	
<i>P. Dunphy</i>	33	€29,925.61	€5,960.86	€1,884.12				€37,770.59	€53.04
<i>D. Fitzgerald</i>	26	€29,925.61	€3,126.25	€4,200.00			€3,177.01	€40,428.87	
<i>P. Fitzpatrick</i>	28	€29,925.61	€3,126.25	€899.65				€33,951.51	
<i>G. Frisby</i>	37	€29,925.61	€5,823.06	€544.46		€5,982.75	€2,874.75	€45,150.64	
<i>D. Hynes</i>	14	€13,547.28	€1,507.16	€1,756.19				€16,810.63	
<i>J. Lyons</i>	31	€29,925.61	€3,265.09	€863.03			€2,874.75	€36,928.48	
<i>J. Malone</i>	23	€29,925.61	€2,880.91	€1,386.71		€4,407.94		€38,601.17	
<i>M. McCarthy</i>	39	€29,925.61	€3,311.77	€4,181.99	€5,295.02			€42,714.38	
<i>A. McGuinness</i>	41	€29,925.61	€3,311.77	€4,103.93		€5,787.84	€3,177.01	€46,306.16	
<i>E. McGuinness</i>	33	€29,925.61	€3,311.77	€2,336.09			€3,177.01	€38,750.48	
<i>S. Ó hArgáin</i>	15	€16,381.79	€1,707.49	€2,100.00				€20,189.28	
<i>P. O'Neill</i>	9	€13,547.28	€909.74	€153.93				€14,610.95	
<i>J. Sheridan</i>	13	€16,381.79	€1,707.49	€647.69				€18,736.97	
<i>M. Shortall</i>	14	€16,381.79	€1,795.46	€639.93				€18,817.17	
Total		€716,038.68	€90,488.25	€57,396.29	€13,857.94	€27,795.78	€30,258.80	€935,835.74	€2,204.85

CIVIC OCCASIONS & EVENTS 2024

January



UCD present Commemorative Letterpress Book to Kilkenny County Library Service



Contract signing of N77 Ballyragget to Ballinaslee Road Improvement Scheme

February



Student Enterprise Awards



Kilkenny County Council adopts Climate Action Plan

March



Launch of Tradfest



Kilkenny 'Women in Politics' seminar



St. Patrick's Day Parade

April



Minister Heather Humphreys T.D. at the opening of the Mayfair Library & turning the sod at Thomastown Library



Night Time Economy Action Plan



Cllr. Mary Hilda Cavanagh celebrating 50 years as a Councillor

May



N25 Tower road Junction Official Opening



The formal launch of the "Team Up to Clean Up - Together for Kilkenny"



June



Annual Meeting



Election of New Cathaoirleach, Cllr. Michael McCarthy, and Leas Cathaoirleach, Cllr. Peter 'Chap' Cleere



Annual Meeting



*Election of new Mayor, Cllr. Andrew McGuinness and
Deputy Mayor Cllr. Joe Malone*



Rás na mBan Route Launch



Regional Ceremony for National Commemoration Day 2024

August



Visit of delegation from Niagara-on-the-Lake



Launches of Autumn Training and Events Programme, and Boost Your Business –Green Efficiency Competition

September



Launch of Kilkenny's Toil and Trouble



Kilkenny & Carlow County Councils launch "Living Artfully"

October



Kilkenny County Council Announcement of 42-Unit Housing Scheme at Abbeyhill, Thomastown



Launch of Green Case Studies as part of International Climate Action Day



The first meeting of the new Kilkenny Heritage Forum

November



Santa & Mrs Claus arrive to Kilkenny for the launch of Yulefest 2024



Pride of Place runner-up award for Community Well-Being Initiative presented to Ferrybank Community



Pride of Place runner-up award for the Population of 0-300 Category presented to Inistioge Community

December



Yulefest 2024



Kilkenny Going Green and Kilkenny County Council's renewal of their commitment to the EU Covenant of Mayors for Climate and Energy

MANAGEMENT STRUCTURE

Kilkenny County Council's Management Structure is:

	<p>Lar Power <i>Chief Executive</i></p> <p>☎ 056-7794075 ✉ lar.power@kilkennycoco.ie</p>	Chief Executive
	<p>Mary J. Mulholland <i>Director of Services</i></p> <p>☎ 056-7794070 ✉ mary.mulholland@kilkennycoco.ie</p>	<p>Director of Services with responsibilities for:</p> <p>Corporate and Infrastructure (including Human Resources, Roads, Machinery Yard, Health & Safety)</p>
	<p>Tim Butler <i>Director of Services</i></p> <p>☎ 056-7794010 ✉ tim.butler@kilkennycoco.ie</p>	<p>Director of Services with responsibilities for:</p> <p>Planning, Economic & Environmental Services (including Parks, LEO & Town Regeneration)</p> <p>Municipal District of Kilkenny</p>
	<p>Martin Prendiville <i>Director of Finance</i></p> <p>☎ 056-7794214 ✉ martin.prendiville@kilkennycoco.ie</p>	<p>Director of Services for responsibilities for:</p> <p>Finance, Information Technology, Facilities Management, Procurement & Special Projects</p> <p>Municipal District of Castlecomer</p>
	<p>Ian Gardner <i>Acting Director of Services</i></p> <p>☎ 056-7794900 ✉ ian.gardner@kilkennycoco.ie</p>	<p>Director of Services with responsibilities for:</p> <p>Housing and Community</p> <p>Municipal District of Piltown</p>
	<p>Fiona Deegan <i>Acting Director of Services</i></p> <p>☎ 056-7794101 ✉ fiona.deegan@kilkennycoco.ie</p>	<p>Director of Services for responsibilities for:</p> <p>Integration, Emergency Services and Culture (including Fire Service, Civil Defence, Library, Arts and Heritage)</p> <p>Municipal District of Callan/Thomastown</p>

GOVERNANCE STATEMENT

Purpose

The purpose of this governance statement is to provide relevant information on the governance structures and governance arrangements within the local authority including on council, committees, senior management and related areas. It demonstrates our commitment to effective governance, recognises key legislative and good governance requirements and affirms the Council's compliance with the Local Government Code of Governance obligations.

Good Governance

Fundamentally, good governance in the local government sector and wider public sector is about delivering priorities, achieving objectives, behaving with integrity and acting in the public interest, in ways that are consistent with legal, regulatory and government policy obligations. Governance refers to the framework of rules, relationships, systems and processes by which the local authority is directed, controlled and held to account and whereby authority within an organisation is exercised and maintained. It encompasses authority, accountability, stewardship and leadership, direction and control.

Good Governance Principles

CORE PRINCIPLE 1 - Good governance means focusing on the purpose of the authority, on outcomes that deliver sustainable economic, community and wider societal benefits and on implementing a vision for the local authority.

CORE PRINCIPLE 2 - Good governance means promoting and demonstrating public service values through upholding high standards of conduct and behaviour.

CORE PRINCIPLE 3 - Good governance means members and officials working together to achieve a common purpose within a framework of clearly defined functions and roles.

CORE PRINCIPLE 4 - Good governance means developing the organisational capacity and the leadership capability and competencies of members and officials to operate effectively and fulfil the purpose of the organization.

CORE PRINCIPLE 5 - Good governance means taking well-informed and transparent decisions and managing risks and performance.

CORE PRINCIPLE 6 - Good governance means engaging openly and comprehensively with local people, citizens and other stakeholders to ensure robust public accountability.

CORE PRINCIPLE 7 - Good governance means actively contributing to the furtherance and achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals by delivering on the priorities and actions within the Climate Action Plan and the provisions of the Climate Act.

Our Commitment to Good Governance

As the Cathaoirleach/Mayor and Chief Executive of the council, and on behalf of the elected members, management and staff we confirm that:

- We have adopted the governance principles as the fundamental bedrock and philosophy on how we operate as a governing body and as an executive.
- The Local Government Code of Governance has been adopted and the extent to which the Council is in compliance with the Code has been reviewed and assessed.

- The Statement of Internal Financial Control is submitted by the Chief Executive to the Elected Members and to the Audit Committee. The Audit Committee reviews the SIFC and provides an assurance on an annual basis to the Elected Members. Mechanisms are available to the Audit Committee to notify the Elected Members of any issues that arise outside of the normal annual reporting.
- Compliance with legal and regulatory obligations are acknowledged and adhered to.
- There is clarity of roles and responsibilities based on the reserved and executive functions and based on committee terms of reference.
- Codes of Conduct and ethics declarations for members and employees are in place.
- Procedures are in place for the making of protected disclosures in accordance with section 21(1) of the Protected Disclosures Act 2014 and confirmation that the annual report required under section 22(1) of the Act has been published.
- The Council and Committees review their own performance on a periodic basis.
- We have instituted appropriate governance oversight arrangements in respect of subsidiary, associated and related companies.
- As part of our commitment to effective oversight and accountability, we have developed and continue to enhance our overall assurance framework utilising external and internal assurance sources to ensure good performance as part of our governance culture.



CATHAOIRLEACH



CHIEF EXECUTIVE



Comhairle Chontae Chill Chainnigh
Kilkenny County Council

DIRECTORATE OF CORPORATE AND INFRASTRUCTURE

MARY J. MULHOLLAND
DIRECTOR OF SERVICES





Franchise

The Franchise Section is responsible for the preparation of the Register of Electors which is a list of persons over 18 years resident in Kilkeny who are entitled to vote in elections/referenda.

Electoral Registration Process

The Rolling Register is a single live and continuously updated register. To apply to vote or update voting details an elector can apply online via www.checktheregister.ie or by paper form (ERF1).

Under the new Electoral Reform Act 2022, a national program called 'Modernisation of the Electoral Register' was implemented to reform the electoral registration process. All electors are now being asked to visit www.checktheregister.ie to confirm or update their entry by adding their PPSN, Date of Birth and Eircode or register for the first time using a newly upgraded online form. This will help to ensure that entries are accurate and up to date as well as enabling the identification of entries on the register that require follow up. Checking, updating or registering has never been easier.

In 2024, the total number of registered electors in County Kilkeny was 80,171, distributed between 4 Local Electoral Areas (LEA's); Callan Thomastown LEA, Castlecomer LEA, Kilkeny LEA, Piltown LEA.

In 2024, Ireland held number of significant Elections:

- Referendum.....8th March, 2024
- European Election7th June, 2024
- Local Election.....7th June, 2024
- General Election29th November, 2024

Any member of the public can check if they are on the register on the following website: www.checktheregister.ie or can contact the Corporate Services Department in the Council.

CUSTOMER CARE

The Council is committed to providing a quality service to all its customers. Kilkenny County Council's Customer Charter sets out the way in which the Council endeavours to deal with its customers. The document is available on our website at www.kilkennycoco.ie.

This Charter includes a commitment to equality in service provision and a recognition of the diverse nature of the community we serve. The Charter also includes a Customer Complaints Procedure which may be availed of by any person not satisfied with the quality of service received. The Senior Executive Officer in Corporate investigates all complaints/comments received. A person not satisfied with the response provided by the Senior Executive Officer can request to have their case reviewed again by the Director of Services, Corporate Services.

In 2024, Kilkenny County Council dealt with 27 formal complaints from customers.

OMBUDSMAN

The Office of the Ombudsman was established under the Ombudsman Act 1980. The role of the Office is to investigate complaints about administrative actions, delays or inactions adversely affecting persons or bodies in their dealings with state bodies including Local Authorities.

The Office of the Ombudsman dealt with 5 Customer complaints in 2024. Reports on each complaint was provided by Kilkenny County Council to the Office of the Ombudsman.

OMBUDSMAN FOR CHILDREN

In 2024, no complaint was made to the Ombudsman for Children.

IRISH LANGUAGE SCHEME

The Official Languages (*Amendment*) Act 2021 was signed by the President of Ireland, Michael D. Higgins into law in December, 2021. This legislation is a strengthening of the Official Languages Act 2003 and it is widely recognised that it will make a significant contribution to the quality of services in Irish provided to the public by State bodies.

Kilkenny County Council recognises that our customers have the right to choose to do business with us in their preferred language and they are facilitated in their dealings with us as far as practicable, whether that is through Irish or through English.

The main changes of this amendment Act which affect Kilkenny County Council immediately are that 20% of new recruits to the public service will need to be competent in Irish by the end of 2030. It also requires that 20% *of any advertising placed* is through the medium of Irish and 5% *of any monies spent on advertising* by the Council in any year shall be in the Irish language in Irish language media outlets.

During 2024, Kilkenny County Council dealt with 13 formal Irish complaints.

If you wish to contact the Council in Irish, please send an e-mail to gaeilge@kilkennycoco.ie

PROTECTED DISCLOSURES

The Protected Disclosures Act 2014 became operational on 15th July 2014. The Act provided a statutory framework within which workers can raise concerns regarding a potential wrongdoing that has come to their attention in the workplace in the knowledge that they can avail of significant employment and other protections if they are penalised by their employer or suffer any detriment for doing so.

The 2014 Act has been substantially overhauled by the Protected Disclosures (*Amendment*) Act 2022, which was signed into law in July, 2022. This new legislation came into operation on 1st January, 2023.

In accordance with Section 22 of the 2014 Act, Kilkenny County Council has an obligation to report on the number of protected disclosures made to the Council in the preceding year. No Protected Disclosures were received by the Designated Officer in 2024.

Freedom of Information Requests (F.O.I.)

The Freedom of Information Act 2014 was enacted on October 2014. It introduced significant changes to the Freedom of Information regime repealing and replacing the Freedom of Information Acts 1997 and 2003 and expanding the scope of the FOI to a number of further bodies. It also consolidated, modernised and updated the legislation generally.

It is the policy of Kilkenny County Council to give members of the public access to information held by the authority in accordance with the provisions of the Freedom of Information Act 2014. Further information is available on the Council's website

https://kilkennycoco.ie/eng/your_council/freedom_of_information/

The Freedom of Information Act 2014 Unit deals with requests from records held by Kilkenny County Council from Members of the public, Journalists and Organisations. Kilkenny County Council is a public body which is subject to the provisions of the Freedom Of Information Act 2014, which allows for access to certain records held by the local authority subject to a number of exemptions.

Kilkenny County Council received 103 requests in 2024

2024	Journalists	Business / Interest Groups	Oireachtas / Public Reps	Staff	Clients	Others	Total
TOTAL	25	33	1	1	4	39	103

A total of 105 decision were made by the Freedom of Information Officer in 2024.

Four applications for an Internal Review were received following the decisions of the FOI Officer.

	FOI DECISIONS MADE 2024					
	Requests Grants	Requests Part Granted	Requests Refused	Requests Withdrawn / Transferred	Requests Handled Outside FOI	TOTAL
Total	24	30	39	10	2	105

Data Protection (GDPR)

Kilkenny County Council processes all personal information in accordance with the General Data Protection Regulation 2016 and the Data Protection Acts, 1988 to 2018.

The General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) applies from 25th May 2018. It has general application to the processing of personal data in the EU, setting out more extensive obligations on data controllers and processors, and providing strengthened protections and rights for data subjects.

Privacy Statement

At Kilkenny County Council we are committed to protecting and respecting your privacy. The Privacy Statement lets you know how we look after your personal data. It also informs you as to our obligations and your rights under data protection law. Kilkenny County Council's privacy statement can be found at: www.kilkennycoco.ie/privacy-statement

In 2024, Kilkenny County Council dealt with 13 data subject access requests. The DPO has activity engaged with all Service Departments in carrying out Data Privacy Impact Assessments and addressing any risks identified. Both in-person and on-line training is provided to staff on all areas of data protection.

Access to Information on the Environment (A.I.E.)

You are entitled to request access to information on the environment that is held by Kilkenny County Council. This right comes from Directive 2003/4/EC of the European Parliament the European Communities. (*Access to Information on the Environment*) Regulations 2007 to 2014 (*hereafter referred to as the AIE Regulations*).

Under these Regulations information relating to the environment held by or for a public authority must be made available on request subject to certain exceptions. The AIE regulations also oblige public authorities to be proactive in disseminating environmental information to the public.

In 2024 Kilkenny County Council received 22 requests - 13 requests were granted, 5 requests were part granted and 4 requests were refused.

There is no initial fee for making an application under the AIE Regulations. However, the Regulations do allow a public authority to charge a reasonable fee for the cost of supplying environmental information and Kilkenny County Council has set the following charges:

- Search, Retrieval and Copy of Records:.....€20 per hour
- Photocopy:.....€0.04 per sheet
- CD Rom:€10.00
- Radiograph:.....€6.00

COMMUNICATIONS & SOCIAL MEDIA

The Communications Team oversees corporate and internal communications for the Council. Their responsibilities include handling all internal and external communications, public relations, crisis management, and marketing on behalf of the Council, extending across all Council services.

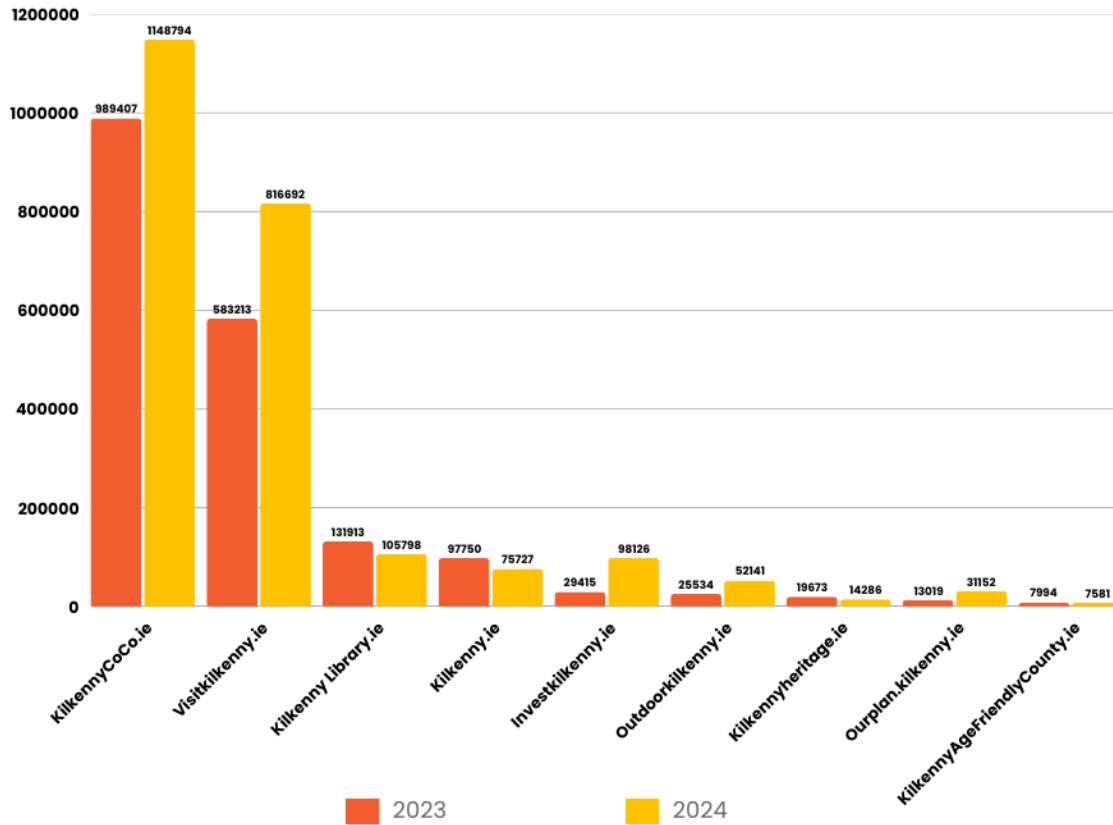
The Team proves full support to An Cathaoirleach, the Mayor, and the Elected Members regarding:

- Advice on Protocol and Event Management
- Organising of Civic Events
- Circulation of Press Release post events
- Photoshoots and videos for promotion
- Preparation of notes for public speaking
- Management of Civic Events

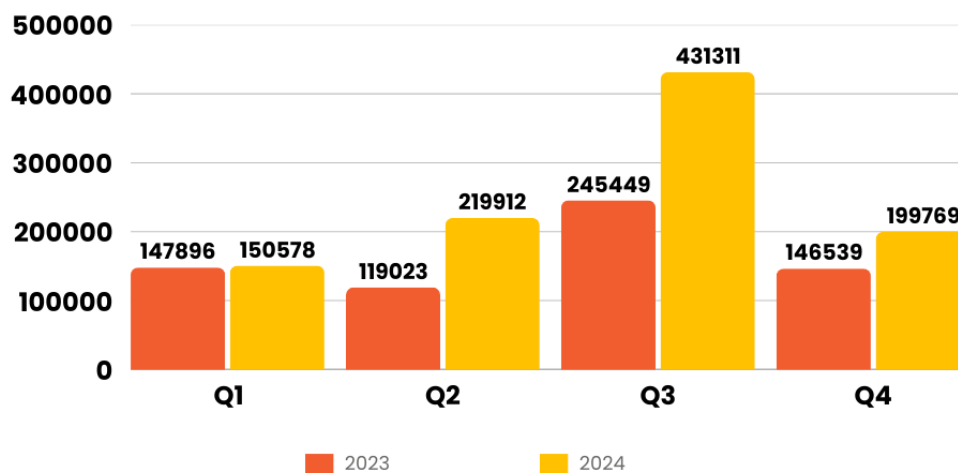
Achievements in 2024:

- 91 Press Releases issued
- Promotion and management of on Kilkenny County Council Events and activities
- Publication of the 2023 Annual Report
- Management of Kilkenny County Council's social media accounts
- Management of Kilkenny.ie social media accounts
- Management of Kilkenny County Council's website and Kilkenny.ie website
- Support to Civic Events held in 2024
- Support to the promotion of the Council's Civic Festivals; St. Patrick's Festival and Yulefest Kilkenny
- Coordinated content for the Kilkenny People Local Authority page
- Participated in the Regional Network of Communications Officers in South East for regional campaigns
- Promotion of the County Brand Kilkenny.ie
- Publicised various national campaigns through social media campaigns including:
 - CheckTheRegister
 - Seachtain na Gaeilge
 - European Sustainable Energy Week
 - Your Council Day
 - National Bike Week
 - Children's Mental Health Week
 - National Heritage Week

KILKENNY COUNTY COUNCIL WEBSITE PAGE VIEWS

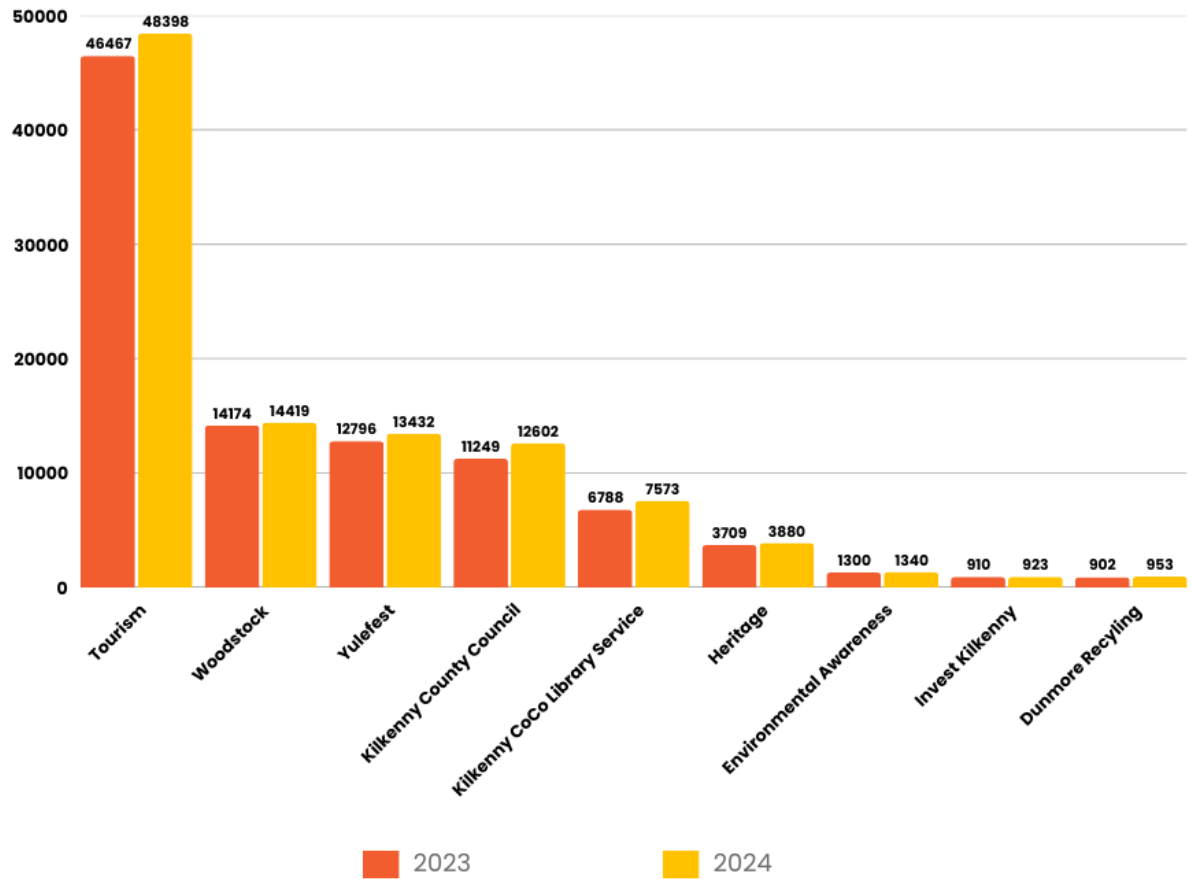


KILKENNY COUNTY COUNCIL FACEBOOK MAIN PAGE REACH

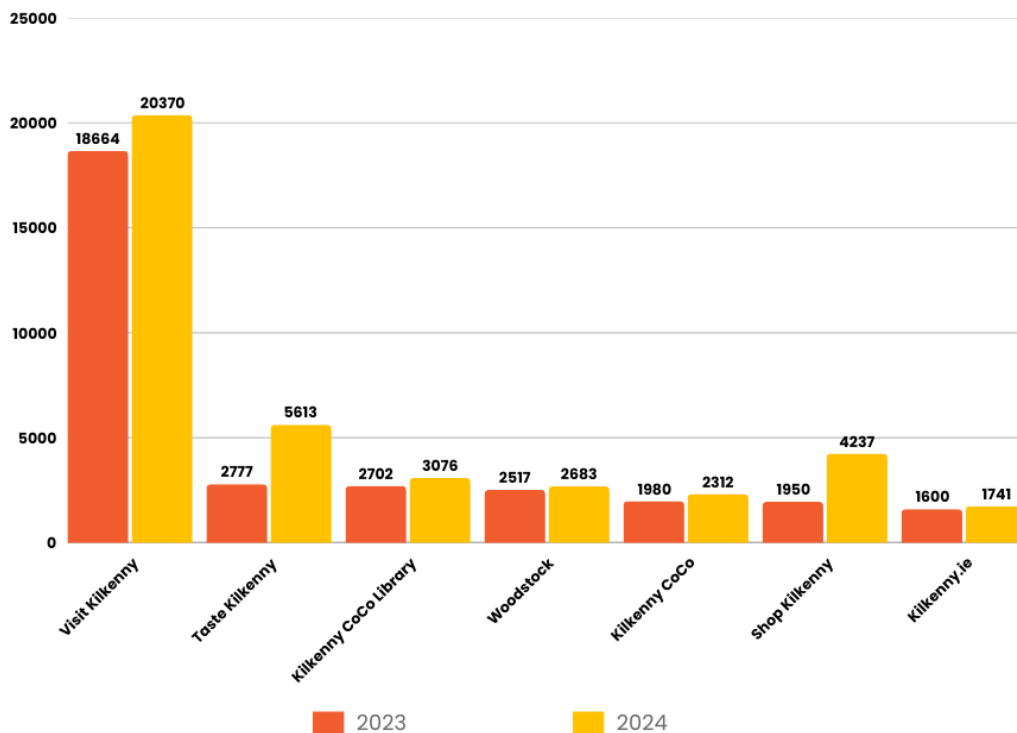


A glance at content reach on Facebook during each quarter of 2024, in comparison to that of 2023.

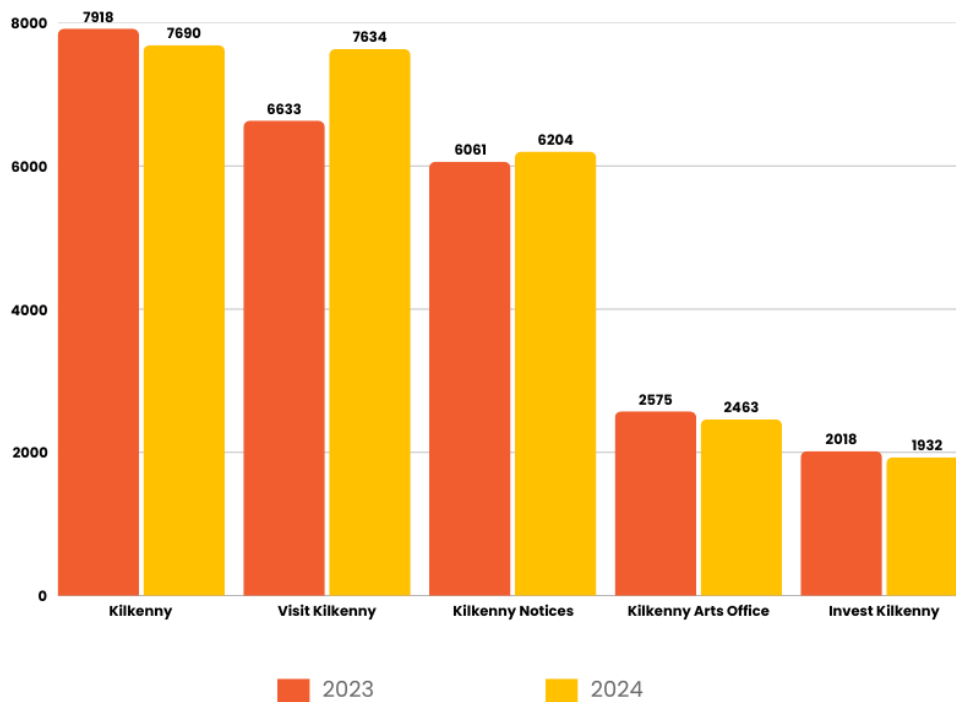
KILKENNY COUNTY COUNCIL FACEBOOK FOLLOWERS



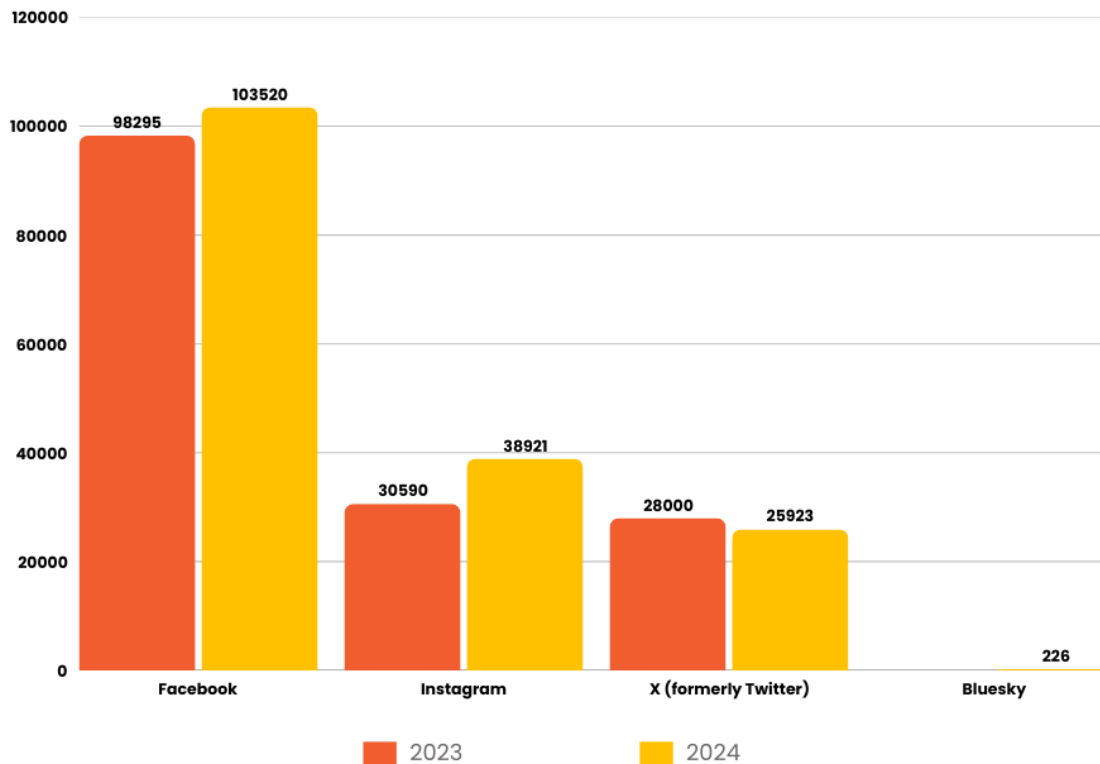
KILKENNY COUNTY COUNCIL INSTAGRAM FOLLOWERS



KILKENNY COUNTY COUNCIL X (FORMERLY TWITTER) FOLLOWERS



KILKENNY COUNTY COUNCIL TOTAL NUMBER OF SOCIAL MEDIA FOLLOWERS



HUMAN RESOURCES

The objective of the Human Resources Department is “to ensure that there is an appropriately resourced, skilled and motivated workforce to meet the priorities and objectives of the Organisation and to ensure as reasonably practical the safety, health and wellbeing of all our staff”.

The Human Resources Department vision is to provide effective strategic and operational support as a business partner to service delivery units of the Authority.

The Human Resources Department deals with the following areas:

- Human Resource Strategy
- Workforce Planning
- Recruitment and Selection
- Payroll & Superannuation
- Employee Training and Development
- Performance Management
- Leadership Development
- Equality
- Diversity Management
- Work-Life Balance – Including Blended Working
- Industrial Relations
- Data Analytics
- Employee Health, Safety and Welfare
- Employee Wellbeing

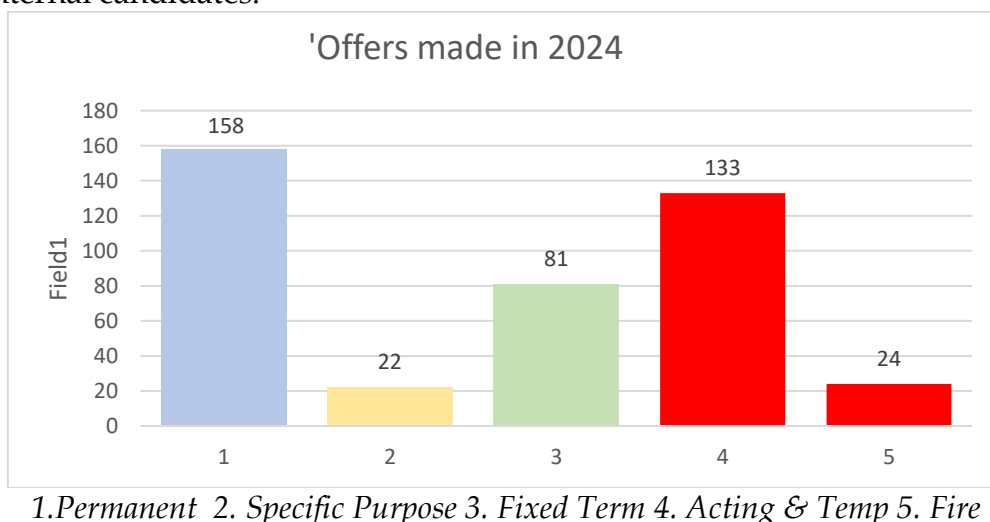
The Human Resource Service in 2024 continued to offer online interview format to those who requested it and delivered online training modules where suitable. The popularity of Blended Working grew in 2024 with 35 new applications from staff approved for remote working.

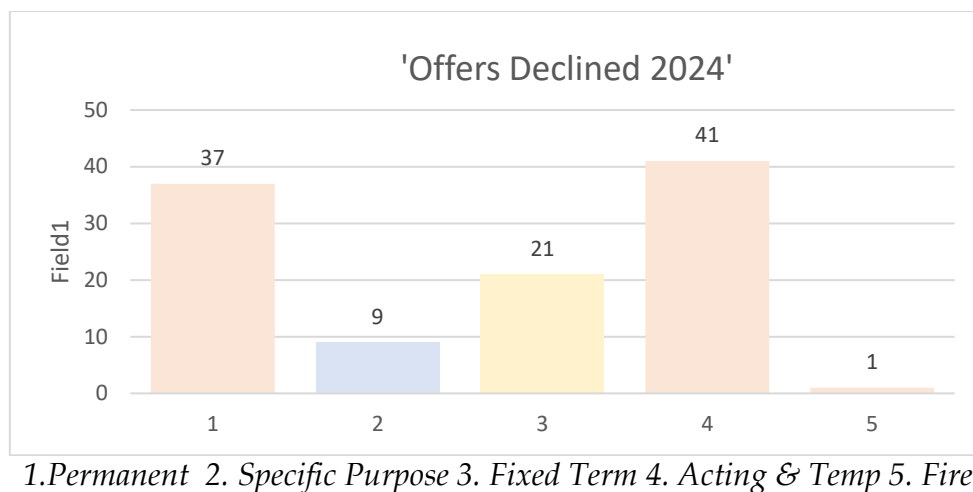
Strategic Work Force Planning / Staffing Levels

The number of staff employed at 31st December, 2024 was 671 (*Headcount*) or 648 (*Whole-Time-Equivalent*). The Human Resource Department coordinates the ongoing management of strategic work force planning, managing the onboarding of new entrants, facilitating staff transfers and administering staff departures with line management colleagues. A new Strategic Workforce Plan for the period 2024 – 2029 commenced development in quarter 4.

Recruitment

The Human Resources Department is successfully implementing an e recruitment process with all competitions now being administered online via submit.com. All competitions are administered through online applications, online selection stages and a hybrid interview service where candidates are offered either face to face or video interviews. There was a total of 67 competitions held during the year which resulted in 1,177 applications being received by the Council. 418 offers were made during 2024 resulting in 307 new appointments (*indoor & outdoor*). 142 of these new appointments were external candidates and 165 internal candidates.





Kilkenny County Council, under its 'belong kilkenny' brand held a Careers Fair in February 2024 in St. Canice's Cathedral and HR provided a stand encouraging applications for vacancies across all departments. Kilkenny County Council also participated in a Careers Fair held in the Ormond Hotel in February 2024. Both Careers Fair highlighted the jobs on offer by Kilkenny County Council with a view to expand the reach of the Authority to talent markets.

Summer Student & Lifeguard Programme

The Council employed 30 students during the summer months of 2024 with placements available across many departments both indoor and outdoor. There were also 16 Lifeguards employed throughout the County during the summer period of 2024.

Shared Payroll & Superannuation Service

This service is delivered by My Pay the Local Government Shared Services Provider from its offices in Portlaoise Co Laois with support from Kilkenny Human Resources Department, Kilkenny County Council.

Attendance Management

The Local Government Sectors Attendance Management Policy was revised in 2013 and revised sick pay schemes were introduced for the Sector. Absenteeism levels continue to be managed in accordance with these policies. The Authority has seen improved reduced levels of absences year on year.

Training & Development

Kilkenny County Council is committed to ensuring the professional and personal development of all employees. Training and development is aimed at helping employees to become more effective in their jobs and developing their potential as identified in their Performance Development Plans, while also meeting the goals and objectives of the Council. A comprehensive training programme was delivered in 2024 which incorporated mandatory training, work related and personal development programmes. This included Health & Safety training, Third Level Learning Programmes, Climate Change training and various other in-house training workshops. A sample of the training programmes provided in 2024 is as follows:

- Abrasive Wheels
- Banksman
- Climate Change Training
- Dignity at Work Training
- CSCS Signing, Lighting & Guarding Training
- CSCS Location of Underground Services
- Mobile Elevated Work Platform Training
- Manual Handling
- Safe pass
- Pre-retirement Course
- Literacy Awareness for Customer Service Training
- Driver CPC
- First Aid Responder Training
- Local Government Studies

The Dignity at Work Policy was reviewed and updated in 2024. In conjunction with this HR rolled out a Dignity at Work training programme to all staff which included a 1-day line manager course and a half day staff briefing for all other staff. This proved very successful in providing awareness and empowering staff in relation to Dignity at Work.

Kilkenny County Council endeavours, subject to available resources, to facilitate and support staff development through the provision of an educational assistance scheme which enables staff access to third level courses that are relevant to and contribute to the roles and the business needs of the Council. The Council is dedicated to developing a library of courses/information which is easily accessible to staff online and to a new hybrid delivery of courses online and in house. An attendance at courses in 2024 totalled 1,543 across 144 various training courses organised by HR Training.

HR Training successfully organised four Chief Executive Staff Briefing sessions in The Set Theatre in Langtons which was attended by 500 Kilkenny County Council staff members. Chief Executive, Lar Power addressed Council Staff over 2 days. The general feedback from this initiative was very positive.

Employee Wellbeing

Following on from the launch of the Kilkenny County Council Employee Wellbeing Strategy in 2023, the Employee Wellbeing Committee was formed in 2024. Kilkenny County Council, through the Employee Wellbeing Strategy, is endeavouring to create a safe and healthy work environment that fosters a culture of positive wellbeing, improving the general wellbeing of our diverse workforce and ensuring that wellbeing is seen as everyone's responsibility.

HR carried out an Employee Satisfaction and Wellbeing Survey early in 2024. 34% of Kilkenny County Council employees participated in the survey. Some key areas dealt with in this survey were Communication, PMDS, Line Management, Training, Employee Morale and Employee Wellbeing. Having considered the survey, the Management Team approved recommendations regarding PMDS, communications, line management and employee wellbeing.



Careers Day St Canice's Cathedral February 2024

Equality and Supporting Diversity

Kilkenny County Council is an equal opportunity employer and is committed to a broad range of policies, practices and procedures which aim to recognise individual contribution and performance, develop each individual's capability and give everyone an equal opportunity to use his/her talent and realise his/her potential.

Kilkenny County Council promotes and supports the employment of people with disabilities and exceeds the public sector target as set out in the Disability Act i.e. 3%.

Industrial Relations

The Council continues to work in partnership with trade unions and employee representatives to achieve harmonious working relationships and improved working conditions with safe, effective and efficient work practices. The main trade unions engaged with are FÓRSA, SIPTU, SIPTU/LAPO, BATU and CONNECT. The Council retains the services of the Local Government Management Agency as representation in disputes referred to third parties such as the Workplace Relations Commission and Labour Court.

Performance Management & Development System (PMDS)

National policy continues to place a very high priority on the use of performance management and development systems in Local Government. Increased emphasis has been placed on ensuring that team development plans and personal development plans are in place for all teams and employees and that they are aligned with the Council's Corporate Objectives.

Gender Pay Gap

Arising from the enactment of the Gender Pay Gap Information Act 2021 and the subsequent publication of the Employment Equality Act 1998 (Section 20A) (Gender Pay Gap Information) Regulations – May 2022, all organisations, (relevant employers), with greater than 250 employees were required to report on their Gender Pay Gap in 2022. Reporting was via a set of metrics provided in the Regulations using a June 2023 snapshot date. Local authorities used a 30 June 2023 snapshot date which was 12 months retrospective. Relevant employers were additionally required to set out the reasons for Gender Pay Gap differences and the measures (if any) being taken, or proposed to be taken, by the employer to eliminate or reduce such differences. The regulations provided for reports to be published within six months of the snapshot date. In common with other Local Authorities, Kilkenny County Council published its 3rd Report in December 2024. The full report is available on the council website at www.kilkennycoco.ie.

INTERNAL AUDIT

The Internal Audit Unit function is to provide a critical and independent opinion on the adequacy and effectiveness of the control framework across the Local Authority. As part of the overall governance and control environment in Kilkenny County Council, it provides Audit assurance that all significant operating risks are identified, managed and controlled effectively. The Internal Audit Unit is independent in the performance of its duties and in its reporting arrangements. It is a function of the Corporate Services Directorate.

Each year a new plan of work for Internal Audit is designed and prepared based on risk evaluation and in consultation with Council Management, The Local Government Auditor and the Audit Committee. The list of Internal Audit Assignments carried out in 2024 included the following:

- NOAC Public Spending Code – In Depth Checks of Capital and Revenue Projects
 - Kilkenny County Council Active Travel
 - Kilkenny County Council Operation of Economic, Tourism Development & Promotional Programme in Kilkenny County Council
- Internal Audit Report Motor Tax End of Year Stocktake.
- Internal Audit Review of Cash Handling.
- Procurement of Cyber Security Audit Services.
- Internal Audit Report of Vacant Rated Commercial Property Strike Off's for 2023.
- Internal Audit Report on Kilkenny County Council Employees – Joiners, Movers & Leavers.
- Internal Audit Report on Approved Housing Bodies.
- Internal Audit Report - Random Cashier Check in Motor Tax, Traffic/Receipts Office.
- Follow up Audit on Woodstock Cash Handling.
- Review of SICAP Programme 2023.
- Internal check on procedure for the change of Supplier Bank Account numbers.

The progress on the implementation of Audit Recommendations is monitored by Internal Audit and a quarterly report is prepared for review by the Audit Committee. This body of work was an integral part of the Audit Plan for 2024 and a total of 84 Audit Recommendations were closed out across the Directorates.

Internal Audit undertook a Tender Procurement process in 2023 for the provision of Cyber Security Audit Services for Kilkenny County Council. Ernst & Young completed an Audit on Cyber Security in Kilkenny County Council in 2024 and reported to the Audit Committee in September.

Staff in the Internal Audit Unit participated in the Performance Management Development System (PMDS) in 2024. This forms part of the assessment of the adequacy of Internal Audit resources. A Team Plan and Performance Development Plans were completed for each Staff Member. This is an important opportunity for Staff to meet with line management for the purpose of clarifying individual/team roles within the organisation, agreeing work objectives, timelines and identifying training and development needs relevant to the Internal Audit Unit.

Staff of the Internal Audit Unit of Kilkenny County Council undertook a number of training courses/networking events during the year. The Assistant Staff Officer in the Unit completed her 'Induction to Internal Audit' training with the IPA in September. These meetings and training courses contribute to the professional development and enhancement of the Internal Audit Function.

The Internal Auditor attended the Southern Region Internal Auditors Network meetings on 5 occasions during 2024 and also participated in the Annual & Bi-Annual Local Government Internal Auditors National (LGIAN) meetings. The following were some of the topics covered at these meetings:

- HAP Shared Services
- Climate Action
- SICAP
- Town Centre First and Regeneration
- Response to Ukrainian Crisis
- Cartels and Collusion – CCPC
- Public Spending Code

The Audit Committee is made up of three external members and two Elected Members. Following the Local Elections in June 2024, the Audit Committee was established by resolution of the Council upon nomination by the Corporate Policy Group and following consultation with the Chief Executive. The term of the committee is concurrent with that of the current Council which commenced on 1st June 2024 and will terminate on 31st May 2029. Its role is:

- To review the Council's financial reporting practices and procedures
- To foster the development of best practice in the Local Authority Internal Audit function
- To review the Council's financial reports and to report on its findings
- To assess and promote efficiency and value for money
- To review systems that are operated by the Local Authority for the management of risks.

There were three Audit Committee meetings held in March, September and December 2024. The three meetings were in person meetings with the option of remote access. During the year the Committee met with the Chief Executive, Local Government Auditor and various Directors of Services and Head of Finance to discuss a broad range of issues.

Areas of priority included:

- Local Government Audit Service Statutory Report 2023
- Annual Financial Statement 2023
- Annual Budget 2024
- Housing
- Roads, Transportation & Water Services
- Internal Audit Reports
- Key Capital Projects
- NOAC Reports
- Planning, Tourism and Economic Development

ROADS & TRANSPORTATION

The Elected Members adopted the 2024 Roadwork's Scheme for County Kilkenny in March 2024. The total value of Maintenance and Improvement Schemes amounted to €36,167,466

Kilkenny County Council successfully secured €402,000 (B12 Maintenance, HD28 Skid Resistance) and Restoration Improvement €1,088,695 in additional funding from Transport Infrastructure Ireland [TII] during the course of the year which allowed for additional design, improvement and maintenance works on the National Road Network.

Kilkenny County Council was also successful in 2024 in securing funding of €765,604 under the Local Improvement Scheme (LIS) scheme for works on 10 non-public roads.

Roads Capital Projects & Improvements

The past decade has seen continued significant capital expenditure invested in road schemes in County Kilkenny.

MAJOR PROJECTS

N24 Waterford to Cahir Major Scheme

An allocation of €993,630 was provided to advance Phase 2 (Option Selection) during 2023.

MINOR WORKS PROGRAMME

Under the Minor Works Programme, financed by TII, Kilkenny County Council has made significant progress with respect to the following:

N24 Tower Road Junction Improvement Scheme

Wills Bros Ltd commenced construction of the scheme on the 16th January 2023 with a 12-month construction time period envisaged. An initial allocation of €5m was provided in early Q1 2023 but this was increased significantly as construction proceeded through 2023.

The compact grade separated junction and link road was substantially complete in February 2024 with an outturn cost of circa €14.5 million. The Scheme was officially opened on the 1st May 2024.



N24 Tower Road Interchange under Construction

N24 Tower Road Interchange at night



N24 Tower Road Interchange Official Opening

N77 Ballyragget to Ballynaslee Improvement Scheme

The contract to construct the scheme was awarded to Fox Building & Engineering Ltd in December 2023 with construction commencing in early February 2024 with a 12-month construction period. Works have progressed well throughout 2024 with an anticipated completion date in Q1 2024. Land acquisition procedures are on-going.



Aerial View of Ballyragget to Ballynaslee Improvement Scheme under construction

N24 Carrick Road Minor Improvement Scheme

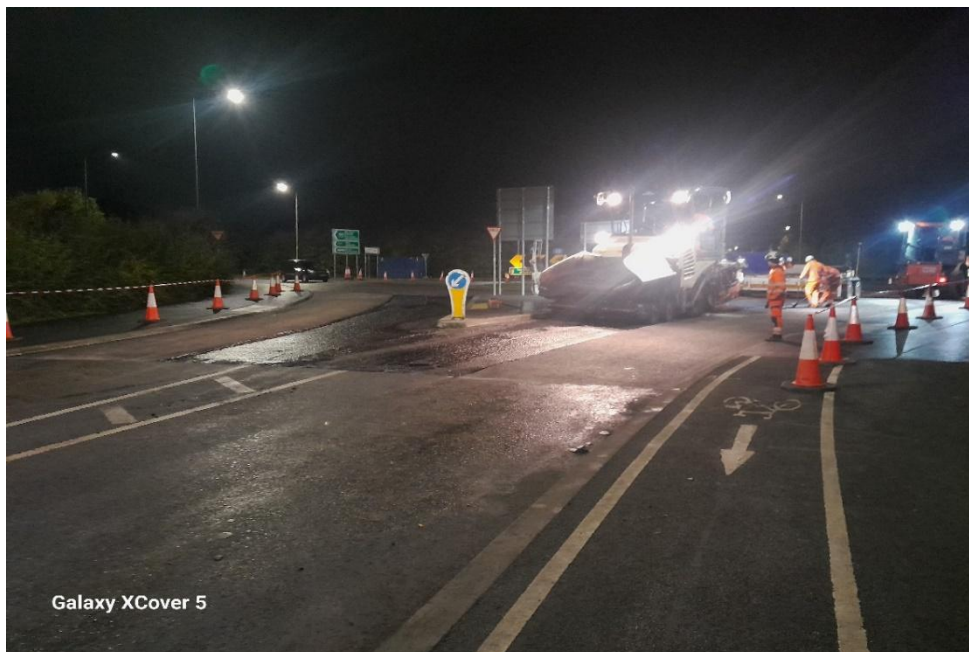
Kilkenny Council received formal notification that An Bord Pleanála approved the 177AE planning application subject to conditions and confirmed the CPO without modifications on the 20th March 2024. An application for a Judicial review of the decision by An Bord Pleanála was lodged with the High Court by 3 no applicants in May 2024. The timeline for the Judicial Review process is currently uncertain but will extend into 2025.

National Pavement Improvement Programme and HD28 Programme

Under the Pavement Improvement and Minor Works and HD28 Programmes, financed by TII, Kilkenny County Council have completed the following schemes:

N76 Reviewsfield Pavement Improvement Scheme

This project comprises two phases, phase one being the resurfacing of the Kells road roundabout on the N76 Kilkenny Ring Road which was funded under the HD 28 Programme. This was completed by Lagan Asphalt Ltd for an out-turn contract value of €214,606 during 2024. Phase two comprises the resurfacing of circa 1km of main line carriageway of the N76 Kilkenny Ring Road, between the Waterford Road and Callan Road Roundabouts which is expected to be completed 2025.



Night Works on the N76 Kells Roundabout

N76 Callan By Pass Pavement Scheme

Design work and the preparation of tender documentation for the scheme are on-going. The overall cost of the scheme is expected to be in excess of €4m with varying sources of TII funding necessary to deliver the scheme. TII has advised approval to proceed to tender is required prior to confirming funding is available for the scheme. The Callan By Pass scheme in particular is complex given its semi urban location, the presence of a major bridge structure and addressing active travel requirements.

National Road B12 Maintenance Works

Kilkenny County Council received €145,000 in 2024 to address a number of specific issues identified by the Municipal District Engineers on the national road network.

National Road HD28 Skid Resistance Maintenance Works

Contracts in excess of €495,000 were awarded 2024 to address skid resistance issues on the N76, N77, N78 & N24. This included pavement replacement and mechanical abrasion works. Two tenders awarded in 2024 on the N24 and N77 are expected to be complete Q2 2025.

Fencing Retrofit on the National Road Network

Works to the value of €38,176 were completed during 2024 on this scheme. This scheme provides for the replacement of old concrete post and rail fencing with passively safe fencing. The funding provided for the completion of works on the N77 Ballyragget.



NON- NATIONAL ROAD NETWORK

Restoration Improvement and Restoration Maintenance Programme 2024

The main road improvements on the Non-National road network are funded from the Road Restoration Improvement and Maintenance Grant Scheme. The Council received a grant allocation of €13,282,195 in 2024. Works under this funding Scheme are prioritised on a basis of providing for enhancements to the road condition rating, skid resistance and impermeability. Significant progress has been made on the Non-National road network over the years since the Restoration Grant was introduced and the condition rating of the roads in County Kilkenny compares favourably with that of other Counties.

Non- National Low-Cost Safety Programme

The Non- National Low-Cost Safety Programme is targeted at locations along the non-national road network which have been identified as collision prone zones. The works carried out under this programme include improved junction delineation and visibility splays, traffic calming, enhanced roadside delineation and pedestrian crossing facilities within urban areas. 15 schemes were completed under this programme at a cost of €372,717 in 2024.



Clogh Phase 2 Before



Clogh Phase 2 After

Public Lighting

Kilkenny County Council maintains approximately 12,100 public lights throughout the County. Killaree Lighting Services are presently contracted to maintain the public lighting stock of Kilkenny County Council having been successful in the tender process which was issued in 2024. This contract was a joint tender by Kilkenny and Carlow County Councils.

Example of new decorative lighting installed on John Street and Rose Inn Street by Kilkenny Municipal District



Kilkenny - Public Lighting Energy Efficiency Programme (PLEEP)

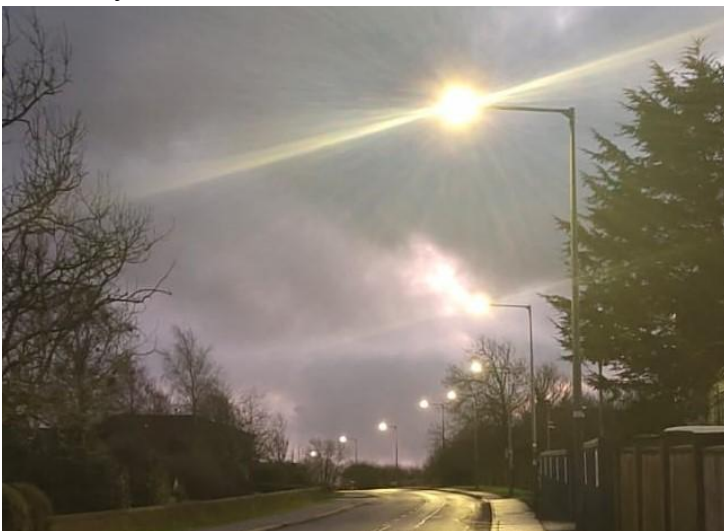
Kilkenny County Council as the lead authority for the 9 LAs in the Eastern Region, in conjunction with the appointed consultants Arup/RPS continue to manage the survey and upgrade of public lighting network across the region to LED.

The works contractor KLS and ASD JV have surveyed in excess of 142,000 public lighting (PL) assets in the region, produced 36,000 lighting designs and upgraded approx. 6850 lights across the 9 LAs.

The survey data is recorded on the LA's new PL asset data management system, MapRoad Public Lighting System.

In addition to upgrading to energy efficiency lighting, work is also being carried out to upgrade the associated infrastructure, which includes separation of the LA's public lighting network from the ESN's network, installation of micro-pillars, interface boxes and associated electrical and civil works and replacement of damaged infrastructure, such as replacement of damaged poles and column doors etc.

The survey (12,000 units) and lighting design works (5,200 units) were completed for County Kilkenny in 2023. Installation works are ongoing with 2,200 PL assets installed in Kilkenny to date.



Flood Relief Capital Projects

Kilkenny County Council was allocated € 29.6million investment for Flood Risk Management measures across 6 schemes in the County, funded by the Governments Ten Year Program of Investment (2018-2028) and administered by the OPW.

In 2024, Two Tranche 1 schemes progressed:

Ballyhale FRS

An Bord Pleanála granted permission for the proposed flood relief works on the 22nd August, 2024 (*Board Order ABP-317082-23*).

The Compulsory Purchase Order associated with the scheme was also approved by the Board.

The scheme advanced to Stage 3 Detailed Design and Tender Process.

The CPO process is ongoing.

Graiguenamanagh FRS

Site investigation works were completed in 2024. Additional archaeological tests were carried out on the Quay during Q4 of 2024.

The completion of Stage 1 of the scheme (Preferred Option) is now scheduled for mid-February 2025. The scheme will then advance to Stage 2 Planning Phase. Submission of Planning application to An Bord Pleanála is scheduled for Q3 2025. A CPO application will also be required to be submitted to An Bord Pleanála.

These Flood Relief Schemes will provide a standard of protection when complete to approximately 92 properties and will have a significant social and economic benefit to the effected communities of both Graiguenamanagh and Ballyhale.

MINOR WORKS PROGRAMME

The OPW approved funding for Flood Protection works at Ardaloos under the Minor Works Programme. Works started on the 18th November and are scheduled to be completed by end of Q1 2025.

Consultants started the design of the scheme for flood relief measures at the K-Cat carpark, Bridge Street and in the yard to Fennelly's Café in Callan during Q4 2024. Tender process is to be carried out in Q1 2025 with works envisaged to take place in Q2 of 2025.

Kilkenny County Council are continuing their role, together with Donegal County Council and the OPW to determine a method for Piloting a new delivery model for certain Tranche 2 Flood Relief Schemes.





Comhairle Chontae Chill Chainnigh
Kilkenny County Council

DIRECTORATE OF HOUSING AND COMMUNITY

IAN GARDNER
ACTING DIRECTOR OF SERVICES



HOUSING

Housing Capital

Housing For All is the Government's plan to increase the supply of housing to an average of 33,000 units per year over up to 2030. The delivery of new social and affordable housing is a key priority of the plan and will form an important element of the overall delivery of new housing units. Housing For All includes a commitment to deliver 90,000 social homes by 2030 which equates to over 10,000 social homes each year. Housing For All also commits to a very significant increase in the delivery of affordable homes (for purchase and rent), by local authorities and Approved Housing Bodies.

Kilkenny County Council in partnership with the voluntary housing sector, under Housing For All are required to deliver 803 social and 76 affordable housing units in Kilkenny in the period 2022 to 2026. The following tables identify these targets and show that Kilkenny County Council is ahead of cumulative delivery for the period 2022-2024.

2024 Social Housing Delivery

SCHEME	PROJECT NAME	NUMBER UNITS
SHIP Construction	Croker's Hill	88
SHIP Construction	Health Centre, Kilmacow	1
SHIP Construction	Fire Station, Thomastown	1
SHIP Construction	Cloghscregg, Thomastown	1
SHIP Turnkey	The Rise, Castle Oaks, Breagagh Valley, Kilkenny	22
SHIP Part V	Fox Meadows, Loughmacask, Kilkenny	8
SHIP Part V	College Park Crescent, Nyne Park, Kilkenny	10
SHIP Part V	The Rise, Castle Oaks, Breagagh Valley, Kilkenny	8
SHIP Acquisitions	Acquisitions	8
CALF	Cluain Glasson, Granges Road, Kilkenny Phase 2	1
CALF	Cluain Glasson, Granges Road, Kilkenny Phase 3	4
CALF	Nyne Park, Callan Road, Kilkenny	12
CALF Part V	Cluain Glasson, Granges Road, Kilkenny	5
CALF Part V	Friary Walk, Callan	3
CAS Acquisitions	Acquisitions	10
		185

Social Housing Delivery	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026	Total
Targets	170	149	153	164	167	803
Delivery	144	185	179			
Cumulative delivery	-26	+10	+36			

Affordable Housing Delivery	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026	Total
Targets	5	14	21	18	18	76
LAAPS/CREL	0	10	61			
Cumulative delivery	-5	-9	+31			



*Abbeymeadows, Ferrybank
March 2025 – 18 units*



*Castleoaks – 30 Apartments
Turnkey and Part 5 - Handed over Feb 2025*



*Croker's Hill Housing Scheme– Community
Centre incorporated into the build*



*Croker's Hill Housing Scheme – 88 units
Getting ready for handover*

Kilkenny County Council also provides social housing supports to persons who are unable to meet their housing needs from their own resources. The Housing Department supports households through a variety of means including:

- Housing Need Assessments (HNA's) to establish eligibility and need
- Social housing tenancy from Kilkenny County Council's stock
- Approved housing body (AHB) tenancy
- Rental Accommodation Scheme (RAS)
- Housing Assistance Payment (HAP) including Homeless HAP
- Local Authority Home Loan Scheme
- Provision of grants to private households

Housing Needs Assessments (HNA's)

The Housing Needs Assessment Team received 979 Social Housing Applications in 2024 with 294 applications approved.

Total No. of Applications	2024	2023	2022
Applications received	979	1041	1025
Validated applications *	460	297	345
Approved applications*	294	199	216
Refused applications*	149	98	129
Applications requiring further information	17	0	0

**Rolling figure includes applications from previous months*

Housing Allocations

252 tenancies were offered to approved Social Housing Applicants in 2024. Choice Based Letting system was introduced in 2023 providing a more fair and transparent process of allocating properties.

	Kilkenny County Council	Approved Housing Body	Kilkenny County Council	Approved Housing Body
	2024	2024	2023	2023
Allocations Offered	136	106	201	169
Offers Accepted	127 (93%)	96 (90%)	164 (82%)	148 (88%)
Offers Refused	9 (7%)	10 (10%)	37 (18%)	21 (12%)
Decisions Pending	0	0	0	0

Housing List

The gross Housing Demand at 31st December 2024 was 1,408 and a comparative analysis with previous years is outlined below:

<i>Year</i>	<i>Number on Housing List</i>
<i>December 2024</i>	<i>1,408</i>
<i>December 2023</i>	<i>1,554</i>
<i>December 2022</i>	<i>1,588</i>
<i>December 2021</i>	<i>1,619</i>
<i>December 2020</i>	<i>1,899</i>
<i>December 2019</i>	<i>1,988</i>
<i>December 2018</i>	<i>2,070</i>

Rental Accommodation Scheme

The Rental Accommodation Scheme (RAS) is a form of social housing support that involves a three-way relationship between a property owner, Kilkenny County Council, and a tenant. Under the scheme, private rented properties provide an additional source of good quality rental accommodation for eligible tenants.

2024 RAS Summary to End of Year	
Total active RAS tenancies	317
New RAS tenancies set up	4
Closed RAS tenancies	30

Housing Assistance Payment Scheme

The Housing Assistance Payment (HAP) is a form of social housing support provided by Kilkenny County Council. Kilkenny County Council makes a monthly rental payment on behalf of the tenant to the private landlord, subject to terms and conditions, including rent limits. In return, the HAP tenant pays a weekly contribution towards the rent to the local authority. Payments to landlords and from tenants is centralised through the HAP Shared Services Centre in Limerick.

2024 HAP Summary to End of Year	
Total active HAP tenancies	463
New HAP tenancies set up	63
HAP allocated Social Housing	119
Closed HAP tenancies	128
HAP Rent Reviews	258
HAP Other tenancy amendments	238

Housing Loans & Tenant Purchase Scheme

The Local Authority Home Loan is a government-backed mortgage available to first-time buyers and 'Fresh Start' applicants (persons who are divorced separated, or whose relationship has ended and have no financial interest in the family home/ persons who have gone through personal insolvency or bankruptcy). This loan can also be used by persons purchasing their properties under the Tenant Incremental Purchase Scheme.

Loans are offered at fixed interest rates up to a maximum of 30 years and can be used to buy new and second-hand properties, or to build a home.

Applicants can borrow up to a maximum of 90% of the market value of the property they are building or buying. The maximum market value for Kilkenny is currently €300,000.

Applicants must satisfy eligibility conditions namely in regard to employment, deposit, satisfactory credit record, residency and evidence of insufficient offers of finance from private lending institutions. The maximum income limit for an applicant is currently €70,000 for a single person and €85,000 for a couple.

Caravan Loan

The National Preferential Caravan Loan Scheme for Travellers – Traveller Specific Accommodation was introduced in November, 2024 following on from the successful pilot Caravan Loan Scheme which had been in operation since 2021.

The scheme allows Local Authorities to offer preferential, discounted loans for Travellers to purchase their own caravan/trailer/mobile home for occupation as their primary residence on official halting sites.

Housing Loan Activity 1 st January - 31 st December, 2024					
Loan Type	Received	Approved	Amount Approved	Number Paid	Amount Paid
Local Authority Home Loan	41	10	€1,270,950	12	€1,754,326
Caravan Loan	0	0	€0	0	€0
Total	45	15	€1,826,240	14	€1,402,240

Housing Private Grants

Kilkenny County Council administers a number of grant options to assist older people and people with a disability in carrying out works which are necessary for the purposes of rendering a house more suitable for their accommodation needs.

Grants Approved & Committed				
SCHEME	2024		2023	
HGD - Housing Adaptation Grant	169	€1,844,865	190	€2,029,306
MAG - Mobility Aid Grant	11	€35,505	17	€64,934
HOP - Housing Aid for Older Persons	292	€1,478,388	247	€1,243,162
Total	472	€3,358,758	454	€3,337,402

Homeless Services

There has been a further increase in the number of homeless presentations in 2024. We also experienced a further increase in the complexity of presentations. The lack of private rental properties greatly reduces the Council's options in providing an exit strategy for households in emergency accommodation.

We continue to focus on the prevention of homelessness and offer emergency accommodation as a last resort only.

The Government put in place a number of measures to prevent homelessness arising from the reactivation of notices of termination of tenancies in June 2023. We provided advice and directed Tenants to the appropriate services required to prevent homelessness. In total, 51 households receiving valid Notices of Termination in 2024 were supported. We provided housing solutions to 43 households through LA / AHB housing, RAS/HAP accommodation and Tenant-in-Situ scheme. 11 active Notices of Termination remain active at year end with an expiry date in 2024.

The Tenant-in-Situ scheme allowed Kilkenny County Council to buy RAS/HAP properties from private landlords who are selling, so the Council can continue to rent these properties to the tenants who are living there. Ten houses have been purchased under this scheme in 2024 with a further 2 sales in progress at year end.

Homeless Services Summary	2021	2022	2023	2024
Homeless Presentations	370	478	540	572
<i>Homeless Assessment Outcomes</i>				
Prevention & Interventions	193	246	393	424
Emergency Service	84	77	68	94
Not eligible / Did not avail of service	96	155	79	54

2024 Notice to Quit Summary to End of Year	
Valid NTQ's received	51
Valid NTQ's for which alternative housing solutions were found	43
Valid NTQ's at 31/12/2024 awaiting alternative housing solution	11
NTQ Tenant in Situ house purchases	10

Tenancy Management

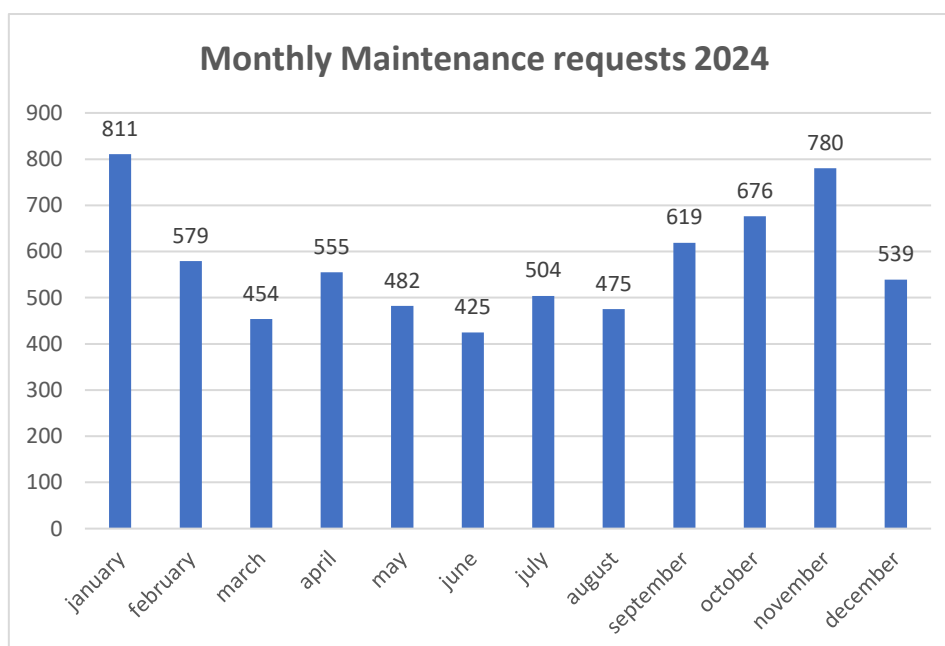
The Council acknowledges that anti-social behaviour can have a seriously negative impact on people's lives, and is committed to promoting a safe and secure environment for all residents, and in areas where anti-social behaviour is being perpetrated by the tenants/occupants of a Council property (mixed tenure areas, rural areas, etc.). There is a dedicated team of Tenant Liaison Officers to ensure that all complaints are investigated, and who work towards the elimination of anti-social behaviour through prevention, enforcement, and support in line with Kilkenny County Council's Anti-Social Behaviour Strategy.

Complaint Type 2024	Number of Complaints	Number Investigated	Number Closed
Anti-Social Behaviour	111	111	43
Dogs	38	38	13
Animals (other than dogs)	16	16	3
Drugs	4	4	2
Fire	5	5	1
Maintenance	4	4	2
Neighbour Feud	39	39	9
Noise	5	5	5
Parking / Boundary Issues	13	13	6
Refuse/Rubbish	53	53	20
Unauthorised Tenant	18	18	12
Other – tenancy breaches, surrendering etc	164	164	71
Total	470	470	187

Housing Stock and Maintenance

Kilkenny County Council housing stock has increased to its current total of approximately 2780 units. We received and responded to 6899 maintenance requests countywide in 2024.

National Housing policy is moving towards an asset management system-based stock condition survey of all local property units. Future funding will move from response towards a planned maintenance approach. We are committed to moving towards planned maintenance programmes on a phased basis to identify deficiencies in our stock and strategically address these issues. Kilkenny County Council have commenced trial with “AddJust” asset management system for stock conditional surveys



Voids

Under the 2024 Voids Maintenance Programme Kilkenny County Council have completed 88 units to make available for re-let at a cost of €1.56 million.

	Number of Units	Re-let Costs
2024	88	€1.56m
2023	75	€1.1m

Private Rented Accommodation

Kilkenny County Council is dedicated to improving the living standards of tenants in private rented accommodation. This is done through the inspection of private rented properties to determine whether they meet the required standards for rental accommodation. Where a property does not meet the required standard, compliance is ensured through the use of improvement and prohibition notices and where necessary, legal proceedings. Landlords and tenants are required to provide access to the Housing Authority to undertake property inspections.

Private Rented Inspections	2024
Total Number of Inspections carried out in year	976
Total number of First Inspections	830
Total number of Second Inspections	146
Number of final Inspections achieving compliance	389
Number of Improvement Notices issued	19
Number of Prohibition Notices issued	3

Kilkenny Age Friendly Programme

The Kilkenny Age Friendly Programme is managed by the Age Friendly Programme Manager and the programme is overseen by the Kilkenny Age Friendly Alliance. The Alliance is a multiagency voluntary partnership that works closely with older people in Kilkenny to ensure that policies and plans reflect their needs. Meeting regularly throughout the year the Alliance holds the responsibility for the development and implementation of Kilkenny's Age Friendly Strategy. The Alliance is chaired by the Chief Executive of Kilkenny County Council, Mr. Lar Power. Membership of the Alliance represents a number of organisations such as the HSE, An Garda Síochána, Kilkenny Leader Partnership, Chamber of Commerce, Kilkenny Recreational Sports Partnership and Kilkenny Older People's Council. Several events and initiatives took place during 2024.

2024 National Network of Older People's Councils Convention

Kilkenny County Council Community section through the Age Friendly Programme hosted almost 200 older people from across Ireland for the Age Friendly Ireland National Network of Older People's Councils (NNOPC) Convention. The Convention held on the 9th and 10th May in the Ormonde Hotel addressed the pressing issue of the technology gap experienced by older demographics including online banking, a cashless society, and automated customer service helplines and offered potential solutions to bridge this divide. The convention included seven workshops and site tours, panel discussions and the opportunity to network and share learnings. The event attended by Minister Mary Butler, TD, Minister of State for Mental Health and Older People at the Department of Health, the Older People's Councils and 31 local authority representatives featured discussions from panel speakers including; Áine Flynn, Director of the Decision Support Service and Mark Harrington, National Manager, Healthy Age Friendly Homes and Garret Doocey, Assistant Secretary from the Department of Transport. Also speaking at the convention were Philip Hogan, CEO of Cliffrun Media, a Dublin-based technology company specialising in technology solutions for older individuals and Diarmuid Angland, a Department of Finance specialist, who is leading the development of a National Payments Strategy.



National Network of Older People's Councils Convention



*National Network of Older People's Councils Convention
Anne Marie Shortall, Alison McGrath, Mary Mulholland, Catherine McGuigan
and Minister Mary Butler*



*National Network of Older People's Councils Convention –
Lar Power, Anne Marie Shortall, Nickey Brennan, Cathaoirleach Michael Doyle, Mary O'Hanlon Lorna
King and Edward Hayden MC*

Kilkenny Age Friendly Healthy Homes

This National Programme is delivered across all 31 Local Authorities and has a local support coordinator in each Local Authority. The Healthy Age Friendly Homes Programme aims to support older people to live in their own home with dignity and independence, for as long as possible. The programme's ambition is to enable everyone to live longer healthier lives by keeping care close to home and expanding the range of health and social care services in the community. It is about providing a range of alternatives for older people who may otherwise transition into long term residential care prematurely. Each Local Coordinator will case manage a support package for each person referred, linking the supports from the variety of public, voluntary, private and community agencies in the area. The purpose of this referral is to identify an older person, over 65, who could benefit from some extra help and support in order to continue living in their own home. The Local Coordinator will carry out a free home-based assessment and, in partnership with the older person, will identify and design a range of supports to enable the older person to continue living independently

A programme of free events and activities for older people at the Mayfair Library

Kilkenny County Council Age Friendly Programme, The Older People's Council, Kilkenny Recreation and Sports Partnership, HSE, An Garda and Kilkenny Library Service teamed up to develop a programme of events and activities. These events were free of charge and ran for 8 weeks from Friday 6th September until Friday 1st November 2024. Located in the new Mayfair Library, the events provided an opportunity for older people to receive useful information as well as providing the opportunity to chat and meet with people. The events had very positive feedback and in total over 500 older people attended the events. The programme topics included Ageing Well in the Community, Dementia Awareness, Physical Activity for older people, Age Friendly Strategy Consultation, Age Friendly Healthy Homes presentation, Assisted Decision Making and Safeguarding, Minding Your Wellbeing Self Care workshop and Community Safety Talk.



Age Friendly Dementia Awareness Talk at Mayfair Library

Kilkenny Age Friendly Strategy 2025-2028

Kilkenny County Council are currently developing a new Age Friendly Strategy. The new strategy aims to build on the progress of the Age Friendly Programme in recent years and to continue to make Kilkenny a more inclusive and age friendly place to live and visit. Community Consultations took place across the County in Thomastown, Castlecomer, Mullinavat, and in Kilkenny City in 2024. There was good attendance and engagement at each of the consultations contributing to the new strategy. The strategy will be launched in early 2025.



Age Friendly Strategy Community Consultation at Mayfair Library

Age Friendly Creative Christmas Connections

As part of Kilkenny Age Friendly Programme and in collaboration and supported by Creative Ireland, a number of free events were organised throughout the month of December 2024. The 'Creative Christmas Connections 2024' programme of events were targeted for older people to enhance community connections by engaging in creative workshops and events. The workshops included 'Festive Flower Arranging' workshops held in Thomastown, Ballyragget and Kilkenny City where each participant to create a beautiful flower arrangement. There were also 'Christmas Crafts' workshops held in Stoneyford and Mullinavat where participants painted and created crafts. Locals in Kilmanagh created Christmas decorations through crocheting. The 'Festive Storytelling' in Urlingford, Stoneyford and Mullinavat were enjoyable events of listening and telling stories. There was an afternoon of comedy sketches, poetry and sing along with musicians for the 'Rambling House Christmas Show' at St. Canice's Neighbourhood Hall, Kilkenny. In collaboration with Kilkenny Arts Office there were some drop in Embroidery sessions. All the events were well attended and there was very positive feedback.



Festive Flower Arranging Workshop



Christmas Craft Workshop

AWARDS

Community Awards Night

Kilkenny County Council's Community Awards Night was held in the Parade Tower in Kilkenny Castle on Thursday 8th February 2024. This award ceremony appreciates and acknowledged the contribution of local communities from across the County for their endless dedication to projects and to their towns and villages.

Awards on the night were made to Keep Kilkenny Beautiful, Inistioge Tidy Towns, Tullahought Tidy Towns and Listerlin Tidy Towns. An award was given to the three nominees for Pride of Place which took place November 2023, St. Canices Community Action Ltd., Callan Community Energy and Freshford Community.



Freshford Community group receiving Pride of Place Award



Keep Kilkenny Beautiful receiving Community Award

Tidy Estates Awards 2024

Kilkenny County Council Tidy Estates Competition aims to encourage residents to take an active role in improving the physical appearance of their housing estate.

Large Estates Category	
1 st	Lakeside Residents Association, Hebron Road
2 nd	Bellfield Residents Association, Ferrybank
3 rd	Glenvale, Ballyragget
Medium Estates Category	
1 st	Millroad Residents Association, Inistioge
2 nd	Parkmore Terrace Residents Association, Gowran
3 rd	The Belfry Residents Association, Thomastown
Small Estates Category	
1 st	Fr. Raftice Place Residents Association, Moneenroe
2 nd	Ard Aoibheann Residents Association, Inistioge
3 rd	Old School Crescent Residents Association, Moneenroe

Pride of Place

Kilkenny County Council nominated three exceptional community groups for the prestigious IPB Pride of Place Awards 2024. Ireland's largest community awards event which took place in Hillgrove Hotel, Monaghan in November 2024. These nominations celebrate the outstanding contributions made by local groups in enhancing the quality of life within their communities and fostering a spirit of unity and pride.

The three nominated groups and their respective award categories are as follows:

- Ferrybank Community - Nominated for the Community Wellbeing category.
- Inistioge Village - Nominated in the Population category (population under 500).
- Johnstown Community - Nominated in the Creative Communities category.

Ferrybank & Inistioge Communities each won a Runners Up Prize.



Pride of Place Runners Up Prize Ferrybank Community



Pride of Place Runners Up Prize Inistioge Community



Johnstown Community Pride of Place Nominees 2024

Chambers Ireland Excellence in Local Government Awards

In November 2024 the Gowran multi use games area (MUGA) was shortlisted for the Chambers Ireland Excellence in Local Government Awards under the Inclusion and Diversity category. Kilkenny County Council received funding for the project under the Town & Village Renewal Fund and allocated its own funding to the project through the Community & Cultural Capital Facilities Scheme.

GRANTS

Community Grants Booklet and Calendar

The seventh Community Grants booklet & Community Calendar was produced and launched at the Parade Tower, Kilkenny Castle in February 2024. The grants booklet is a one stop shop of all funding available to the community from Kilkenny County Council. This

booklet is available online on www.kilkennycoco.ie . The Community Calendar showcases all the local projects carried out by the Community Department throughout the year, highlighting important closing dates for grants throughout the year.

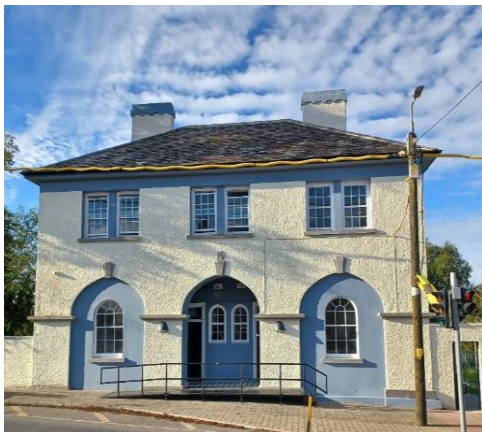
Community Events Grants Scheme

Community Events Grants Scheme assist community event organisers with the development, promotion and the running of small-scale community events organised by local not-for-profit voluntary groups and organisations. The total budget allocated for the scheme was €30,000. A total of 64 applications were received and 62 applications were approved under the grant scheme.

Town & Village Renewal Scheme 2021 / 2022

In 2024, the following projects were completed/partially completed. These projects were approved under the Town & Village Scheme 2021 and 2022

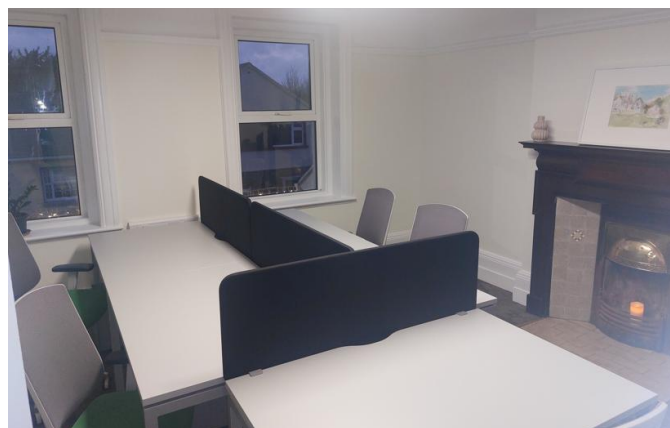
Name	Amount	Description	Status
Piltown	€500,000	Remote Working Hub	Completed
Urlingford	€250,000	Remote Working Hub	Completed
Gowran	€250,000	Intergenerational Outdoor Activity Hub	Completed
PDM Glenmore	€49,500	Community Café	In Progress
PDM Thomastown	€49,500	Old Supervalu Premises, Thomastown	In progress



Piltown Remote Working Hub



Gowran Outdoor Activity Hub



Urlingford Remote Working Hub

Town & Village Renewal Scheme 2023 / 2024

In 2023, applications were made to the Department of Rural & Community Development for the following projects which were successful in receiving funding announced in March 2024 for completion by 31st August 2025 as follows:

Name	Amount	Description	Status
Callan	€247,500	Restoration of the Kings River to enable the community to use it for activities, fishing, swimming and canoeing/kayaking	In Progress
Dunnamaggin	€247,500	The transformation of a community green space into an events amenity	In Progress
Callan	€49,950	Project will develop plans to establish an outdoor classroom community space in Abbey Field and examine the re-development of a derelict cottage in Moate Field and complete biodiversity studies on both sites.	In Progress
Urlingford	€500,000	Phase 2 – Refurbishment of Urlingford Community Centre	In Progress
Paulstown	€49,950	Project Development Measure to create a plan for a town central point – Consultation, design brief, tender, planning permission	In Progress
Total	€1,0984,900		

CLÁR

CLÁR (*Ceantair Laga Árd-Riachtanais*) is a targeted investment programme for rural areas that aims to provide funding for small infrastructural projects in areas that have experienced significant levels of de-population. The funding works in conjunction with local Agency and other Departmental funding programmes and on the basis of locally identified priorities.

In June 2023, Kilkenny County Council submitted eight applications for funding under the CLÁR 2023 programme. The successful projects under Measure 1 were announced in December 2023 and the fund for Kilkenny in the amount of €295,469 are listed below:

Name of Applicant	Project Description	Grant Approved
Tullogher Rosbercon GAA Club	Provision of tarmacadam car park, passing bay and emergency access road to new playing field	€50,000
Muckalee Football Club	Tarmacadam of car park and marking of car park	€50,000
Kilmoganny GAA	Upgrade car park and walkway	€30,150
St Martins GAA	Lighting, nets, railing and gates	€44,766
Kilkenny County Council Supported by Coolagh Community Group	Upgrade works outside community hall	€45.000
Kilkenny County Council Muckalee Public Lighting	Upgrade of public lighting (Phase 2)	€24,750
Kilkenny Galmoy Community Hall	Provision of a MUGA	€30,015
Kilkenny Windgap Tidy Towns	Tarmac surface at Windgap Lake Car Park	€20,788

In June 2024, Kilkenny County Council submitted six applications for funding under the CLÁR 2024 programme of which four applications were successfully approved for funding. The successful projects under Measure 1 were announced in October 2024 and the funding for Kilkenny in the amount of €148,679 are listed below:

Name of Applicant	Project Description	Grant Approved
Ballyouskill Development Association Ltd	Improvements and upgrade of facilities of Community Hall	€36,641
Windgap Handball Alley	External insulation of two outside walls	€50,000
Naomh Aodhan Community Centre CLG	Upgrade works on rebuilding & refurbishing of handball alley and ground works	€30,150
Windgap GAA	Works to include tarmac to drive way and parking area	€44,766

Rural Regeneration Development Fund

The Rural Regeneration and Development Fund (RRDF) was established to provide investment to support rural renewal, strengthen and build resilience in rural communities and assist in the regeneration of towns and villages with a population of less than 10,000 and outlying areas. Kilkenny County Council is currently carrying out four projects under the RRDF scheme.

Project Description	Grant Approved
Thomastown Library & Community Centre	€4,013,115
Callan Friary Complex Development	€861,867
Piltown RRDF Urban Streetscape	€1,744,745
South East Greenway Connectivity Link and Pink Rock Cycle Loop & Amenity Trail	€1,885,138

Community and Cultural Facilities Capital Scheme (CCFCS)

The CCFCS scheme provides financial support to community and voluntary groups to develop recreational and cultural facilities including open spaces, walks and parklands, play areas, community arts projects and conservation and natural heritage projects. CCFCS grants were awarded to eleven groups across the County in 2024 as follows

Name of Applicant	Project Description	Grant Approved
Cois Nore	Develop and Refurbishment of Community Space	€40,000
Piltown AFC	Walkway, Lighting and Security Fencing	€36,000
Callan United AFC	Upgrade of Dressing Rooms and Storage facilities	€35,000
Gowran Community Complex	Fit out and works to be completed on shell of building to develop community space.	€27,000
Windgap Handball Club	Replace glass wall, installation of ventilation, upgrade of heating system, lights, shower and toilet facilities, painting of handball alley.	€25,000
Conahy Shamrocks GAA	Replacement of lights and extension of walkway	€25,000

Inistioge Community Council	Bi folding doors to increase space for large functions	€14,000
Johnstown Community Hall	Upgrade Seating, enhancements to floor balcony, curtains stage	€15,000
Danesfort GAA Club	Extension of floodlit walkway	€15,000
Mullinavat Community Group	Installation of CCTV and fob entry system	€9,000
Ballyhale Shamrocks	Upgrade of toilets/disability access	€9,000
	Total	€250,000

The following CCFCS projects were completed in 2024

Name of Applicant	Project Details	Grant Approved
Ferrybank AFC	Installation of tarmac and concrete surface for disability access for pedestrians	€30,000
Dunnamaggin GAA Club	Lighting of Dunnamaggin Walkway	€30,000
Kilfane Handball Club	Construction of gym	€25,000
John Lockes GAA Club	Walkway improvements, CCTV, sensory activity outdoor wall panels/littler bins/walkway benches and security gate	€11,000
Graiguenamanagh Hall	Installation of new stage lighting/screen & projector	€9,000
Rower Inistioge GAA Club	Erection of floodlighting as part of ball wall facility	€30,000
Kilkenny Christian Centre	Upgrade of centre facilities	€35,000
Thomastown Scout Group	Carry out fire safety works to the Scouts den to bring up the fire safety standards	€40,000
Muckalee Community Centre Ltd	Community shop & café – fit out	€40,000
Mooncoin Soccer Club	Erection of spectator railing around playing pitches	€10,000
Gowran on the Move	Installation of additional play equipment for the outdoor recreational Hub	€45,000
Windgap Handball Club	Replace glass wall, installation of ventilation, upgrade of heating system, lights, shower and toilet facilities, painting of handball alley (Stage 1 & 2)	€17,000
Trasna Productions	Conversion of Bacon Factory to Café Gallery	€40,000

KILKENNY LOCAL COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE (LCDC)

Kilkenny County Council continued to support the work of and administration of the LCDC throughout 2024. During 2024, six meetings took place. The LCDC successfully administered the Community Enhancement Programme Grants, the Healthy Ireland Programme, the Community Development Programme (Kilkenny Traveller Community Movement) and maintained its oversight role of the Kilkenny SICAP Programme. The programme implementors for the SICAP programme are Kilkenny Leader Partnership. The LCDC administers and monitors a variety of funding streams for communities that experience social exclusion or disadvantage.

Local Economic & Community Plan (LECP)

Kilkenny LCDC adopted the LECP 2023-2028 in May, 2023. This was accompanied by a 2-year implementation plan for 2023 and 2024. Monitoring and review of the implementation plan was carried out during 2024.

Local Enhancement Programme Funding (LEP)

The LEP Scheme is funded by the Department of Rural and Community Development and administered by the Local Community Development Committee (LCDC). It provides funding to communities across Ireland to enhance facilities targeted towards disadvantaged areas as identified in the Local Economic and Community Plan (LECP).



Painting of Tullahought Community Hall funded by LEP Grant 2024

Kilkenny were awarded Capital funding of €151,823. The funding can be allocated to capital type projects such as carrying out necessary repairs and improvements to facilities, energy efficiency type projects, purchase of equipment. There was also ring-fenced for Women's Groups. There were 77 groups were awarded grant funding between €1,000-€10,000, contributing towards upgrading of facilities and the purchase of equipment.

Kilkenny Traveller Interagency Group (KTIG)

The role of the KTIG is to ensure that local agencies and the Traveller Community work together to address locally identified needs and concerns as well as to put in place responses where gaps in services currently exist for the Traveller Community. Kilkenny County Council continued to fund and support a programme of education and animal welfare throughout 2024.



Hard Standing, Horse Project, Hebron



Traveller Culture Awareness Training

A further meeting of the Education Subgroup took place in 2024 and Kilkenny County Council supported the Kilkenny Carlow Education Training Board (KCETB) to organise a multi-agency Traveller Literacy Awareness event to identify the gaps in Education in the Travelling Community. Traveller Culture Awareness Training was also provided.

HEALTHY IRELAND

Healthy Ireland is a government-led initiative aimed at improving the health and wellbeing of everyone living in Ireland. The Healthy Ireland, A Framework for Improved Health and Wellbeing 2013-2025. In 2023, The Minister for Public Health, Wellbeing and the National Drugs Strategy, Hildegard Naughton, announced the allocation of Healthy Ireland funding to each of the 31 Local Authorities for a three-year period 2023 – 2025. Through partnership working, the Healthy Ireland programme supports initiatives targeted at a diverse range of target groups including; Adolescents and Young People, One-Parent Families, People living with a Disability, Travellers and Disadvantage Areas in Kilkenny.

In 2024, Healthy Ireland supported initiatives in Kilkenny focused on enhancing physical activity opportunities. The Kilkenny Recreation & Sports Partnership introduced physical activity programs for people with additional needs, including supported swimming lessons, adapted physical activities, cycling, and multi-activity camps during Easter and Summer. Social farming placements were also made available for individuals living with additional needs.



Social Farming Placement

Kilkenny County Council Active Travel implemented community cycling programs benefiting over 50 children and young people across various locations. They also installed a bike bunker at Newpark Family Resource Centre, offering upcycled bikes and secure parking, enhancing access to cycling for the wider community.



Cycling Programme for school children

For adolescents and young people, Foroige provided diverse physical activities like water sports, yoga, and circuits in Castlecomer, along with exercise equipment. Ossory Youth, in collaboration with Mountaineering Ireland and Castlecomer Discovery Park, piloted the 'Summit Sisters' hill walking program for adolescent girls.

The Kilkenny Junior Park Run, jointly funded by Healthy Ireland, Kilkenny County Council, and Kilkenny Recreation and Sports Partnership, commenced in April. This event is held every Sunday morning at 9:00am in the County side park for 4-14 year olds and made possible by local Park Run volunteers, promoting regular physical activity among young people.

The Healthy Kilkenny programme in 2024 also focused on improving self-reported health among target groups, including one-parent families, Travellers, and residents of disadvantaged areas. Key initiatives included events and family activities organised by the Kilkenny One-Parent Community Development Worker in collaboration with Kilkenny Leader Partnership and the Social Inclusion Programme. These activities aimed to support one-parent families and strengthen the "Kilkenny One-Parent Community" network and parent advisory group.

The Kilkenny Traveller Community Movement introduced gym-based health and fitness programs, along with mental health and creative wellbeing workshops, specifically for the Traveller community.

A multi-stakeholder group, led by Kilkenny County Council conducted a health needs analysis in Kilkenny City's Eastern Environs. The findings aim to guide community-driven responses to enhance health and wellbeing in the area in 2025.

The Social Health Education Project (SHEP) provided facilitator groupwork training to 17 voluntary and community workers in Kilkenny to support capacity building in the community.



Additionally, the "Not Around Us" campaign addressed smoking and vaping around children and young people. Led by Healthy Kilkenny and Healthy Carlow, the campaign included input from Kilkenny and Carlow Comhairle na nÓg, who collaborated with a local artist to create designs for signage, a

charter and an educational toolkit. A consultation toolkit, developed with HSE partners, highlights the health risks of smoking and vaping. The campaign will officially launch in 2025.

The Healthy Kilkenny Programme supported the following projects:

Urban Action for Physical Activity & Cancer Prevention (EU Erasmus+ Co-Funded by the EU Commission)

Minister Naughton visited the Kilkenny LCDC Healthy Ireland projects and formally launched the *Urban Action for Cancer Prevention* project in February 2024. The UcanACT pilot

project is a collaborative initiative involving local authorities, physiotherapists, non-for-profits, and academic institutions involving five EU countries (Ireland, Belgium, Germany, Italy and Spain) over a period of 3 years. Its main goal is to encourage adults and senior citizens to engage in physical activity within public urban green spaces as a tool for cancer prevention. In 2024, Kilkenny County Council recruited over 50 citizens to participate in the UcanACT programme in three local public urban green spaces in Kilkenny City. The programmes were led by our team of local physiotherapists and student physios from the University of Limerick and local Community Managers. The UcanACT Physical Activity App which was developed by one of the project Partners was piloted alongside the programme to explore if the app influenced physical activity patterns in between the exercise sessions. Kilkenny County Council in collaboration with the project partners also developed a Citizen Engagement Strategy for the pilot project which provided the tools, methodology and actions required for engaging individuals, encouraging participation and sustaining motivation. The pilot programme will be evaluated in 2025.



Participants of UCANACT Programme

Sun Smart Campaign

Kilkenny County Council launched the National Cancer Control Programme's "Sun Smart" campaign in the Summer. This initiative aims to educate the public on protecting their skin from harmful ultraviolet (UV) rays while enjoying the beautiful Irish weather. The campaign was rolled out in three key locations in Kilkenny: Newpark Marsh Eco Park, Kilkenny Countryside Park in Dunmore, and along the Waterway in Graiguenamanagh. Each location featured a SunSmart dispenser providing essential tips, information, and resources to help everyone stay safe under the sun.

Period Dignity

Kilkenny County Council received €14,000 to implement the Local Authority Period Dignity Initiative. Under this initiative, the provision of free period products was made available in Kilkenny County Council Public Toilet Facilities, Local Parks and Kilkenny County Council Library Services. A local small grant scheme was also made available to Ossory Youth, Foroige and Kilkenny Traveller Community Movement.

YOUNG PEOPLE

National Play Day

National Play Day 2024 organised by the Community section in conjunction with the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration & Youth was held on Saturday 13th July 2024. The event hosted by Kilkenny County Council and OPW Kilkenny Castle took place between 11am and 1pm. The feedback from the various workshops was hugely positive and planning for 2025 has already commenced for an even bigger and better event. Along with event partners Healthy Ireland and Children and Young People's Services Committee (CYPSC) it was great to highlight and support the importance of creating time and space for families to have fun together.

Play is vital to supporting children's development, learning and wellbeing. It encourages a sense of adventure and discovery, helping young minds to better understand the world around them through fun and creative ways. This National Play Day was an opportunity for Kilkenny County Council and our partners to invite children and their families to come together in the grounds of Kilkenny Castle Park and take part in a wide range of activities for all to enjoy.

Hundreds of children enjoyed the workshops chosen to represent the wonder and discovery that unfolds when children play outside. Access to outdoor play means children have many opportunities for developing their imagination and physical abilities, playing in nature also presents opportunities for exploration and adventure.



National Play Day at Kilkenny Castle Park



Face Painting at National Play Day

Comhairle na nÓg

In 2024, Comhairle na nÓg continued to prioritise diversity and inclusion as the key issues facing young people in Kilkenny. Comhairle focused on increased awareness and promotion of safe spaces for diversity in schools and the broader community in Kilkenny City and County. In early 2024 Comhairle members participated in a Youth Advisory Group for Hub na nÓg to develop an online course on children's rights for adults who work with children and young people across Ireland. Comhairle members attended and presented at a plenary meeting of the Public Participation Network (PPN). Comhairle members also engaged with the Children and Young People's Services Committee (CYPSC) during the consultation event (SpeakFest) to inform the development of the new Children and Young People's Plan (CYPP) for 2025-2057.

The Comhairle na nÓg Annual Youth Conference took place in November 2024 with 94 young people from Kilkenny City and County in attendance. They actively engaged in discussions on various topics to identify youth issues in their local areas. The result of these discussions prioritised a focus on Mental Health and Wellbeing for the next two-year term of Comhairle. Comhairle members also had the opportunity to present their work and encourage participants to join Comhairle na nÓg.

KILKENNY RECREATION & SPORTS PARTNERSHIP

An initiative of Sport Ireland, Kilkenny Recreation and Sports Partnership (KRSP) plans, leads, and co-ordinates the development of sport and physical activity in County Kilkenny. The aim is to make sport inclusive and appealing to people of all ages, abilities, and social backgrounds across every corner of the County.

Kilkenny County Council continues to be a significant supporter of the work of the Partnership from representation and active membership on the KRSP Board and committees, the provision of reduced rate office accommodation, provision of financial support in addition to working on partner projects, programmes and events which achieve shared goals and objectives.

KSRP Programme Delivery:

Older Adult Exercise Programmes

- 26 weeks of activity delivered in three blocks throughout the year
- Chair Based Exercise – Chair Based Pilates in Callan; Chair Based Yoga programmes in Ferrybank. 20 participants in each area in each block
- Activator Poles – Stretch & Move walking programmes in Kilkenny Castle Park – 16 participants in each block
- Go for Life Games – 15 participants in each block

Older Adult Support and Information

- KRSP delivered a talk on being physically active in the Mayfair Library which was attended by 40 older adults.
- KRSP SIDO attended the Older People's Council annual meeting in the Ormonde Hotel with a physical activity break and information on KRSP activities
- SIDO continues to attend Kilkenny Age Friendly meetings



Go for Life Games



Mayfair Older Persons Talk

People with a Disability

KRSP organised adaptive programmes to cater for the diverse needs of participants, providing opportunities for engaging in group activities.

Programmes include:

- Supported Swim Lessons for children with additional needs – 26 weeks (3 blocks) with 35 swimmers, 20 volunteers per block and 2 swim teachers
- Multi-Sport Club – 26 sessions with 30 – 40 participants
- Football for All – 26 sessions with 10-15 players with disability
- Learn to Cycle – 4 programmes of 3 hours for mixed ability group – 25 participants
- Adapted Cycling 26 sessions using KRSP adapted bikes for adults with disability – 15 participants
- Inclusive Summer Programme - KRSP successfully organised two weeks of inclusive summer camp activities (8–12 July and 15–19 July) for 48 children with additional needs. The programme was supported by 35 young volunteers and 6 adult volunteers, alongside KRSP staff, tutors, and local NGB Development Officers. Each participant received one-to-one support from KRSP volunteers. Activities will be included athletics, orienteering and playground games, Football with FAI Kilkenny, Cycling and Kayaking with Kilkenny Aqua Canoe Club, Tennis at Kilkenny Tennis Club, Orienteering and rugby with Leinster Rugby. All activities were at very gentle, inclusive, and fun level.
- To ensure the programmes success, volunteers underwent Disability Inclusion training (funded by KRSP) a week before the camp, provided by Active Disability Ireland. Additionally, Safeguarding 1 training was funded by the HSE.
- Summer Swim programme for 24 children with additional needs as part of our inclusive summer programme
- KRSP worked with Kilkenny GAA to support the inclusion of 12 children with a disability in the mainstream Easter GAA Camp over three days
- Give It A Try week – Provision of six taster sessions in various activities over 5 days for adults with a disability
- Community Walks – 26 sessions over the year with approximately 30 walkers on each session
- National Learning Network – KRSP provides a tutor for 26 weeks to a group of 22 adults as part of their personal physical activity education programme
- TASK support group – collaboration with HSE. 26 sessions for a group using TASK in the recovery from mental health difficulties.
- Kellogg's / GAA Cúl Camp – KRSP SIDO successfully advocated for inclusive sections to be added to all Cúl Camps nationally. First inclusive Kellogg's / GAA Cúl Camp in Kilkenny rolled out to replace KRSP summer GAA camps. 25 children with additional needs attended
- Inclusive GAA – KRSP advocated for the establishment of GAA Clubs in Kilkenny to become inclusive. 2 were established in 2024 with approximately 30 young people catered for.
- Sport Inclusion & Disability Awareness presentation to 20 Kilkenny GAA Cúl Camp head coaches
- Sport Inclusion & Disability Awareness presentation to Transition Year Presentation Secondary School Classes
- Sport Inclusion & Disability Awareness presentation to GAA clubs interested in establishing inclusive sections

- SIDO continues to support Gowran GAA Club; Gowran Park Golf Club; Kilkenny Rugby Club and Kilkenny Hockey Club inclusive sports sections for children with additional needs
- Disability Awareness Training and Autism in Sport training workshops delivered through Active Disability Ireland to coaches from inclusive clubs – 18 coaches attended both Workshops.



Learn to Cycle Mixed Ability Group



Summer Camp Kayaking



KRSP Kilkenny GAA Cúl Camps

NATIONAL BIKE WEEK

There were 1934 participants of all ages and abilities took part in 31 events in Kilkenny during National Bike Week 2024. Events ranged from family cycles, to toddler events, to mountain biking and a cycle to Dunmore Biodiversity Park for a Bat Reveal. A total of 18 schools took part and approximately 1300 children participated in specific Bike Week events, with many more participating in whole school initiatives.

Bike Fest returned as a long weekend event in Kilkenny with the pop-up mountain biking course in County Hall, Kilkenny, providing exciting cycling events for hundreds of school children and adults.

The flagship event, Bike Fest, was run in conjunction with Cycling Ireland. Bike Week events were supported by Cycling Ireland, Kilkenny Recreation and Sports Partnership and local groups and organisations; On Your Rothar, Castlecomer Discovery Park, Trail Bike Body, Kilkenny Walking and Cycling Campaign Group, Kilkenny Cycle Tours, the Community Bike Ride leaders, Relay for Life and local clubs; Callan, Marble City Cyclers, Kilkenny Pedallers and Kilkenny Collective Mountain Bikers and schools throughout the County.

The focus of Bike Week in Kilkenny was to provide people of all ages and abilities with a variety of cycling events and to create awareness of cycling as an enjoyable form of transport and physical activity.

Schools Participation

Four secondary schools (CBS, St Kieran's, Loreto and Presentation Secondary School) and nine primary schools (John's Seniors, Gaelscoil, Gowran N. S., Kilkenny School Project, Mother of Fair Love, Danesfort N.S.) organised events for Bike Week in Kilkenny. Events ranged from bike maintenance, BMX workshops, cycle to school days to mountain biking.

Bike Fest

Bike Fest returned to Kilkenny as the flagship event of Bike Week. Leisure Cycles were held on Saturday, the 18th of May, exploring the bridges and laneways in Kilkenny, with the added attraction of the visit of Specialized, who made a fleet of bikes available for the day. On Sunday the 19th, the grounds of County Hall hosted Bike Fest with Mountain Biking, Grass Racing and Learn to Cycle events for all ages. The day kicked off with a cycle to Dunmore Biodiversity Park for a very special moth trap reveal. The Slow Roll through the City is a hugely popular event and this year, the Wobbly Circus added a new element with their circus workshop and Penny Farthing and the rhythm of the drums was in the background throughout the day.



Schools Mountain Biking Challenge

County Hall was transformed into a pop-up mountain biking track for the week. Schools were thrilled to experience mountain biking in Kilkenny City. The course was prepared in conjunction with local mountain bikers and Cycling Ireland and was a huge hit with hundreds of students. There was great feedback on the alternative use of space and the possibilities that exist in City Centre green spaces.

School City Cycles

Many of the schools encourage students to cycle to school for the week and also put in a programme of fun cycling activities. Volunteers came on board to escort groups of students on City cycles.

Bike Maintenance Classes

Kilkenny Recreation and Sports Partnership (KRSP) hosted two, one-hour bike maintenance workshops during Bike Week, catering for both new and experienced cyclists. The sessions equipped participants with the skills to identify and repair punctures, perform basic 'M-checks,' and ask questions directly of seasoned mechanics. Participants gained practical knowledge and confidence in bike maintenance. All participants received their own bike maintenance kit to take home with them.



Community Bike Rides

Three community bike rides were held as part of Bike Week, ranging from shorter cycles exploring the streets and bridges of Kilkenny and a trip to the new Biodiversity Park, bright and early, for a Moth Trap reveal.

Bike Week in Kilkenny School Project

From the 13th to the 24th of May, Kilkenny School Project N. S. celebrated Bike Fest. Each class from Junior Infants to Sixth Class were encouraged to bring in their bikes. The Junior classes coloured some helmets and bicycles while the older classes worked on designing a bike. A pack of resources was sent around to each class with a timetable for the week. It was enjoyed by all the children and there was a great sense of fun around the school.



Relay for Life

Once again, the junior committee under the supervision of some of our senior committee members, organised a Bike Parade. They all met at Canal Square for music, face painting and bike decorations. At the finish line they received a goody bag each. It was a lovely evening & we hope we managed to promote cycling in our beautiful City as well as promoting our own event.

Fr. McGrath Family Resource Centre

Fr. McGrath Family Resource Centre held a cycle right course for their after-school group. This was the second year that Kilkenny Cycle Tours visited and it was eagerly anticipated and enjoyed by all.

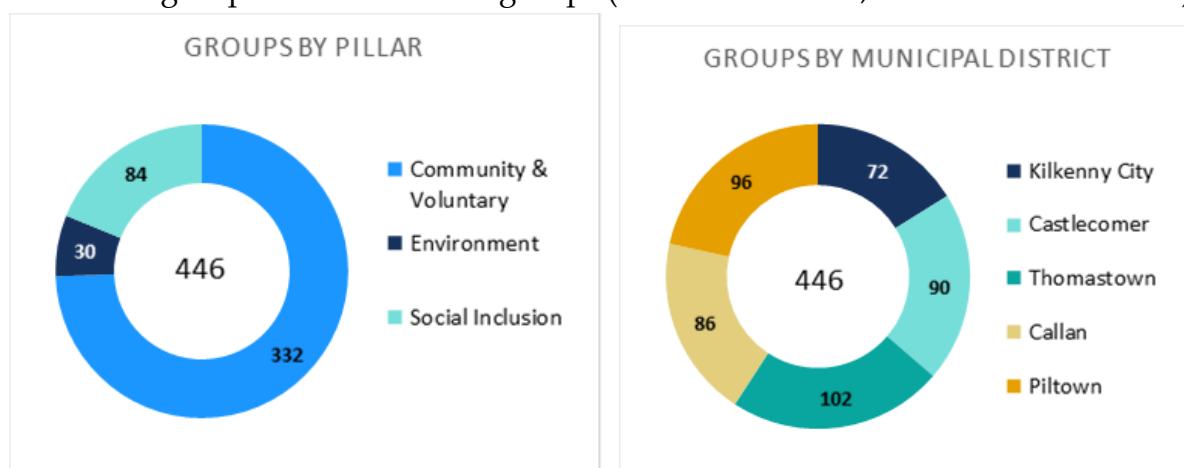
Children's Learn to Cycle

KRSP ran a Learn to Cycle for children of mixed ability. The children's classes were well supported, and 14 children signed up. Great fun was had, and all the children successfully learned to cycle. All children received lots of individual support during the lessons.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION NETWORK (PPN)

HIGHLIGHTS

Growth: There were 36 new community groups join the PPN in 2024, including the first Ukrainian group. Total: 457 active groups (446 full members, 11 associate members).



Engagement: The PPN continued to facilitate public engagement and community participation throughout the County and acted as the conduit through which Kilkenny County Council connected with community, social inclusion, and environmental groups.

Consultations: The PPN participated in various public consultations and policy submissions at all levels.

Strategic Plan: The PPN launched a 5-year strategic plan to guide priorities and increase influence in local government decisions.

Plenaries: The PPN Hosted two Plenaries celebrating the 10th anniversary, featuring community expos and notable speakers.

Policy Committees: The PPN made comprehensive submissions and filled all PPN seats on the Strategic Policy Committees 2024-2029.

Heritage Forum: The PPN nominated members to assist with the County Heritage Plan 2025-2029.

Communication: The PPN distributes weekly newsletters with public consultations, events, news, training, and funding opportunities to member groups.

Training: The PPN offered free training on governance, grant writing, and more to build the capacity of its member groups and representatives.

Social Enterprises: The PPN conducted online training webinars on business planning, governance, and financial management to support social enterprises in the County.

Climate Action: The PPN collaborated on climate action and biodiversity training, encouraging funding applications.

Workshops: The PPN hosted in-person and online workshops on climate action and biodiversity, including practical sessions with horticulturist Aoife Munn and worked with the Local Authority to inform the new Age friendly Strategy.

Biodiversity Plan: The PPN worked with the Local Authority on community consultation workshops for the new Biodiversity Action Plan.



PPN Climate action and Biodiversity workshop with horticulturist Aoife Munn



PPN Community Expo



Members of the South Sudanese Community at the PPN Community Expo



Comhairle Chontae Chill Chainnigh
Kilkenny County Council

DIRECTORATE OF INTEGRATION, EMERGENCY SERVICES, AND CULTURE

FIONA DEEGAN
ACTING DIRECTOR OF SERVICES

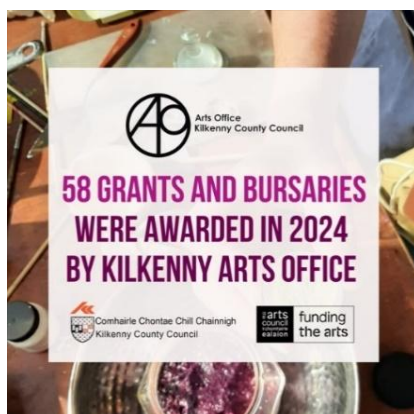


ARTS

The Arts Office develops, co-ordinates, motivates, inspires and empowers artistic activity throughout the City and County. It promotes the arts as a worthwhile activity for all and work to further strengthen Kilkenny's position as a centre of excellence for the arts and ensure a successful and prosperous arts environment within the region.

NOTABLE ACHIEVEMENTS IN 2024

- Over 28,000 people engaged with the arts
- Over 21,300 young people engaged with programmes
- Over 390 artists and creatives were engaged in programmes
- 58 grants & bursaries were awarded in 2024 by Kilkenny Arts Office



NEW DEVELOPMENTS

EDI Bursary

This opportunity is designed for individuals from underrepresented backgrounds, including those based on age, civil or family status, disability, gender, membership of the minority groups, race, religion, sexual orientation, and socioeconomic status. The bursary supports The Arts Council's Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion Implementation Plan, acknowledging the unique challenges faced by these artists as they work to advance their careers and enhance their artistic practice. By offering financial support of €5,000 the bursary provides the successful applicant with the freedom to concentrate on developing their practice and, if applicable, a specific project. Violinist Maria Ryan was this year's recipient of the Arts Offices new EDI Bursary.

Public Arts Programme 2024-2026

This programme commenced in September 2024 receiving over 80 applications from Ireland and across the world. Five commissions from any recognised art form were accepted with the focus being on collaborations with communities in County Kilkenny. The main objectives of this programme are to provide artists across all disciplines with meaningful opportunities, to facilitate evocative encounters, dialogue and connections between artists and communities.

IN BLOOM: Future Sounds of Kilkenny

The Arts Office in collaboration with Cleeres Bar launched a new live gig series for young and emerging bands, musicians, singers and DJ's in Kilkenny. These events provided a platform for emerging artists, amplifying young voices and giving them an opportunity to connect with audiences, build a following, and energise the City with their creativity and passion. The line-up for IN BLOOM Future Sounds of Kilkenny included, Seafall, Joycult, Jack Doheny, Charlotte Mackay, Aoife Rhatigan, Organic Produce, the Quincavelles and The Donnys.



In BLOOM – Joycult Performing at Cleeres Bar Kilkenny

Repair to Care Day

The Arts Office hosted Repair to Care, a full day of clothing and textile mending & repair, on 19th October, International Repair Day. This fun and interactive event was all about inspiring positive changes that benefit both us and the planet. Members of the public brought clothing and other textiles enabling participants to learn new skills, to repair and connect with other likeminded individuals, artists and organisations.



Participants and Claire Downey presenting 'Making Fashion Circular' at the Repair to Care Day

Culture Night is the national collective event, for one night only, of free arts and cultural events taking place across the country. It celebrates all that makes up the richness and diversity of culture in Ireland today. Once again Kilkenny participated in Culture Night with events taking place throughout the County. This year the Arts Office worked in partnership with the Department of Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport and Media under the Kilkenny City Night Time Economy Action Plan, to support a larger number of Culture Night events taking place later in the evening.

With the financial support of the Night Time Economy more venues and more high-quality events were supported this year. It also encouraged new venues and groups to participate that would not have otherwise done so. A total of 24 events took place throughout the County with a total of 2,914 people attending and 132 artists employed.

ARTISTS SUPPORTS

Kilkenny Poetry Broadsheet - The 24th edition of the Poetry Broadsheet was published in August. This year 110 poems were submitted by 60 writers for consideration. There were thirteen poems being selected for publication by Irish poet James Harpur. The Broadsheet was beautifully illustrated by local designer and illustrator Tim Harper of Wax Botanical.



Kilkenny Poetry Broadsheet Launch

Your Voice Matters - Anne Tannam, Writer and Creative Coach, delivered a programme which supported Kilkenny writers over a nine-month period. The participants received both online and in-person support by way of workshops and groups and one-to-one coaching.

Emerging Curator Development Programme - This programme supports emerging curators in developing and progressing their skills, was developed experience and ultimately their careers. Our 2024 Programme was restructured to recruit an emerging curator with an interest in and commitment to developing their careers, specifically in the area of Public Arts. The successful applicant will undertake an internship with Kilkenny County Council Public Arts Project Manager, enabling them to gain experience in the project management, curation and administration of Public Arts project(s) for Kilkenny.

Tea Houses - Bateman Quay acquired over in August for programming by the Arts Office and curator Rachel Botha. This programme has further enhanced the arts and cultural offer in Kilkenny to local and national audiences alike. The Tea Houses have become a visible place for contemporary Irish Art, engaging with existing artists, networks and communities that are situated in Kilkenny City and County. Projects included three exhibitions, four artists in residence and seven events, including launches, artist's talks and student visits from SETU and UCD.

National Mentoring Programme - Local writers Ann Murtagh and Caroline Sutherland were selected by the Irish Writers Centre to receive professional literary mentoring over an eight-month period in 2024 from an acclaimed Irish writer of their choice. After a national call out, 39 writers have been selected from a total of 416 hundred applicants. County Kilkenny Arts Office funds the literary mentorships along with the Arts Council of Ireland to guarantee that the best applicants from the County are selected. Their support ensures that the chosen mentees receive this potentially life-changing support free of charge. It is also an investment in the long-term literary reputation of the region.

ArtLinks - Professional development for artists across art forms. Partnership with the Arts Offices of Carlow, Waterford and Wexford. Continued investment in bursaries for artists across the four-county region. Continued our concentrated work on the social media presence to promote and raise the profile of ArtLinks and awareness of practitioners in the region.

Rhizome Residency - With support from The Arts Council's Invitation to Collaboration and led by Wexford Arts Office the Rhizome Residency forms part of a research and development phase which will inform the building of a template for a Climate Art Assembly in 2025 led by Roots for the Future Collective comprised of artists Maeve Stone, Sinead Curran, Eileen Hutton, Vanya Lambrecht-Ward and Rosie O'Reilly. By embedding the project in four counties - Cavan, Clare, Offaly and Galway - across the four provinces artists spend time researching and mapping the creative ecology of the specific place including the artists, arts organisations and arts workers who contribute to the culture of each County. The aim of the residency research is to create a baseline that exposes the kinds of people, places and types of work happening, and to build an understanding of where the specific adaptation pressures and possibilities lie. The outcomes of the residencies will form the bedrock of the approach and themes of a Climate Art Assembly of artists, arts sector workers, administrators, crafts people and arts organisations. Gareth Kennedy was recipient of Kilkenny's Rhizome Residency.

YOUNG PEOPLE

ArtEd - ArtEd, in collaboration with Kilkenny Education Centre, is an artist residency programme designed for TAP-trained artists to work within primary schools. This initiative provides primary school children in Kilkenny with high quality, hands-on arts education opportunities, allowing them to engage directly with talented local artists. Additionally, the programme offers classroom-based CPD opportunities for teachers, equipping them with transferable skills. The programme enables artists to share their creative practices with both children and teachers and fosters a collaborative environment where artists can work closely with schools. This collaboration results in the creation of bespoke, creative initiatives that are in line with the Primary Curriculum. Furthermore, the programme supports teaching staff in developing the skills and confidence needed to facilitate and champion arts experiences within their school settings, ultimately enriching the educational environment for all involved. Four artists worked with four schools, two focusing on music and songwriting and two on visual art.

Bookville Festival - There were sixty live workshops and five virtual working held with authors and illustrators from Ireland and the UK. Events include reading, writing, storytelling, comedy, illustration, drama, music, visual arts and Irish, Ukrainian, Polish and Irish Sign Languages events. Over 13,000 Bookville activity books were distributed to every primary school child. The interactive exhibition, 'The Adventures of Pinocchio,' which included a collection of illustrated editions of Pinocchio attracted both adults and children, with 1,217 attendees Puppets generously on loan from Branar.



School Children engaging with the Pinocchio Exhibition as part of the Bookville Festival

Art of Change - Art of Change is a workshop series for young people aged 13-18yrs. The programme involved delivery of workshops in Youth Centres and Secondary Schools over the course of the. The Art of Change initiative aimed to empower young people in exploring environmental and climate action topics through different artforms. The project provided young people with a way of approaching big issues while also giving them an understanding of the impact art can have, and how it can shift our way of thinking. The project offers young people a chance to be part of a supportive community in which they explored a variety of art practices with professional artists.

During the Spring and Autumn, 32 young people took part in a series of workshops in youth centres with a variety of artists. The sessions saw the young people delve into different art practices and approaches offering them a new perspective and new ideas, encouraging them to ask even more questions. The programme delivered workshops to 77 students in two secondary schools. The Rediscovery Centre delivered their Sustainable Fashion Workshop which is particularly tailored to Secondary schools.

School Bus Subsidy - The annual school bus subsidy was awarded to 12 primary schools to assist in attending the Barnstorm Theatre production 'The Play' taking place in October. This subsidy supported a total of 874 children to attend.

Arts Grants and Bursaries

Bursary/ Grant	Description	Successful Applicants	Funding Amount
Art Act Grants	Grants awarded to individuals and organisations of all art forms.	24	€25,000
ArtLinks Bursaries	Professional Development partnership programme with Kilkenny, Carlow, Waterford & Wexford County Councils.	15	€30,000
Tyrone Guthrie Residency	Bursary to spend two-week residency at Tyrone Guthrie Centre, Monaghan.	5	€3,200
EDI	Bursary designed for individuals from underrepresented backgrounds	1	€5,000
Drama League of Ireland	1-week Summer School at University of Limerick to hone existing skills and learn new ones.	1	€630
Theatre Forum	For arts practitioners based in the Kilkenny area to attend the Theatre Forum Gathering in Sligo	2	€600
Tyrone Guthrie Age & Opportunity	To support older professional artists to develop their practice by creating time and space to think and reflect on their work and bolster their network.	1	€500
Breaking the Patterns	Three-month artist residency and work placement programme for emerging visual artists in Seville, Spain.	2	€3,000
Creative Futures Academy (CFA)	New collaboration with CFA for artists seeking to gain new qualifications and skills to progress their practice.	5	€5,100
National Mentoring Programme	Local writers Ann Murtagh and Caroline Sutherland were selected by the Irish Writers Centre to receive professional literary mentoring over an eight-month period in 2024 from an acclaimed Irish writer of their choice.	2	€3,000

CREATIVE IRELAND

Guided by the Kilkenny Culture and Creativity Strategy 2023-2027, the Creative Ireland programme strives to enhance participation in cultural and creative activities throughout Kilkenny. The Creative Ireland team has overseen significant programme impacts, boosting social engagement and the overall well-being of residents. To date, projects have maintained a legacy of high-quality, inclusive, and diverse initiatives, promoting the intrinsic value and awareness of culture and creativity in County Kilkenny. The projects funded in 2024 these include Biodiversity, the Arts Office, Keep Kilkenny Beautiful, the Heritage Office, Healthy Kilkenny, Climate Action, Libraries, Carlow County Council, youth and community groups, and key stakeholders such as KCETB, HSE, KLP, who work with marginalized groups in Kilkenny.

Creative Ireland Grant Scheme

Under the Creative Ireland Grant Scheme, 176 artists were employed in 106 events and projects with 60,429 participations. There was a wide range events and projects covering various genres of Music, Spoken Word, Design, Science, Technology, Engineering, Maths, Visual Art, Literature, Poetry, Theatre, Drama, Comedy, Crafts, Design, Science, Technology, Biodiversity, Natural Heritage and Architecture Heritage.

The total fund for the events in 2024 was €147,000 and examples of events funded under the Creative Ireland Grant Scheme 2024 are as follows. The Alice Kyteler Library events celebrated the 700th anniversary of the witch trails in Kilkenny of various free accessible workshops in various Library branches in Kilkenny and exhibition at the Mayfair library. Age Friendly Creative Christmas Connections programme had 15 workshops and events such as Flower Arranging, Christmas Crafts, Festive Storytelling throughout Kilkenny during the month of December in collaboration with Age Friendly, Yule Fest and Kilkenny Arts Office.

Community projects which included Craic at the Cross roads in Kilnaspic, Waking the seeds and Plein Air event in Graiguenamanagh. There were pop up weaving, papermaking, jewellery and a cultural headdress workshops promoting heritage and culture.



*Candle Making Workshop
Alice Kyteler Library events*



*Pop up weaving, papermaking, jewellery
and cultural headdress workshops*



*Creative Christmas Connections
Storytelling workshop in Urlingford*

Cruinniú na nÓg

Cruinniú na nÓg is a day of free creativity for young people which took place on 15th June 2024. Young people were invited to participate in 35 free creative activities across Kilkenny. The total amount of funding awarded was €30,000. There were 53 artists employed with 1,666 young people participated in the events.

The events covered various genres and examples of Cruinniú na nÓg events include:

- Masterclasses in Traditional Irish Music and Song
- Plant photography and murals
- Silversmithing, basket making and pottery
- Circus, art workshops and dance
- Song collective with Music Generation and Robert Grace
- Book doctor and drumming
- Nighttime events including comedy, animation, natural prints and inks

Creative Ireland Additional Grants

Creative Kilkenny received €33,000 of funding to support further projects through open calls from Creative Ireland. There were 16 artists employed and 800 people participated in the following events and projects; Living Artfully project, Night Time Economies, Live Music in Retirement homes, Cruinniú na nÓg Consultation, Graiguenamangh Women's Shed development and Ossory Does Comedy.



Living Artfully Launch



Living Artfully Induction Day for Artists



John Spillane, Gerald Peregrine and Lynda O'Connor performing at the Live Music events in the Retirement Homes

BIODIVERSITY

In 2024, the preparation of the Biodiversity Action Plan was a priority action along with the establishment of a Biodiversity Working Group. Total biodiversity programme expenditure in 2024 was €107,224. The Local Biodiversity Action Fund (LBAF) from the National Parks and Wildlife Service assisted research and education initiatives and contributed €64,951 towards LBAF costs. The Heritage Council Local Biodiversity Action Plan Scheme 2024 provided funding of €19,360 for the development of the Biodiversity Action Plan, contributing 75% of total projects costs.

Kilkenny's Biodiversity Action Plan

A biodiversity discussion paper was launched in March, it marked the first of two public consultation phases to assist the development of the Biodiversity Action Plan. Presentations were made to elected representatives, interested groups and a media campaign alerted the public of the opportunity to participate. An engagement workshop organised by the PPN network provided additional feedback from their members. The Biodiversity Working Group was established, bringing stakeholders with an interest in biodiversity together to assist in the delivery of the draft Biodiversity Action Plan.



Biodiversity Action Plan Public Consultation

Bugs, Bats and Bee's Citizen Science Programme

Funded under LBAF, this programme raised the awareness of the importance of pollinators promoting what actions can assist in providing more habitat and food sources for pollinators, it also encouraged participation in national citizen science monitoring campaigns for bumble bees. In person events included 2 identification training workshops, 4 library workshops, 4 interactive walks for bat monitoring and two moth trap and release events.

Biodiversity Education and Engagement

National Biodiversity Week hosted events throughout the County and a biodiversity themed radio campaign ran on KCLR in collaboration with Carlow County Council. Three educational webinars took place in 2024, highlighting the National Mayfly Monitoring Scheme, Swifts and the Opportunities in the Construction Industry and a Tree Care Webinar. Kilkenny City celebrated the Creative Ireland "Leave the Long Grass Grow" art project by displaying the art outputs on the street banners throughout the summer. Biodiversity was integrated at other events throughout the year, having a presence at the National Bike Week, Bike Fest event and at the National Play Day.

Nightjar Survey

Kilkenny County Council supported BirdWatch Ireland's most extensive and ambitious survey for European Nightjar (*Caprimulgus europaeus*) across Kilkenny and Wexford, funded by LBAF. The survey used acoustic recorders, coinciding with their summer activity patterns when nightjar is most vocal.

The nightjar is a summer migrant, nocturnal and insectivorous bird. Once well distributed throughout Ireland their numbers have declined significantly which is thought to be related to habitat loss, disturbance and a decrease in insects due to pesticide use.



There was 2,266 hours of audio recordings from sites across south Kilkenny were assessed. While no nightjars were detected in Kilkenny, they were detected in Wexford. The Kilkenny survey produced other interesting data with 49 different bird species recorded including 10 bird species were of high conservation concern, including yellowhammer, woodcock and barn owl. 8 bird species were of medium conservation concern including linnet and willow warbler. As not all suitable habitats in Kilkenny could be included in the survey, a campaign on KCLR FM asked the public to report if they recalled hearing the distinctive “churring” call of the nightjar. The survey results received extensive national media coverage. The NPWS are now including Nightjar in the Article 12 Assessment with the confirmation that the species is still present in the southeast, as it was presumed that they were no longer present in Ireland.

Study of Protected and Rare Plants of County Kilkenny

A desktop study to determine the geographical distribution of floral species listed under the Flora Protection Order 2022 was completed. As only seven species are present in Kilkenny, the study expanded to include species that are rare, in a Kilkenny context. This added a further thirty-eight plants and could possibly indicate geographical areas of rich biodiversity value. The study will enable areas to be prioritised for botanical surveys to provide a better understanding of the biodiversity potential of County Kilkenny.

Barn Owl Study

The barn owl (*Tyto Alba*) is a red-listed bird of conservation concern however populations in County Kilkenny are recovering after a period of extensive decline. BirdWatch Ireland with the assistance of the local branch volunteers, barn owl studies continued in Kilkenny in 2024 funded by LBAF. Known nest sites were surveyed to determine breeding success. A total of 96 chicks from 29 broods were ringed in County Kilkenny between 2021 and 2024.

Kilkenny Swift Project

Swifts are a red-listed bird of conservation concern with their decline thought to be related to the loss of habitat. Nesting in cracks and cervices of buildings, these migrant birds return from Africa to nest in Kilkenny each summer. The County Swift Survey 2021, outlined a number of measures to secure their future. To support venerable populations in Thomastown, three triple cavity nest boxes were installed on the Thomastown Area Office. To support a large population in Kilkenny City, 12 triple cavity nest boxes were installed in Stephens Barracks with the assistance of the 3rd Infantry Battalion. These were positive actions to sustain the Kilkenny swift population.



*Swift Nest Boxes installation in progress at
James Stephens Army Barracks*

CIVIL DEFENCE

Kilkenny Civil Defence had an exceptional and impactful year in 2024, demonstrating unwavering dedication and a strong commitment to supporting both the Principal Response Agencies and the local community. The team provided first aid at events, assisted with missing person callouts and community support initiatives. The volunteers have showcased their invaluable role in ensuring public safety and well-being. In addition to their operational duties, the team has continued to prioritise training by upskilling in new areas and recertifying existing qualifications and ensuring they are always prepared to respond effectively when needed.

Events Attended

Event Type	Number of Events	Number of Hours
Search and Rescue	11	735
Community Assistance	62	1180
Medical Assistance	26	122
Emergency Response	1	32
Safety Boat	7	134
Total	107	2203

Training

Qualification	2023	2024
Emergency First Responder	16	15
First Aid Responder	9	10
MapyX User	9	10
Network Operator	19	21
Swift Water Responder	25	25
Emergency Medical Technician	7	7
Student Paramedic	3	1
Paramedic	0	3
Advanced Paramedic	1	1

This year saw the unit particularly busy assisting neighbouring counties with the National Ploughing Championships held in County Laois and providing Drone assistance to An Garda Síochána to manage traffic at the Electric Picnic festival in Laois. Kilkenny Civil Defence provided assistance to Wexford Civil Defence for the Fleadh Cheoil. The highly successful event saw the medical control managed by Civil Defence with Kilkenny Civil Defence Officer assisting with this. Over 600,000 people attended that event with medical and safety boat assistance provided by their volunteers.





National Services Day at Kilkenny Castle Park

National Services Day was held in Kilkenny Castle organised by Kilkenny Civil Defence Officer and members from National Ambulance Service, Prison Service and An Garda Síochána. It was a successful and popular event with a joint skills display of the fire service disassembling a car and National Ambulance Service “treated” the occupants as part of a demonstration.

A New Ford Ranger was added to our fleet this year which runs completely on HVO (*Hydro Treated Vegetable Oil*) which was funded in part by the Department of Defence. In line with the Climate Action Plan, the last 3 litre Diesel Jeep was removed from the fleet to reduce emissions. The purchase of a new Matrice M30T Drone has been active on many missing person searches.

Kilkenny Civil Defence completed several interagency training events with Kilkenny Fire Service, Kilkenny Sub Aqua as well as An Garda Síochána and local Civil Defence units. In November 2024, Kilkenny Civil Defence hosted the Annual Civil Defence Officers Conference. There was over 200 members of Civil Defence in attendance at the event.



Annual Civil Defence Officers Conference hosted by Kilkenny Civil Defence



FIRE SERVICES & MAJOR EMERGENCY

Kilkenny County Council maintains fire brigades in seven fire stations located in Kilkenny City, Castlecomer, Freshford, Urlingford, Thomastown, Callan and Graiguenamanagh. The dedicated crews, together with modern vehicles and equipment, ensured delivery of a prompt, efficient and effective response to 847 incidents on a 24/7 basis in 2024. This is supported by the Eastern Regional Control Centre located in Tara Street Fire Station, Dublin, which receives calls from the public through the 999/112 service and mobilises the appropriate fire service resources in Kilkenny. Services such as administration, fire safety activities, dangerous substances licensing and major emergency management are delivered from the Fire Service Headquarters at Gaol Road, Kilkenny City.

Our focus is on protecting the communities we serve. The Fire and Rescue Service provides a highly skilled response to a range of emergencies. During the recent Storms Ashlee, Bert and Darragh, the Local Authority Fire and Rescue Service showed to be very resilient and a useful resource in that Brigades (*trained and equipped manpower*) can be mobilised within minutes of an emergency in their area 24hrs a day/7days a week/365 day a year.

Fire & Rescue Service main functions are:

- To engage with the community in order to inform and educate citizens in how to reduce the risk of fires and other emergencies.
- To influence and regulate the built environment in order to protect people, property and the environment from harm.
- To plan and prepare for emergencies that may happen and making a high quality, effective and resilient response to them.
- To work together to deliver the highest quality services within a safe and positive environment for everyone in the organisation.

Capital Projects

The new fire station for Urlingford was officially opened by Minister Darragh O'Brien, Minister for the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage, in the presence of Cathaoirleach Cllr. Michael Doyle and a large gathering of invited guests on Wednesday 29th May 2024.



The design of the new HQ fire Station for Kilkenny City is progressing well. A Part 8 planning application is being prepared.

Vehicles

Kilkenny County Council Fire and Rescue Service have a Command and Control vehicle, 2 seater electrical fire vehicle and a Class B fire engine all of which being built at present. The Incident Command vehicle in particular will enhance our ability to manage large and complex incidents and possible Major Emergency incidents.

All major construction projects, including major refurbishment projects at Fire Stations require capital funding from the NDFEM. Ongoing day-to-day maintenance of Fire Stations is funded from the Fire Authorities own revenue budget.

Fire Safety Certificate Applications

97 applications for Fire Safety Certificates were received in 2024 and processed on behalf of the Building Control Section.

The break-down is as follows:

- 0% (0) of these files were fire safety assessments (FA)
- 19% (19) of these files were Regularisation fire safety certificates
- 14% (14) of these files were 7-Day Notice fire safety certificates
- 10% (10) of these files were Revised fire safety certificates
- 68% (53) of these files were Traditional fire safety certificates
- Number of files invalidated - 1 (1%)

We assessed one max fee, €50,000, application fee for a large scale warehouse storage units in Belview Port, 19no apartment block developments were accessed, this corresponds to 19% of all fire safety certificate application files received and processed (almost 1 in 5 applications)

Large-scale Kilkenny infrastructure – the new secondary schools, Presentation Secondary School and CBS Secondary School that are being built in Kilkenny. We have continued to liaise closely with developers and the design team professionals to ensure these key Kilkenny projects – Project Nore – are advancing.

Ukrainian Response Unit - Fire Safety Certificate Compliance

The Fire Authority technical staff have been involved with Kilkenny County Council's Ukrainian Response Unit. 16no of these risk premises throughout Kilkenny City and County have been subject to review and fire safety certification applications to ensure current fire safety standards are met.

Fire Services Acts 1981 & 2003

- Fire Officers made a number of fire prevention visits to premises both to provide advice and to enforce legislation.
- 99 inspections of premises both to provide advice and to enforce legislation were undertaken.

- 68 Licence Applications were processed under Section 24 of the Fire Services Acts 1981 and 2003.
- 12 Dangerous Substance licence applications, 3 Vapour Recover Certificates and 1 certificate of installation were received and assessed to date.
- 3 Fire Safety Notices under the Fire Services Acts 1981 and 2003 was served in 2024.

Community Fire Safety



Home Fire Safety Visits were carried out by Fire Brigade personnel in 2024. Home Fire Safety Visits (HFSVs) are a significant element of our Community Fire Safety Strategy. Fire service personnel call to

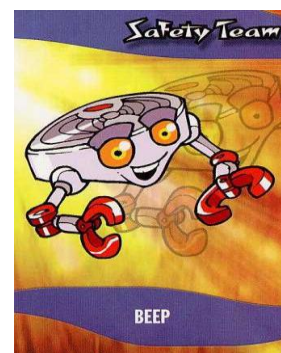
houses by appointment and give fire safety advice to the occupants. A HFSV is usually carried out by two uniformed operational fire service personnel. They use a checklist to ask questions, try to identify the fire safety hazards in the house and recommend solutions. Fire safety advice is given, fire safety leaflets handed out and smoke detectors may be provided and fitted, where necessary. They also discuss the occupant's response should a fire occur in their home.

The firefighters leave the occupier with further advice and information to make available to other members of the household. The primary aim of these HFSVs is to reduce the numbers of fires, deaths and injuries in the home by firstly preventing fires occurring and to ensure that when fires do occur, the occupiers are given early warning and they know how to react quickly and safely.



Ongoing public messaging campaigns were maintained through our social media channels to encourage members of the public to install smoke alarms and to test their smoke alarms once a week to ensure that they are working.

Firefighters have been very busy in visiting their local primary schools to deliver the very successful primary schools programme. This programme has been delivered since 2006. as part of annual on-going community fire safety programme. Fire officers delivered the Primary School Programme (PSP) which covers: Fire safety in the home, the importance of smoke alarms, Test it Tuesday, what are the hazards and risks of accidental fires we have in our homes, how these can be prevented, how to call your local fire brigade 112, What to do if you do have a fire in your home.



Training

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

All personnel responding to Fire and Rescue Service incidents require a minimum level of training to meet core requirements. In addition, many personnel also require further training for specialist or supervisory roles. Furthermore, a number of Fire and Rescue Service personnel have completed "Instructor" courses in order that they can instruct and

direct delivery of inhouse training sessions / courses. Personnel also require appropriate refresher training in all of the above throughout their careers, generally delivered either through on-station training or through specific refresher courses.

Training has traditionally been delivered at varying levels (*e.g. local station, fire authority, region, national and international*) and through a variety of arrangements.

We delivered quality training to date in 2024 *e.g.* QQI Initial Firefighting skills, QQI Transportation Incidents, Breathing Apparatus Pump Operations, STORM, Compressed Air Foam System, Emergency Services Driving Standard, Emergency First Responder and Recertification, Emergency Traffic Management and Water Awareness training.

Kilkenny County Council's Fire and Rescue Service ran a Compartment Behaviour Training Course in Hackettstown Fire Training Centre. The aim of this 5-day course is to provide the learners (trainee firefighters), who have completed the 10-day Using Breathing Apparatus (Initial Wearer) course, with the skills, knowledge and competency necessary to wear Breathing Apparatus in compartment fires.

This course is intended to develop the learners in the discharge of their roles as firefighters and to assist their Fire Authority in its function as a fire and rescue service. This course provides practical training on the knowledge and skills that are required to enable recruit firefighters to safely work as BA wearers at operational incidents, within the incident command structure and BA procedural norms.

Photos from the course show entry techniques into a hot and smoke filled compartment fire.



*Compartment Fire Behaviour Course,
Hackettstown*



STORM Course, Thomastown

Kilkenny County Councils' Fire and Rescue Service ran a very successful Skills Training on Risk Management (STORM) course in Thomastown Fire Station. This is a two-day skill building workshop in understanding self-harm and suicide. Participants were trained to reduce the immediate risk of a self-harm, suicide and increase the support for a person at risk. The workshop provided opportunities to learn what a person at risk may need from others in order to keep safe and get more help.

Kilkenny County Council's Fire and Rescue Service ran a Compressed Air Foam Training course in Castlecomer Fire Station.



This course is intended to develop the learners in the discharge of their roles as firefighters and to assist their Fire Brigades in its function as a fire and rescue service. This course provides practical training on the knowledge and skills that are required to enable firefighters to safely work with CAFS.

An Emergency First Responder Course was carried out in April in Kilkenny City Fire Station. This course is 5 days in duration and is a pre-hospital Emergency Care Council approved course. Instructors on the course are in-house. This is an initial course and is for personnel who have not previously completed Emergency First Responder Training. This course provides practical training on the knowledge and skills that are required to enable firefighters to safely provide emergency first aid.

A transportation incident training course was held in Castlecomer Fire Station, Kilkenny between the 22nd and 26th April 2024. The aim of this 5-day course is to equip the learner with the relevant knowledge, skill and competence to effectively and safely operate at a transportation incident, as a member of a fire service team, cognisant of one's own safety, the safety of their team and the public.



This course provides practical training on the knowledge and skills that are required to enable recruit firefighters to safely work at transportation incidents, within the incident command structure and procedural norms. Photos below show fire fighters participating in some of the extrication exercises.

A Pump Operators training course was held in Graiguenamanagh Fire Station, Kilkenny between the 13th and 17th May 2024. The aim of this 5-day course is to equip the learner with the relevant knowledge, skill and competence to effectively and safely operate both portable and main pumps. This course provides practical training on the knowledge and skills that are required to enable recruit firefighters to safely work firefighting pumps within the incident command structure and procedural norms. Group photo below of the students and instructors.



Pump Operators Course, Graiguenamanagh.

We had 6 firefighters on a 2 week Breathing Apparatus Course (QQI) in Hacketstown Fire Station. This course provides practical training on the knowledge and skills that are required to enable recruit firefighters to safely work as BA wearers at operational incidents, within the incident command structure and BA procedural norms.

We have also provided our own in house instructors to national training courses in areas such as compartment fire behaviour, Breathing Apparatus and Managing Incidents.



Breathing Apparatus Course, Thomastown.

A water awareness course was held in Graiguenamanagh fire station. Instructors on the course are external. This course provides practical training on the knowledge and skills that are required to enable firefighters to safely operate near water.

Recruitment of Retained Firefighters

There are major financial implications for all Local Authorities due to the recommendations of the WRC as there is a need for an increase in staffing levels and an increase in pay to all firefighters in the settlement terms contained with the proposals.

Two competitions were held during the year for the recruitment of firefighters as part of the WRC proposal. Applications for retained fire fighters for Kilkenny City, Castlecomer, Freshford, Urlingford, Thomastown, Callan and Graiguenamanagh were received. A process of selection was under taken involving shortlisting, suitability tests, Interviews, Garda Vetting, medicals and the recruit training.

Operations

Fire Brigades responded to 847 incidents in 2024. The Fire Service is a very resilient and a useful resource to the Local Authority in that Brigades (*trained and equipped manpower*) can be mobilised within minutes of an emergency in their area. Our operation response covers the full spectrum and includes fires, hazardous materials incidents, confined space rescue, road traffic collisions, river rescue many other incident types.



Major Emergency Management

The External Emergency Plan for Nitrofert, Raheen near New Ross, Co. Kilkenny was reviewed and tested under the Seveso III Directive in 2024. This comprised a test of the mobilisation procedures of the Principal Response Agencies (PRA's) and a test of the External Emergency by the PRA's, Site Operator and other Statutory Agencies.



Testing External Emergency

Kilkenny Fire Service staff also updated and renewed the Kilkenny County Council Major Emergency Plan, Severe Weather Plan and Flooding Response Plan in order that these documents remain up-to-date and ready for use at all times.



Major Emergency Plan and Appendices

Occupational Health & Safety

Kilkenny Fire Service maintains a Safety Management System (SMS) as part of the Kilkenny Co. Co. SMS. Each year, the Safety Statement for each Fire Station is updated and all staff were given their annual safety induction.

The Safety Statements for each fire station and the safety statement for the Brigade Mechanic combine to form the Kilkenny Fire Service Safety Manual as required under S.20 of the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act 2005.

The learning outcomes for all incident safety inspections, fire station inspections, accident reports and near miss reports are entered into the Fire Service Non-Conformance list and are used to update the Safety Manual each year.

It remains the ambition of Kilkenny Fire Service to attain ISO 450001 accreditation however this is dependant upon having adequate resources available to deliver this project.

HERITAGE

The Heritage Office delivered a comprehensive programme of projects, grants and initiatives in 2024. These projects were co-funded by Kilkenny County Council and a range of partners including the Heritage Council, the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage (National Monuments Service), Creative Ireland and the Department of Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport and Media (Commemorations Unit).

Community Monuments Fund

Twelve Kilkenny projects were awarded funding by the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage under the 2024 Community Monuments Fund (CMF). The aim of this funding is to help owners and custodians of archaeological monuments to safeguard them in the future. This funding was administered by the Heritage in partnership with the Environment Section of Kilkenny County Council. The programme provides 100% project funding and the total drawn down in 2024 was €509,580. Please find the following details of each project:

Stream 1 - Essential repairs and capital works for the conservation of archaeological monuments		Grant Amount
Grangefertagh Medieval Church and Graveyard, Johnstown	Phase 2 of conservation works at this site and involving masonry repairs to the ruined church including removal of vegetation and consolidation of the surviving walls.	€35,926
Tubbrid Medieval Church and Graveyard, Clontubrid	Works to secure the church ruins and urgent stabilisation of the leaning monument inside the church.	€100,789
19 Parliament Street, Kilkenny City	Works to secure the repair and stabilisation of a seventeenth century historic structure.	€100,000
21 Parliament Street, Kilkenny City	Works to repair the historic masonry and replace existing end of life roof on this seventeenth century historic structure.	€116,064

Stream 2 - Development of Conservation Management Plans/Reports and detailed Specification of Works aimed at identifying measures for conservation of archaeological monuments and improving public access		Grant Amount
Kellymount Medieval Graveyard, Paulstown	A comprehensive Conservation Management Plan was prepared for this site. This included specialist reports from an archaeologist, ecologist and conservation engineer who have made recommendations on the prioritisation of works.	€18,388
St David's Church, Castleinch, Ballycallan	A comprehensive Conservation Management Plan was prepared for this site. This included specialist reports from an archaeologist, ecologist and	€18,265

	conservation engineer who have made recommendations on the prioritisation of works.	
St Coleman's Medieval Church and Graveyard, Churchclara, Clara	A comprehensive Conservation Management Plan was prepared for this site. This included specialist reports from an archaeologist, ecologist and conservation engineer who have made recommendations on the prioritisation of works.	€20,541
St Catherine's Church, Rathbeagh	A comprehensive Conservation Management Plan was prepared for this site. This included specialist reports from an archaeologist, ecologist and conservation engineer who have made recommendations on the prioritisation of works.	€15,375

Stream 3 - Enhancement of access infrastructure, interpretation at archaeological monuments.		Grant Amount
Cloghabrody Medieval Graveyard, Thomastown	Emergency works to secure a collapse in the boundary wall of the graveyard.	€13,552
St Canice's Cathedral, Kilkenny City	Improved Interpretation for St. Canice's Round Tower and graveyard/cathedral close area, consisting of information panels.	€30,000
Kenny's Well, Kilkenny City	Preparation of a plan to enhance the Access and Interpretation for Kenny's Well.	€30,000
Garryduff Medieval Graveyard, Paulstown	Emergency works to secure a collapse in the boundary wall of the graveyard.	€10,680

New Kilkenny Heritage Forum Convened

The first meeting of the New Kilkenny Heritage Forum took place on the 25th October 2024. This advisory group, established by Kilkenny County Council, aims to guide the development of the next County Heritage Strategy. The forum includes representatives from range of stakeholder organisations in Kilkenny's heritage. This meeting initiated the process of creating a new County Heritage Strategy to manage and protect Kilkenny's natural, built, and cultural heritage.

Kilkenny's Toil and Trouble

The 700th anniversary of Kilkenny's Witch Trials was commemorated with a series of events from July to November 2024. Coordinated by the Heritage Office, Kilkenny County Council. The festivities included a Service of Atonement at St Canice's Cathedral, the premiere of the play "The Witch Hunt of Alice Kyteler," a podcast titled "Witch Trial," and an intergenerational oral history project called "Mná Feasa." The events received extensive media coverage. More details can be found on the Kilkenny's Toil and Trouble website: www.kilkenny.ie/toilandtrouble/



Kilkenny Witch Trials Visual Identity designed by Cartoon Saloon

County Heritage Plan Funding Secured

The Heritage Council co funded Kilkenny County Council in awarding €37,500 to support the actions of the Kilkenny County Heritage Plan. This included a Heritage Awareness and Engagement Programme. This programme comprised of six themed ad campaigns (radio / newspaper / social media) to promote Kilkenny's Heritage. This also funded two data collection projects - phase two of a countywide survey of Kilkenny's holy wells which was carried out by Shanarc Archaeology and phase 2 of the County mass paths survey *Mass Paths in Memory* which was carried out by Heritage Consultant Pat Reid.

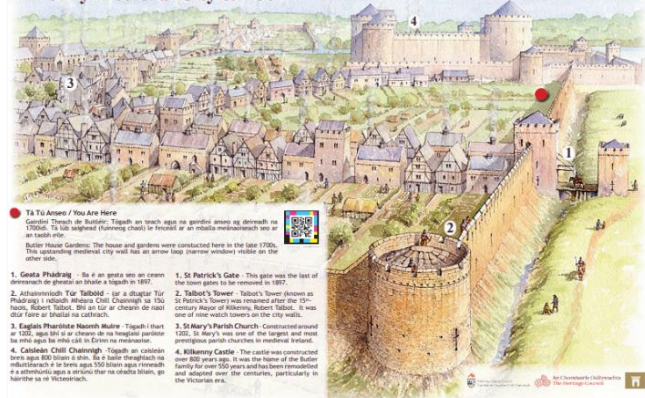


Lacken Holy Well

National Heritage Week

National Heritage Week saw over 60 events and projects celebrating all aspects of our heritage take place across Kilkenny City and County by heritage groups, venues and organisations. The Heritage Office organised a workshop on recording and mapping your local heritage features and a consultation event on the interpretation of Kilkenny's City walls. This event complemented a City wall signage project which saw new interpretation for the City walls installed in the gardens of Butler House, funded under the Heritage Council's Irish Walled Towns programme.

Cathair Mheánaoiseach Chill Chainnigh c.1450
Kilkenny Medieval City c.1450



City Wall Interpretation at Butler House Gardens

INTEGRATION

2024 saw the introduction of the Local Authority Integration Team (LAIT) within Kilkenny County Council. An Integration Co-ordinator, 2 Integration Support Workers and an Assistant Staff Officer commenced, funded by the Department of Children Equality Disability Integration and Youth. The Team provide supports for:

- Beneficiaries of Temporary Protection (BOTPs) - Ukrainians
- Applicants for International Protection (IP)
- People who have been granted refugee status or other forms of protection, such as subsidiary protection or permission to remain
- Refugees who have been resettled in Ireland through a government programme

The goal of the LAIT's is to help these cohorts become independent, settle into their new communities, and participate in Irish life. They do this by connecting people to important services that can help them integrate into the community. LAITs operate under the principle of 'Integration from Day One'. This means that LAITs provide integration support to people who need it as soon as they arrive in Ireland.

By the end of 2024, the LAIT's:

- met with 618 individuals supporting them with 1,226 queries ranging from health, education, employment, immigration, accommodation, volunteering and community engagement.
- hosted 37 group sessions with 627 attendees, providing information on many topics varying from employment, health, accommodation, immigration, education, training, etc.
- In December 2024, an intercultural event was held in Ossory Youth Centre featuring food, dance and music from across the world. Countries represented at the event included Jordan, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Ukraine, Somalia, Uzbekistan, Syria, El Salvador. Over 80 people attended the event.

A body of work was carried out meeting with over 20 local agencies to build collaborative approaches to guarantee integration and avoid duplication. This led to the development and updating of a directory of services (previously developed by Citizens Information Service) which is an invaluable tool for new arrivals to Kilkenny.

Many of these agencies, that the LAIT's met with, are members of the Community Integration Forum (CIF). The CIF, chaired by the Chief Executive, continues to provide wrap around supports to ensure that all arrivals are supported. At the end of 2024 there were approximately 800 Ukrainians living in Kilkenny in various DCEDIY commercial properties and Pledged Properties and Offer a Home Properties offered by the people of Kilkenny. There were also 173 International Protection Applicants, living across 3 DCEIY commercial properties in Kilkenny.

This first year of operating has led to the embedding of the LAIT within the newly arrived communities and 2025 will see a cohesive plan with the relevant agencies to ensure continued success.

LIBRARY SERVICES

Notable Achievements

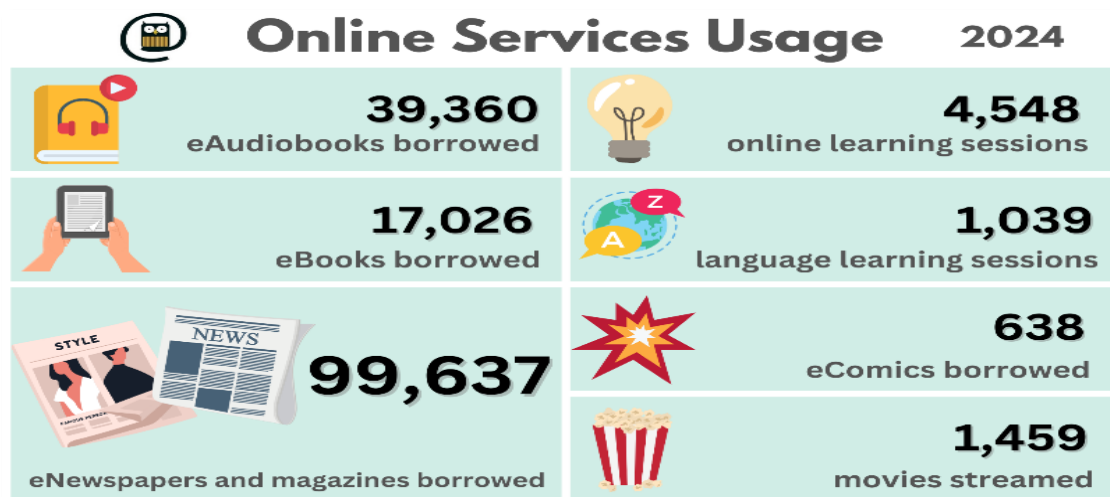
- Mayfair Library opened on 24th April, with over 100,000 items borrowed, over 129,000 visitors, and over 13,000 at events and workshops held in 2024.
- We hosted the 2024 National Public Libraries Annual Conference "*Libraries, a space for both an escape and exploration; a refuge from the world and a doorway into it*" in the Mayfair Library.
- An increase of 29% on library memberships this year, which brought our total to 24,936.
- 441,975 books, eBooks and eAudiobooks were borrowed throughout the year, reflecting an increase of 32%.
- 310,909 library users came through our doors, reflecting an increase of 57%

Other Achievements

- 13,000 Bookville Activity Books were distributed to all primary school children across Kilkenny as part of our Bookville Kilkenny Festival.
- As part of Kilkenny's Toil and Trouble 700th anniversary celebrations, staff produced a school activity pack for primary schools, with 13,000 copies distributed to children all over the County.

New Developments

- Thomastown Library has progressed substantially in 2024, with an opening expected in Quarter 4, 2025.
- Grant funding of €180,000 from Department of Rural and Community Development towards the purchase of a new mobile library vehicle.



National Library Initiatives



Right to Read
at your Library

359 events
8,514 attendees

Highlights:

Ireland Reads, Bookville, Spring into Storytime, Summer Stars, Family Time at Your Library



42 events
507 attendees

Highlights:

Parent and toddler yoga, pilates for menopause, Irish Heart Foundation mobile unit, healthy eating workshops



77 events
1,019 attendees

Highlights:

Bealtaine Festival, Age Friendly programme of events in the Mayfair Library

Programming

Programming across our network of branches attracted figures in excess of 41,000 participants of all ages, with over 2,700 events organised. The breadth of our programming continues to expand and includes tech upskilling, ciorcal comhrá, book clubs, gardening, upcycling, music, chess, biodiversity, coding, crafts, author visits, story-times & science workshops.

Bookville 2024: Our 8th Bookville Festival took place from October 10th to 16th with over 70 events taking place to celebrate all aspects of storytelling including creative writing, history, comedy, music, illustration, Gaeilge, drama, and poetry. There were 3,596 people in attendance and our ever-popular Bookville activity book was delivered to over 13,000 primary school children in the County.

Storyteller in Residence: Our Storyteller in Residence, Helena Byrne, continued to engage with families and communities in Kilkenny promoting literacy and fostering the habit of enjoyment of reading amongst children and young people.



Local Studies

Kilkenny's Toil and Trouble Festival: We offered a wide-ranging programme of events for all ages as part of the Festival, from author visits, children's art workshops, candle making sessions, primary schools history workshops, plant lore workshops, walking tours, oral history sessions and we developed an educational activity pack for every primary school child in Kilkenny.

Mná Feasa: To celebrate 'Mná Feasa/Wise Women, we ran a social history workshop and podcast series comprising of stories, experiences & local lore from women of all ages in Kilkenny. The project focused on the art of oral storytelling culminating in the production of a podcast series and a storytelling performance by TY students in the Mayfair Library.

Digital Archive: The Kilkenny Digital Archive continues to make the collections of Kilkenny County Library's Local Studies' Department and Kilkenny County Council accessible to a wider audience, offering access to locally themed collections in a variety of formats.

Digital

- Public PCs upgraded county-wide with new software, hardware, and Wi-Fi. Web-based PC booking now available.
- Mayfair Library now offers 3-hour in-house laptop loans, which are proving very popular.
- Eduroam is available for students in all branches, connecting directly to their local/international educational institution.
- Mayfair Makerspace was equipped with 3D printers, vinyl cutters, 3D scanning equipment, sewing machines, and art materials, and 3D printer in Loughboy Library upgraded.
- Kanopy movie streaming service now available members.
- Online Digital Skill Club for Children has expanded to include robotics and digital animation courses.

Income

We successfully applied and were awarded €113,212 from a range of funding sources including Solas, Dormant Accounts Fund, Kilkenny Carlow ETB, Creative Ireland, LGMA, Commemorative fund, Night Time Economy funding and Calmast.

Climate and SDGs at Kilkenny Library



Embedding SDGs for Impact

As we continue to embed the SDG's across our service delivery and programming, our climate impact also grew with 650 participants attending over 45 events.

Community Energy Hub at Loughboy Library

Loughboy Library was chosen as a pilot location for The South East Energy Agency Community Energy Hub, an online platform offering energy advice and information on upgrade grants, and hosting Energy Drop-in Clinics for one-on-one consultations for the public.



Climate Literacy

Our Climate Literacy at the Library programme for adults funded under the Adult Literacy for Life Strategy proved very successful with 61 participants learning about Food Waste, Fast Fashion, Biodiversity Loss and Waste Minimisation.

Innovative sustainability with SETU Carlow

We partnered with the design department at SETU Carlow, explored creative and innovative ways to breathe new life into books that have reached the end of their journey. This project is more than just recycling; it's about reimagining and innovating.



Literacy and Reading Support

We engaged with our educational partners hosting 509 class visits to our library branches and 59 outreach visits to ELCs, Primary and Post Primary schools.

Mobile Library Service

On a monthly basis our mobile library visited over 60 schools, nursing homes and early learning centres across the County including 11 community stops in rural towns and villages. Our mobile library also continued to provide door-to-door book deliveries to borrowers who were unable to visit their local library branch.

Service Development and Infrastructure

- On 24th April we welcomed Heather Humphreys TD, Minister for Rural and Community Development, to officially open the Mayfair Library. This 1800 m² state-of-the-art facility offers cultural, community, and educational opportunities for all ages. The library features a community exhibition space, meeting room, study spaces, young adult area, dedicated children's area, makerspace with 3D printers and sewing machines, comfortable seating areas, WiFi, PC access, and printing, scanning, and photocopying facilities. The Mayfair Library is open Monday-Saturday, including two late evenings.
- Thomastown Library construction commenced.
- Callan library development progressed
- Carnegie Library funding application progressed and submitted.



Workforce & Training

Our staff completed over 400 training sessions, enhancing our skills to meet the diverse needs of our community. Two staff members are currently pursuing professional qualifications in Librarianship. We hosted the National Public Libraries Conference in November, featuring presentations on AI and countering disinformation and emerging trends. Staff led tours of the new library and presented the Alice Kyteler Project experience.

We began work on our 2025 Workforce Plan, exploring innovative ways to manage workloads and roles to ensure efficiency and maintain high standards for Kilkenny Library Service.

Information and Communication



141,330 virtual newsletters sent



54,408 visits to www.kilkennylibrary.ie



12,431 followers on social media



3,020 social media posts and videos



Comhairle Chontae Chill Chainnigh
Kilkenny County Council

DIRECTORATE OF PLANNING, ECONOMIC, AND ENVIROMENTAL SERVICES

TIM BUTLER
DIRECTOR OF SERVICES



PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT

To provide for the proper planning and sustainable development of the County.

DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT

Planning Summary	Total 2023	Total 2024
Planning Applications Received	880	820
Planning Applications Granted	613	644
Planning Applications Refused	113	57

A total of 820 planning applications were received during the year, compared to 880 in 2023 representing a decrease of 6.8 % but as can be seen from the commencement notices under Building Control below there has been a 17.2% increase in commencement notices year on year indicating continued construction activity. Approximately 82% of all planning applications were received electronically through the e-planning portal in the year to December 2024

PLANNING ENFORCEMENT

Enforcement Summary	Total 2023	Total 2024
Complaints Received	96	130
Warning Letters Issued	93	80
Enforcements Notices Issued	41	33
Cases Closed	124	71

One hundred and thirty (130) formal complaints were received by Planning Enforcement in 2024 an increase of 35% on 2023. Planning Enforcement complaints related primarily to unauthorised development or non compliance with planning permissions. Seventy one planning enforcement cases were closed in 2024.

FORWARD PLANNING

Two variations to the City & County Plan were progressed in the year.

Variation 2 clarified the settlement hierarchy in relation to small settlements in the City and County Development Plan 2021 specifically omitting the term node as a description for a village or settlement.

Variation 3 seeks to rezone a small portion of green space in Loughboy to residential, for the purpose of a small number of Age Friendly and Disability Accessible houses. The proposed variation was placed on public display in December 2024 and will be decided upon in early 2025.

An amendment was made to the Callan Local Area Plan to reconfigure the zoning objectives in the 2019 Local Area Plan for Callan to reflect housing development and amenity provision as delivered on the ground and allow for a continuation of housing development. This was approved by Council in July 2024.

MASTERPLANS

Ballyragget/Paulstown/Kilmacow

All 3 masterplans were approved by the relevant Municipal Districts during 2024.

LOCAL AREA PLANS

Ferrybank/Belview Local Area Plan

Work commenced the preparation of a new Ferrybank/Belview Local Area Plan in June 2024. A workshop style information session was in June in Abbey Community College at which over 100 people attended. An issues paper was published and submissions invited. Work on a local transport plan an infrastructural assessment, strategic environmental assessment, strategic flood risk assessment and appropriate assessment have been carried out during 2024 which will all form part of the Draft documents.

A draft will be published in Q1 2025.

Castlecomer Plan review process

The Plan preparation process commenced in 2024 , with extensive collaboration between the Community and Planning sections and public engagement for the pre draft stage of the plan.. A Director's Report on the pre-draft consultation stage has was published on the Consult website in November 2024. This outlined the engagement on the pre draft Plan. The Draft Settlement Plan will be accompanied by various assessments, including an Infrastructural assessment and environmental assessments. Public display of the Plan will commence in Q1 2025.

CONSERVATION

The quality of our historic built environment contributes to the vitality of our urban areas, villages and countryside, instils a sense of pride of place and enhances the quality of our everyday lives. Our built heritage is one of the main attractions for visitors to Kilkenny City & County, and therefore its protection and conservation is integral to the Kilkenny City's standing as the medieval capital of Ireland.

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

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

Architectural Conservation Area Trails 2024: A consultant was appointed to work with the Kilkenny County Council's conservation officer, the National Built Heritage Service, and local communities to design walking trails for two Architectural Conservation Areas in County Kilkenny: Castlecomer and Freshford. The purpose of these trails is to use local knowledge to educate and inform communities and visitors about the rich built heritage surrounding them.

Built Heritage Stocktake 2024:

A consultant was appointed to work with Kilkenny County Council's conservation officer and the National Built Heritage Service to deliver a stocktake for the following settlements: Callan, Gowran, Inistioge, Johnstown, Thomastown. The stocktake will focus on the structures listed on the RPS and NIAH.

Conservation Grants 2024:

Successful 2024 Conservation Grant funded projects are now complete. Fifteen projects, over three Conservation Grants: Built Heritage Investment Scheme, Historic Thatched Buildings, and, the Historic Structures Fund are complete. These grants supported masonry, window, ironwork, and joinery repairs, re-thatching, lime plastering and re-pointing of Kilkenny's architectural heritage structures, culminating in a total project spend over the three schemes of €673,105.49.

These projects provided 1,345 employment days for local crafts people and conservation professionals. The projects highlight the circular economy approach involved in conservation works, while they also have a local economic benefit by supporting local craft professionals and conserving Kilkenny's architectural heritage. The grants, and their management, are essential for keeping historic buildings of architectural significance in use.

Details are presented in the table below

Grant	Department Funding	Privately Leveraged	Total Project Costs	Number of Projects	Employment Days
Built Heritage Investment Scheme (BHIS)	€151,471.45	€211,589.65	€363,061.10	11	800
Historic Thatched Buildings (HTB)	€10,957.23	€17,307.23	€28,264.46	2	93
Historic Structures Fund (HSF)	€196,918.12	€84,861.81	€281,779.93	2	452
Total	€359,346.80	€313,758.69	€673,105.49	15	1345

Architectural Conservation Officer reports for 2024 are detailed below:

- Planning Referrals.....95
- Further Information requests34
- Clarification of Further Information requests.....4
- Section 57 Declarations.....16
- Post planning11
- Part VIII2

VACANT SITES

At the end of 2024 there were 18 Vacant Sites on the Vacant Sites Register, and the number of cancelled entries due to site activation or improvement stood at 29. The Vacant Site levy (VSL) will be replaced by the RZLT in 2025, but any outstanding VSL's will remain due to the Council. A further €21,000 was received in December 2024, bringing the total for 2024 to €163,200. The last outstanding appeal for vacant sites was determined by An Bord Pleanála, upholding the Council's demand for payment on site ref. VSR18-23 in Ferrybank.

Residential Zoned Land Tax (RZLT)

Draft Maps of land in scope for the new Residential Zoned Land Tax (RZLT) were published in January 2024. Submissions were received on the Draft maps, and determinations on these submissions were notified to the landowners. Four landowner made appeals to An Bord Pleanála, and all 4 appeals have been determined, upholding the Council's determinations.

The Final 2025 Map of lands in scope for the new Residential Zoned Land Tax (RZLT) was prepared for publication on the 31st January 2025. This will form the basis for the levying of the tax by Revenue. The settlements currently liable are Kilkenny City, Rosbercon(New Ross), Callan and Thomastown. The Draft Annual 2026 Map was also prepared, and submissions will be invited on this map from 1st February 2025. The 2024 Budget announced a further opportunity for farmers to seek to have their land rezoned.

BUILDING CONTROL

Valid Commencement Notices Received Start of Year to End of Year	2024	2023	2022	2021	2020
Number of Valid Commencement Notices Received	360	307	336	434	319

Nearly a third, 204, of the notices received were accompanied by an “opt- out declaration”, this type of notice may be used for a single standalone dwelling or a domestic extension. 60 notices lodged by registered construction professionals accounted for just under 1,000 dwelling units. 31 notices lodged by registered construction professionals accounted for non-domestic projects such as educational, community, commercial and industrial projects.

Disability Access Certs

Disability Access Applications Received Start of Year to End of Month	2024	2023	2022	2021	2020
Number of Disability Access Applications Received	60	67	72	54	85

All Disability Access Applications are now made online via the online Building Control Management System, BCMS.

TAKING IN CHARGE

The following is a list of developments where the taking in charge process was completed by the local authority in 2024:

Reference Number	Estate Name	Date Taken in Charge
TC186	Ladyswell, Thomastown, Kilkenny	16/12/2024
TC172	Orchard Close, New Orchard Road, Kilkenny	18/11/2024
TC177	Weir View Gardens	21/10/2024
TC176	Beechwood, Richview, Castlecomer Road	21/10/2024
TC182	Village Gardens, Smithlands North, Waterford Road, Kilkenny (Raggetts)	21/10/2024
TC038	Clonkill, Callan	21/10/2024
TC175	Harrowville, Leggettsrath West, Kilkenny	16/09/2024
TC190	Tobair Brid, Graiguenamanagh, Co Kilkenny	16/09/2024
TC170	Sycamore Drive, Larchfield, Kilkenny	20/05/2024
TC141	Ayrfield, Kilkenny	20/05/2024
TC018	Greenoaks, Ferrybank	25/03/2024
TC154	Ogenty , Gowran	15/01/2024
TC059	Jerpoint West, Thomastown (The Greens)	15/01/2024

The main public infrastructure subject to TIC are:

- public roads and footpaths,
- public open spaces,
- unallocated surface parking areas, and
- public lighting.

Eight (8) additional estates were requested to be taken in charge during 2024 leaving a total of 25 estates remaining to be taken in charge as at the end of 2024.

Town Centre First

A Health Check was completed for Castlecomer in 2024 with health checks commenced for Mooncoin and Callan. New Town Teams were formed in Graiguenamanagh, Mooncoin and Castlecomer during the year.



The Urlingford Town Team, supported by the Town Regeneration Officer, were successful in securing funding of €500,000 for works on phase 2 of improvements to be carried out to the community centre.

THRIVE

This new funding stream (*Town Centre First Heritage Revival Scheme*) was announced in early 2024 and the Council were successful in receiving the maximum funding of €200,000 under Strand 1 for an Urban Design Strategy for the John's Quay/John Street area in Kilkenny City. A consultation process to develop the strategy took place involving key stakeholders, the business community and local residents. The strategy was completed in December 2024 and the Council are progressing a Part 8 for the refurbishment of Carnegie Library and surrounding public realm area, which was identified as a priority project as part of the Strategy.

Derelict Sites

The Derelict Sites function was transferred to the Town Regeneration Office (TRO) in 2024. Three new Compulsory Purchase Orders (CPO's) were initiated in 2024 - with two completed at year end and the other currently awaiting Judicial review. Four previously commenced CPO's were advanced to completion stage and all four properties are expected to be placed for open market sale. Levy demands were issued to owners in respect of 20 properties on the Derelict Sites Register and valuations were carried out on an additional 8 properties. Two properties were added to the Register in 2024 and an overall total of 7 removed.

Vacant Property Refurbishment Grant: Croí Cónaithe Towns Fund Scheme

All new applications submitted from January 2024 were managed by the TRO Office. Up to end of 2024, a combined total of 248 applications were received. Of this figure, 165 have been given approval and 22 grants were successfully completed and paid.



Before



After

A successful grant applicant replied as follows:

"Dear Just letting you know that the funds arrived in my account today. I would like to thank you and all your staff for your assistance throughout the renovation I really appreciate that I was able to get the house liveable it would not have been possible without the grant. Thanks again. Sincerely"

Butts Area Regeneration

Work commenced on the Regeneration Framework for the Butts area during 2024. Following on from initial public consultation, the Butts Town Team was formed and the Council have established a site office in the estate. A Community Liaison Officer was put in place in August 2024. Consultants were appointed and work commenced on the Framework Plan for the area. A community consultation event took place in November 2024 and the community has given its views on the needs for the area via feedback forms. Regular newsletters are disseminated to all properties in the area with updates on progress. In addition, a survey of housing stock in the area was started in mid-November 2024.



Highlights

- Funding of €200,000 received under THRIVE for Urban Design Strategy for John's Quay/John Street area
- Funding of €500,000 received under Town & Village for Phase 2 of refurbishment of community centre in Urlingford
- Levy demands issued in respect of Derelict Sites amounted to €227,716
- Croí Cónaithe Grants paid in the amount of €1,102,968

CLIMATE

Inaugural Climate Action Plan Adopted

The Inaugural Kilkenny County Council Climate Action Plan 2024-2029 was adopted at the Council Plenary (Feb). It sets out how the Council will respond to the climate crisis by improving energy efficiency, reducing greenhouse gas emissions, and embedding climate resilience across the organisation. It also addresses how the Council will adopt a leadership role in the County by supporting local communities, businesses and other



Kilkenny County Council Climate Action Plan 2024-2029 was adopted by Elected Representatives at the Council Plenary Feb 2024.

stakeholders to take climate action. The Plan contains 95 actions, and was adopted following extensive consultation, gathering scientific data, and deliberations by the Elected Representatives and Staff of Kilkenny County Council.

Council Renews Commitment to EU Covenant of Mayors for Climate and Energy

Kilkenny County Council renewed its commitment to the EU Covenant of Mayors for Climate and Energy, a voluntary initiative of local governments in Europe at the December Plenary. In doing so the Council has re-committed to implement EU climate and energy objectives, and secure a better future for its citizens. The key focus is to reduce greenhouse gas emission, strengthen resilience to climate change, and address energy poverty. It was timely to renew the commitment, with the election of a new Council in 2024, and the adoption of the inaugural Kilkenny County Council Climate Action Plan earlier in 2024, along with the fact that the EU updated the Covenant in the last few years.



Kilkenny County Council renewed its commitment to the EU Covenant of Mayors for Climate and Energy

New Developments

EV Trial for Staff Travel

The Environment & Climate Action Offices of Kilkenny County Council organised a 3-month EV trial in partnership with the Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland and Enterprise Rent a Car. The Council made an electric car available to all staff for business related travel and installed 2 EV chargers at County Hall. There were over 50 bookings made on the vehicle. In total it was used for more 2500Km of business travel, which saved 175kg of carbon dioxide.

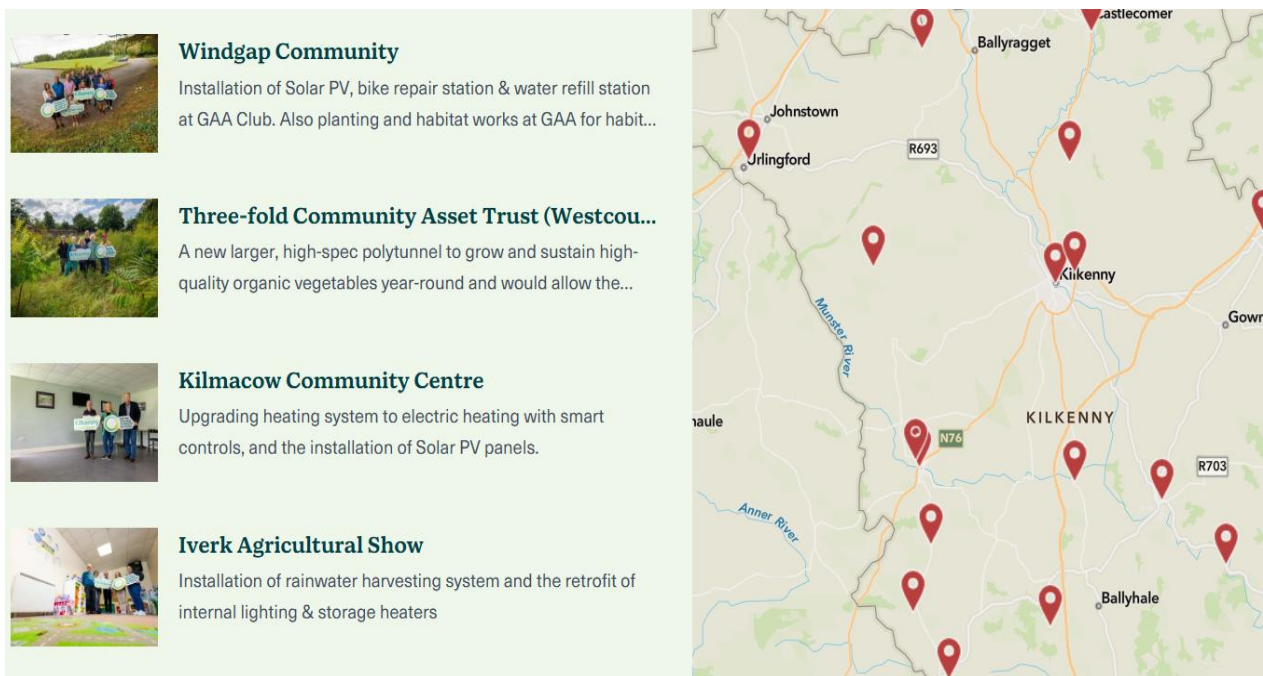
Other Achievements

€511,000 to Communities for Local Climate Action

A new fund of €511,000 was launched to support communities in County Kilkenny to take local climate action. In partnership with the Department of Environment, Climate and Communications, the Climate Action Office of Kilkenny County Council awarded funding to 22 communities to deliver a range of climate action projects including solar panels, energy efficient lighting, upgraded heating, rainwater harvesting, and community allotments. A new [Community Climate Action Storymap](#) was developed to showcase the communities and their projects.



Coolagh Pattern Committee, one of the 22 communities awarded funding for local Climate Action Project



Storymap of the 22 communities in Co. Kilkenny undertaking local climate action projects with funding from the Kilkenny County Council Community Climate Action Fund

Collaboration on Decarbonising

Kilkenny County Council hosted Local Authority Climate Action Teams from around the country to a workshop on Decarbonising Zones: Challenges and Opportunities (Built Environment) on 25th Sept. The event, coordinated by the Climate Action Regional Office (CARO), and hosted by Kilkenny County Council, was attended by 82 local authority staff engaged in delivering climate action.



Staff of Kilkenny County Council, CARO, the Heritage Council and KPMG at the Decarbonising Workshop hosted by Kilkenny County Council.

Monitoring and Reporting on Climate and Energy Performance

The Climate Action Office submitted the annual statutory public sector Monitoring and Reporting (M&R) data to the SEAI, including data the Council's energy use, energy projects, business travel, vehicle inventory, vehicle procurement, public lighting and Building Stock Register. The SEAI will publish the 2023 results at the end of Q1 2025, and provisional data for 2024 in April 2025 to show how the Councils energy and emissions have changed over the period.

Staff Climate Awareness Training

30 new Council staff completed Climate Action Awareness Training, coordinated by the HR Department and the Local Authority Services Training National Group. 2 climate action sessions delivered at Staff Induction Training

ISO Energy Management Standard Secured

Recertification of the Council's ISO 50001 Energy Management Standard by NSAI confirming that the Council has managed and improved its energy performance.

Energy Audits

3 Energy Audits completed on Council building (Road Design Office (No. 1 Dean Street), KRSP Office (No. 5 Dean Street) and the Carnegie Library.

Energy Certs for Council Buildings

7 Display Energy Certs completed for Council buildings (County Hall, City Hall, Johns Green House, Libraries (Ferrybank, Graiguenamanagh & Loughboy), The Watershed); publicly displaying the energy performance and carbon emissions of the building.

Public Engagement Events

Gardening for Biodiversity and Climate Action workshop (May): co-hosted with the PPN, Biodiversity Office and the Mayfair Library. International Day of Climate Action (Oct): communications campaign with hints and tips for the public on how to take climate action in their homes, schools, businesses and community. Climate Action at Savour Festival (Oct): Climate Action Breakfast hosted by Comedian Colm O'Regan, aka the Climate Worrier. Supported the South East Energy Agency and Kilkenny City Sustainable Energy Community (SEC) to host a public information evening about energy reduction in communities (Nov)

Service Level Agreement

New SLA signed with the Department of Environment, Climate and Communications regarding implementation of the Council's Climate Action Plan (Nov 2023-Dec 2028)

WASTE MANAGEMENT

Dunmore Civic Amenity Site (CAS)

In 2024, the Dunmore CAS received 1739 tonnes of Municipal Solid Waste and 1012 tonnes of Municipal Dry Waste. Many recycling streams were also deposited at Dunmore CAS such as paper, plastic, cardboard, food waste, green waste, timber, metal and WEEE. These recycling streams combined totalled 1379 tonnes.

Under our Anti-Dumping Initiative in 2024, there was a Dry Bulk Waste week facilitated at the Dunmore CAS and also at the Grannagh CAS. For a set fee of €5, customers could bring any amount of timber or bulk furniture to the site for recycling. This initiative resulted in 27 tonnes of timber and 15 tonnes of furniture deposited at the site which was all broken down, transported off site where the various recycling streams were segregated and processed for recycling.



Bring Banks

The Council provides and manages 47 Bring Bank Recycling Centres across the City and County. A total of 2046 tonnes of recyclables were collected at these Centres in 2024. Loughboy Shopping Centre is the busiest Bring Centre in the City while ALDI, Ferrybank is the busiest centre outside of the City. Environment staff are continuing to work very closely with our service providers to ensure the collection service is in keeping with demand, especially around holiday periods. The Council continues to look to expand the network of recycling centres and in this regard is in discussions with Tidy Town committee's in relation to suitable locations.

Anti-Dumping Initiative application for 2024

Kilkenny County Council was awarded funding for projects under the Anti-Dumping Initiative for 2024 in the amount of €90,000. This funding contributed to several projects around the County.

Project No.	Project Title	Total Amount Requested	Total Amount Approved
1	County Wide Bulky Furniture Event	€25,000.00	€25,000.00
2	CCTV using Dual sim 4g and solar panels	€5000	€5000
3	Clean up at Michael Street	€10,000.00	€10,000.00
4	Multimedia Campaigns	€10,000.00	€10,000.00
5	Re Use Textile Event	€12,000.00	€12,000.00
6	Clean up of <u>Bishop mountain</u>	€8000	€8000
7	Clean up of Regional Roads in the County	€13,000.00	€13,000.00
8	Clean up of Bishop Birch	€8666	€8666
TOTAL		€91,666.00	€91,666.00

Casual Trading

Six Casual Trading Licences issued in 2024 i.e. five of these were renewals. The locations are: two in Castlecomer, one in Kells, two in Graiguenamanagh and one in Inistioge.

Casual Trading is a great opportunity for someone to start up a new business venture quickly with just a vehicle or unit that fits into a car parking space for an annual licence fee. Casual Traders who wish to sell food or drink are advised to contact the HSE to register their foodstall and all Casual Traders are advised to contact the Gardai.

Burial Grounds

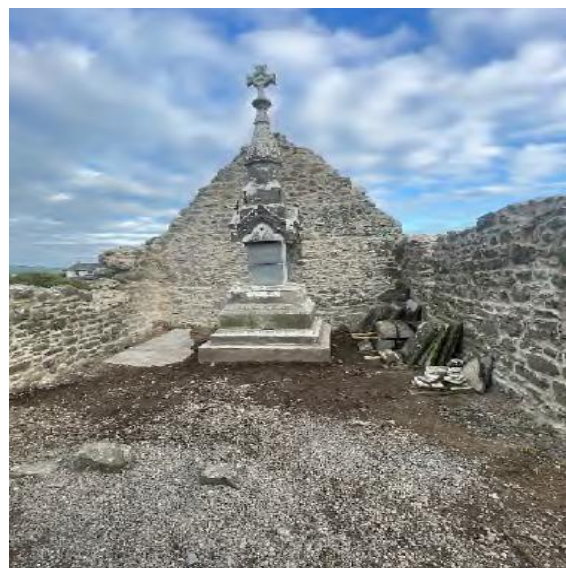
Community Monuments Fund – Grangefertagh, Tubbrid, Castleinch, Churchclara & Kellymount church & Graveyards Conservation Surveys/Works with Emergency works carried out on Garryduff & Cloghabrody cemeteries.

Kilkenny County Council have carried out works to help conserve and protect two medieval churches and graveyards at Grangefertagh and Tubbrid in Johnstown under the Community Monuments fund 2024 provided by the Department of Housing, Heritage and Local Government. Additional Works include Conservation surveys carried out on Castleinch, Churchclara & Kellymount with Emergency repair works carried out on Garryduff & Cloghabrody cemeteries to prevent boundary walls collapsing onto public roads. Stage 2 of the Conservation Works on Grangefertagh Historic Church & Graveyard has been partially completed in 2024 with final works commencing on the effigial Tomb in 2025 once approved by the Department of Housing, Heritage and Local Government. All conservation works/surveys have been completed on Tubbrid, Castleinch, Churchclara & Kellymount church & graveyards. All Emergency works have been completed on Garryduff & Cloghabrody cemeteries. All projects mentioned above were managed by the Environment Section & Heritage Office.

Conservation works at Tubbrid Church & Graveyard



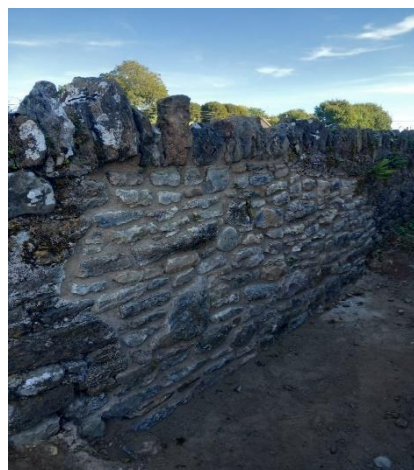
Before



After



Wall Collapse at Cloghabrody



Repaired Wal at Cloghabrody

Water Safety

The 2024 lifeguard season commenced on the June bank holiday weekend in 2024. Lifeguards were posted on our lifeguarded areas on weekends throughout June, daily lifeguard attendance was provided thereafter throughout July and August at The Weir, The Meadows, Thomastown, Inistioge and Graiguenamanagh. The lifeguard hours were 1.00 p.m. to 6.30 pm.

16 lifeguards were engaged to cover the 5 lifeguarded areas.

Numbers of swimmers in attendance varied hugely throughout Summer 2024 due to inclement weather conditions and heavy downpours during June, July and August. The season started with good weather in early to mid-June where lifeguards recorded in excess of 6,100 bathers at the lifeguarded areas throughout the bathing season. Lifeguards provided safety advise to in excess of 1,300 bathers, prevented 171 accidents and provided first aid on 9 occasions. There was also 5 rescues and 22 assists recorded.

Measures introduced at the start of the bathing season in 2023 to combat littering, continued to prove effective in 2024 with very few complaints of litter or waste.

The lifebuoys in the City are checked weekly by Kilkenny City Area staff and rurally by the lifeguards at swimming areas during the lifeguard season. Members of the public can report missing lifebuoys to the national website; www.Ringbuoy.ie, the Council's Environment Section and the WSDO. Kilkenny Civil Defence, Kilkenny Aqua Canoe Club members and landowners have kindly retrieved a large number of reusable lifebuoys from the banks of the river throughout the year and returned them to the Water Safety Development Officer (WSDO) for checking and reuse.



Lifeguards “Went Blue” on the 25th July for World Drowning Prevention day by wearing blue facepaint, this was posted on the Councils Social Media to promote awareness of drowning prevention in Kilkenny.



Kilkenny Water Safety Committee ran “Summer Swim Week” from the 15th to the 19th July at Graiguenamanagh Swimming area with assistance from our lifeguards. Unfortunately, due to a shortage of swim teachers the Thomastown Swim Week was cancelled. Swim week was promoted through Kilkenny County Council’s social media channels. Swim Week was very well received in Graiguenamangh with positive feedback from swimmers and parents alike.

Kilkenny Water Safety Committee also ran the “Nore Swim” on 11th August 2024, this was a welcome return after being cancelled in 2024. Lifeguards also provided assistance on the water on the day.

EDUCATION AND AWARENESS

Tidy Towns Awards

There were twenty-eight entrants from County Kilkenny which is an increase in participation from previous years. The following awards were achieved:

- *Inistioge* retained its gold medal and came 1st place in the County Awards
- *Kilkenny City* retained its gold medal and came 2nd place in the County Awards
- *Tullahought* was awarded “Highly Commended” for their work under the National Pollinator Programme during the ceremony held at Croagh Park on November 1st, 2024. Their unwavering dedication to cleanliness, improving green spaces, and promoting community pride has distinguished them in this competitive field.
- *Coon* secured the Endeavour Award for the biggest improvement by an entrant in each County from the previous year.

Kilkenny had two new entrants under the National Competition with Graiguenamanagh, and Owing demonstrating their exceptional efforts and work for their respective communities. All of whom scored strongly for their first time around.

Green Schools Programme

The Environment Section corresponded with all schools due to renew their Green Flag programme. 75% of schools were due to renew their flag in 2024.

For schools in a position to renew, their renewal applications were submitted to An Taisce. Prior to submitting their application, the Environmental Awareness Officer (EAO) visited and assessed the school. 17 schools were visited before the end of March. 5 schools attained their 1st flag.

For schools restarting the programme, the Environmental Awareness Officer provided advice to green school co-ordinators and completed talks to support schools working on litter and waste themes. Other supports were made available from external stakeholders including SEAI and Voice Ireland.

Composting Ireland-Composting and Recycling For Schools



Composting & Recycling for Schools Programme August 2024



As part of the “Team Up to Clean Up-Together for Kilkenny” campaign for 2024, 20 primary and secondary schools involved in the Green Schools Programme in Kilkenny registered for an award winning composting and recycling for schools programme free of charge.

The aim of the programme was to help schools prevent waste, improve recycling and set up, start or improve on-site composting systems to reduce waste, save money and combat climate change. The programme also helped schools improve their gardening efforts and increase biodiversity around their schools. All of these activities assisted schools in attaining their Green School Flags and reaching their Sustainable Development Goals. In addition, the programme gave teachers access to a wide variety of fun, participatory and interactive activities for school children to learn about waste prevention, recycling, composting and gardening. These activities supported children’s understanding of the underlying principles of ecology, biology and biodiversity that underpin all life on our planet.

Each participating school received a €250 voucher to spend on in-school collection caddies, indoor recycling bins, instructional signs, a variety of composting systems, including composting bins, leaf mould cages and wormeries, and composting tools, including secateurs, pitch forks, compost aerators, watering cans, thermometers and anything that supports their respective action plans.

National Spring Clean

The National Spring Clean is a well-recognized and successful anti-litter initiative. It takes place annually during the whole month of April. The campaign encourages every sector of society to actively participate and take responsibility for litter, by actually conducting clean ups in their own local environment.

There were 105 National Spring Clean registrations recorded for the County in 2024, this is a 10% increase on 2023. There were 59 requests for rubbish collections from registered participants which resulted in 255 bags.

Litter Management Plan 2024-2026



The public consultation process for the Litter Management Plan 2024 – 2026 closed on 15th March 2024 and on the 22nd April 2024, the Litter Management Plan 2024 – 2026 was approved by the Plenary.

Team Up to Clean Up 2024



“Team Up to Clean Up” took place on the weekend of **20th-22nd of September 2024**.

Led by Kilkenny County Council, in a collaborative effort to promote environmental stewardship, leading sponsors including Dawn Meats, Tirlán/Glanbia Plc, Panda, PRL, and the John O’Shea Trust joined forces to support this essential community initiative.

Over the course of the weekend, over 120 registered groups participated with an estimated 4,000 enthusiastic volunteers engaged in litter picking across the County reinforcing the community’s commitment to maintaining a clean and vibrant environment. This included 35 schools across the City and County.

Volunteers not only contributed to a cleaner environment but also became ambassadors for sustainable practices that mitigate littering in the long term.



The Gum Litter Taskforce Visited Kilkenny

The Gum Litter Taskforce, supported by Kilkenny County Council, arrived in the City as part of its summer roadshow to tackle the scourge of gum litter pollution. The initiative aims to educate and engage the public on the importance of proper waste disposal and the impact of litter on our environment.

The campaign was a collaboration between Food Drink Ireland, the Department of Environment, Climate and Communications, the chewing gum industry, and local authorities. Its mission is to reduce gum litter and promote a cleaner and more sustainable environment.



National Food Waste Recycling Week- June 2nd-7th

During National Food Waste Recycling Week aimed to encourage everyone to recycle food waste by providing practical advice along with hints and tips on how easy it is to recycle and get everyone involved.

The Environmental Department set up an information and awareness stand in McDonagh Junction on **Wednesday 5th of June** to highlight the use of the proper use of the brown bin, provide information on advice about the service provision, how to compost and proper portion control in the household.

Members of the public were also given a free brown food caddy on the day.

Food waste is a big issue, as wasted food can sometimes end up in landfill where it will produce methane which is a harmful greenhouse gas; this combined with the resources used to get the food to us, the consumers, and then wasting this food can have significant impacts on the environment. The recycling of food waste diverts this important resource from landfill and allows it to be transformed into renewable energy and fertilizers for horticulture and agriculture use in Ireland.

Air Quality Campaign

In conjunction with the Enforcement Team in Environment, the EAO is coordinated a targeted campaign throughout the City and County on air quality and the continued use of smoky coals. The campaign sought to raise awareness amongst the wider public, stakeholders, businesses and schools about the health and environmental impacts of poor air quality and the ways individuals can help reduce pollution.



Protecting Water Quality

Kilkenny County Council produced a new guidance leaflet for the farming community in relation to upholding good farming practices to support the protection of our water quality. This document is in line with the WFD and the National Water Policy to maintain healthy rivers, lakes and groundwater.



IBAL Results 2023/24



Kilkenny retained its position of 4th out of 40 cities. This was a fantastic achievement and testament to the commitment and hard work of our Environmental team, KKB (our Tidy Towns Group), local residents and businesses.

It was a testament to the commitment and hard work of the Area Office and the outdoor staff at the Borough.

The Skate Park received a Grade A status as it was virtually absent from litter. This was a huge improvement on the 2022/23 survey which highlighted it as a potential problematic area. Kilkenny Train Station (Exterior and Interior) received a Grade A for its exceptional cleanliness and presentation.

Parliament Street was described as an "exceptionally freshly presented shopping street" with attractive paving and no litter issues.

The Bring Facility at St Canice's, has significantly improved from previous surveys, with no items of litter or misuse of recycling bins.

The R712 - Paulstown Approach Road, created a "very positive first impression" with its well-maintained and litter-free environment.

The area of the Riverbank, with the Pedestrian Bridge, received a Grade A for its lovely riverside environment and recent grass cutting.

Anti-Litter and Anti-Graffiti Grant 2024

€28,550 in grant aid and programme costs was allocated under the Anti-Litter and Anti-Graffiti scheme for 2024. This included 4 community led murals in Graiguenamanagh, Mooncoin, The Butts and Stoneyford.

As part of this programme, Kilkenny County Council offered community groups an opportunity to promote anti-litter and anti-graffiti awareness in their local community. The grant aimed to mobilize community groups to care for their local environment by decreasing the impact of litter by its removal and to promote a social message locally to encourage everyone to put litter in its rightful place – in a bin.

This funding came directly from the Department of Communications, Climate Action & Environment.

20 applications were received from Community and Environmental organisations within the City and County which totalled €16,500.



Anti Dumping Initiative 2024

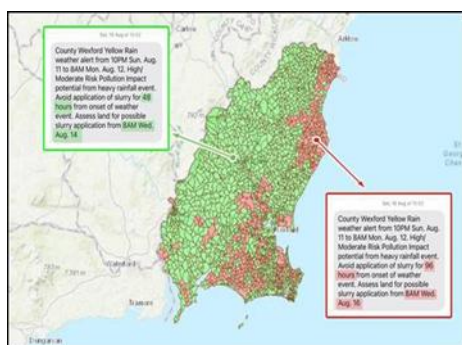
As part of the Anti-Dumping Initiative, Kilkenny County Council funded the development of a mural in Francis McManus Square which had become a blackspot for rubbish and dumping in recent years. The project was co-led by Keep Kilkenny Beautiful and Ossory Youth and is demonstrative of what can be achieved by good will, teamwork and environmental stewardship.



Agricultural Map Alerter

A new Agricultural Map Alerter has been set up on Kilkenny County Council Alerts portal. The purpose of the alert system is to notify registered farmers. An active campaign to encourage registrations is currently being undertaken.

The map of Kilkenny is broken down into Townlands and Electoral Divisions (DEDs) with run off times for the spreading of slurry broken into two categories of 48 hrs or 96 hrs. If a Level Yellow/Orange/Red rainfall warning is issued for Co. Kilkenny then it will trigger an SMS message to agricultural alert subscribers, an SMS will go out to the farmer highlighting the pollution impact and notifying them not to spread slurry for a period of 48hrs or 96hrs.



A basic SMS template is used with a similar image to the one in Wexford County Council which breaks down the areas.

AIR QUALITY AND NOISE

Air

Air pollution can be a major environmental risk to people's health, with approximately 1,600 premature deaths annually in Ireland due to poor air quality. Ireland's latest monitoring shows we are in compliance with current EU standards, however, Ireland is not on track to achieve its ambition, set out in the National Clean Air Strategy, to meet the health-based WHO air quality guideline limits in 2026. Achieving future targets will be very challenging. Main pollutants of concern are fine particulate matter (PM2.5) from solid fuel combustion and nitrogen dioxide (NO2) from vehicle emissions/traffic.

During 2024 Kilkenny County Council carried out over 150 inspections in relation to air quality. 107 inspections were carried out in relation to the sale of solid fuels, 41 inspections in relation to petroleum vapours, 15 inspections in relation to solvents and decorative paints. Numerous enforcement actions were implemented in the form of advisory letters with the aim of bringing non-compliant sites into compliance. Follow up inspections or further enforcement actions will take place in 2025 to ensure compliance.

Kilkenny County Council published educational and awareness campaigns specifically relating to the burning of solid fuels on Kilkenny Live, The Observer and The Irish Independent on 5 occasions during 2024. One of these campaigns was run in collaboration with Colin Ahern, chairman of Solid Fuel Merchants Ireland. KCC officers visited Mr Ahern's premises with photos of the visit being published with an educational piece in The Kilkenny Observer.

Air quality monitors which are linked to the EPA Air Quality Maps have been in place and continue to operate at suitable sites in Thomastown and the Callan Road. The monitors are operational and provide real time information to EPA and public. Both air quality monitors show a “good” status (at the time of this report) on the EPA’s Air Quality Index for Health with a score between 1-3. Analysis of the annual recorded data for 2024 confirms that the status for both monitors is “good” status with the average recording for PM10 and PM2.5 being 7 and 5 for Thomastown and PM10, NO2 and O3 being 12, 5 and 52 at Callan Road.

During 2024 a third air quality monitor was installed in Castlecomer. Although this air monitor is not linked to the EPA Air Quality website the readings for PM10 and PM2.5 are made available to the public on the Kilkenny County Council website.

Kilkenny County Council purchased 2 further air quality monitors in December 2024 which are scheduled for installation in early 2025.

Noise

The Environmental Noise Directive is the main EU law to identify noise pollution levels and act on them. It focuses on four action areas:

- determining exposure to environmental noise and assessing its health effects at single dwelling level
- ensuring that information on environmental noise and its effects is made available to the public
- preventing and reducing environmental noise
- preserving environmental noise quality in areas where it is good

The Directive requires EU countries to prepare and publish noise maps and noise management action plans every 5 years for:

- agglomerations with more than 100 000 inhabitants
- major roads (more than 3 million vehicles a year)
- major railways (more than 30 000 trains a year)
- major airports (more than 50 000 take-offs or landings a year, including small aircrafts and helicopters)

The END was transposed into Irish Law under the Environment Noise Regulations 2006 which were revised in 2018 and amended in 2021.

During 2024 Kilkenny County Council with the support of Noise Consultants Limited completed the draft Noise Action Plan 2024-2028 and placed it for public consultation. Following the public consultation the final Noise Action plan was made and is now available on the Councils website. The Noise Action Plan was also submitted to the EPA during 2024. The Noise Action Plan is aimed at strategic long-term management of environmental noise from major roads. It does not apply to noise from domestic activities, neighbourhood noise, noise at workplaces or noise inside means of transport or due to military activities in military areas. The next stage of the plan will be its implantation which should take place over the next 3 years. The plan has several actions and targeted outcomes.

Water Quality

During 2024 the Environment Team carried out a number of inspections in areas identified by the EPA as presenting significant pressures on water quality.

Agricultural

During 2024, 4 new assistant scientist joined the Environment Department. 3 of these scientists work specifically on the National Agricultural Inspection Programme (NAIP). The team achieved the target number of inspections, which is set by the EPA, carrying out 241 initial inspections during 2024. In addition to this, the team also completed 89 follow up inspections from initial inspections carried out in both 2023 and 2024.

Inspections took place in the Dinan, Duiske, Powerstown, Lisdowney, Muckalee and Nuenna catchments. The inspections included both farmyard and farmland surveys which lead to a more complete overall assessment of the farms inspected.

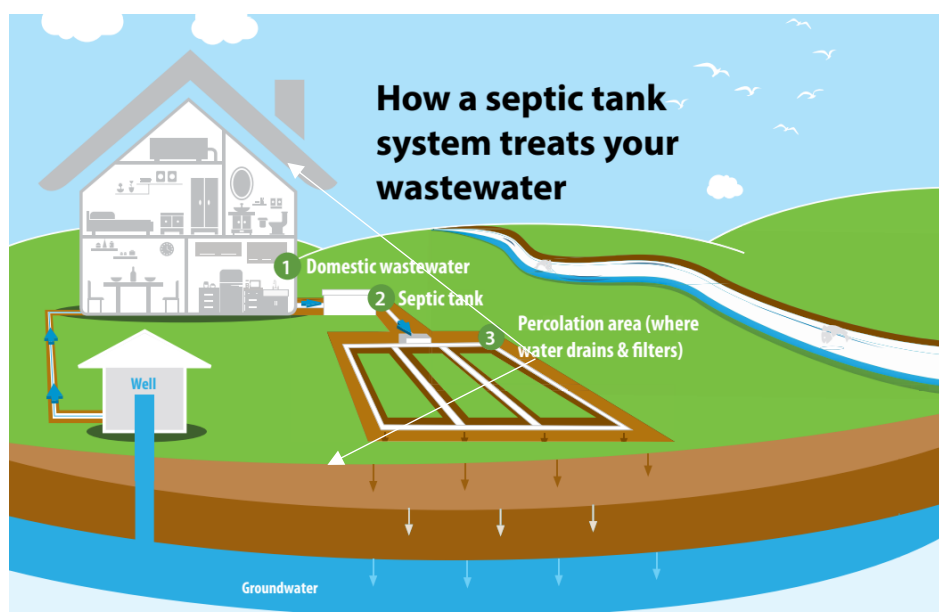
In September, Kilkenny were invited to speak at an EPA event. One of the farm inspectors presented a case study of works carried out by the team which resulted in a positive environmental outcome, stopping pollution entering a river. The presentation received positive feedback from both the EPA and other local authorities.

Domestic Wastewater Discharge (Septic Tanks)

The target number of inspections for 2024 was 51. The Environment Team surpassed this target, completing a total of 61 inspections by the end of the year. The selection of sites was conducted using a risk based approach using the EPA maps. Some of the areas selected were Conahy, Castlecomer, Coon, Castlewarren, Tullaroan, Glenmore and Kilmoganny.

The failure rate encountered for 2024, was in the order of 56% with the most prominent causes for failure due to unsatisfactory / insufficient desludging or the requirement for the system to be upgraded/replaced.

From the Advisory Notices issued for the 2024 NIP Inspections, 41% of these have been closed out, with a further 15% currently in the process of obtaining a grant to upgrade/replace their systems. A total of 4 grant applications were processed for the County in 2024.



VETERINARY SERVICES

What We Do – Food Safety Authority of Ireland Service Contract

The Veterinary Service fulfils the Food Safety Service Contract between the FSAI and Kilkenny County Council which includes responsibility for the Local Authority Veterinary Service in the Carlow area.

The service has redeployed to the Department of Agriculture Food and the Marine (DAFM) from 2nd January, 2024 – the supervision of small food businesses transferring to the DAFM. Thus ending a long association of Local Authorities with the veterinary profession. Since the formation of the state and before, there were various Veterinary professionals employed and attached to Local Authorities. Especially immediately after the formation of the state, when public health issues were to the top of the political agenda i.e. human tuberculosis cases, food security, hygienic living/ working conditions etc were all huge issues in the emerging state. The Milk and Dairies Act and Slaughter of Animal Act of the 1930's which was enforced by the Veterinary Profession (*Local Authority Vets leading and contributing enormously and working in collaboration with the district Public Health Authorities*) to bring Human TB under control. As well as the human level controls a very modern multi hurdle approach was taken at animal level through the mandatory pasteurisation of liquid milk, increased hygiene at dairies and farms and disease control at animal level etc. The collaboration policy between Veterinary Public Health and the District Public Health authorities was very successful and more or less eradicated TB from the human population. Since 1999 the Local Authorities had Service Level Agreements with FSAI for the regulation of small food business e.g. Low throughput Slaughterhouses, Small Meat Manufacturing plants etc. Food Crisis during this period included the Pork Dioxin issue 2008, the 2013 Horse Meat issue and animal health issue Foot and Mouth Disease Crisis 2001. And of course, the many instances of less published contributions to zoonotic disease control outbreaks, food allergen recalls etc.

Year 2024

- Slaughterhouses under the service's supervision in 2024, slaughtered. 5,375 Cattle, Sheep 12,982, and 114,327 Poultry. It should be noted that each animal slaughtered in approved premises for human consumption must undergo an Ante Mortem and Post Mortem inspection.
- 16 Food Businesses were under the supervision of the service in 2024
- 182 Hygiene Inspections (*other than AM/PM Inspections*) were done in food premises under the services supervision.
- 159 Official Control Samples were taken by the Veterinary Service consisting of the following:
 - 25 for Animal Remedies
 - 16 for chemicals in food
 - 13 water samples
 - 75 Carcass Swabs for microbes
 - 30 food samples for microbes

All of these were sent to designated Official Control Laboratories in accordance with Ireland's National Official Control Sampling Plan.

Dogs and Horses

Together with the Dog Warden Service (*which is shared with Carlow County Council*), the Veterinary Service is involved in the implementation of the Control of Dogs Act 1986 as amended and the Dog Breeding Establishments Act 2010 as amended (*for both counties*).

- 35 Dog Breeding Establishments (*includes 15 Commercial Boarding Kennels*) were regulated by the service in 2024 and there were 47 Dog Breeding Establishments inspections were completed in 2024.
- The number of dogs licensed was 5,162
- the number of dogs surrendered (*including those picked up by the DWS as strays*), total 267 (*surrenders +, strays*)
- the number of dogs reclaimed was 52
- the number of dogs rehomed was 225 and the number of dogs put to sleep was 3
- 17 horses were impounded under the Control of Horses Act in 2024.

Kilkenny and Tipperary County Councils continue to lead the national shared service “The Local Authority Waters Programme” (LAWPRO) which operates as a national Water Framework Directive (WFD) office fostering cooperation between Local Authorities and relevant public bodies both locally and nationally to produce positive water quality outcomes. LAWPRO is fully funded by the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage.

Key functions of LAWPRO are:

- to coordinate implementation of Water Action Plan (formerly River Basin Management Plan) through Regional Operational Committee meetings of all implementing organisations.
- to work with community groups fostering their interest in their local waters and supporting various local projects.
- to carry out water quality assessments and engage with stakeholders in Priority Areas for Action (catchments identified in the Water Action Plan where protect or restore actions are needed to assure good water quality).

In 2024, LAWPRO welcomed expansion of their national team and functions to include:

- Nature-Based Solutions team (two engineers) to promote mainstreaming nature-based solutions (NBS) in public and private infrastructure projects.
- Local Authority Support & Coordination team (team of three) to provide support for Local Authorities in delivering their functions under Water Action Plan.
- Additional staff to support community engagement team (five regional Senior Community Officers) and catchment science team (five regional technical leads).

Established the Farming for Water EIP (European Innovation Partnership) team. The Farming for Water EIP is an agri-environmental project providing grant funding for farmers to implement targeted actions to reduce losses of nutrients, sediment and pesticides from agricultural lands. The total project budget is €60m consisting of €50 million for farm measures, as well as other catchment-based initiatives where water quality issues are identified and require actions on agricultural lands. The scheme will focus on supplementary measures for water quality but will also include co benefits such as aquatic and terrestrial biodiversity, climate action and natural flood management measures. Project will run until 2027.

Water Action Plan 2024 Launched in Thomastown, Co. Kilkenny

On Thursday, 5th September, 2024 the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage (DHLGH) launched the Water Action Plan 2024 at the Grennan Mill in Thomastown, Co. Kilkenny. The Water Action Plan (WAP) sets out the measures that are necessary to protect and restore water quality in Ireland under the EU Water Framework Directive up to 2027.



Minister of State for Housing, Local Government and Heritage, Malcolm Noonan, TD, Minister for Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth of Ireland, Roderic O’Gorman TD, Anthony Coleman Director of Services at LAWPRO & Margaret Keegan Regional Coordinator at LAWPRO

2024 LAWPRO Highlights for Kilkenny

Catchment Science Work

In 2024 the South East Catchment Science team continued to work on assessments and engagements with the stakeholders in River Bregagh and River Lingaun (work in River Lingaun included areas expanded in the new Water Action Plan). The team was also busy reporting on work in these areas as well as in Erkina River. Throughout 2024, the catchment science team capacity in the region was reduced from six to two catchment scientists, and recruitment is still ongoing to fill vacant positions.

Farm Measures Implemented in Bregagh Catchment

In the Bregagh river catchment, with the advice from LAWPRO catchment scientist and ASSAP (Agricultural Sustainability Support and Advisory Programme) advisor, a local farmer installed series of wetland ponds to filter out pollutants picked up by rainwater flowing through his farm.

The design was supported by Nore Vision (see video [Farm Wetland Buffer](#)). This work has been used as a great example of supplementary measure on a farm, show-cased to other farmers in Kilkenny by local ASSAP advisor and to other agencies attending the South East Regional Operational Committee.



Jim Croke, Catchment Scientist and Deirdre Glynn, Teagasc ASSAP advisor presenting on the farm wetland in the Bregagh catchment to the SE Regional Operational Committee

Community Engagement in Kilkenny

The Community Water Officer (CWO) for Kilkenny continued to work with community groups in developing awareness of their local waters and supporting various local projects. Water Heritage Day is a key public awareness and engagement day in the LAWPRO calendar. It occurs each August on the 2nd Sunday of Heritage Week and the 2024 theme was “Connections, Routes and Networks” which fits very well with LAWPROs programme. Key Kilkenny events this year included:

- World Water Day 2024 – announcement of €1.2million for water quality projects nationally by Minister Malcolm Noonan
- Spring Clean Up with LAWPRO and Canoe club
- Biodiversity Week with Kilkenny Anglers and Keep Kilkenny Beautiful
- Biodiversity Week event with Biodiversity Officer on bat populations on Duiske River
- Water Heritage Day 2024 – Citizen Science event on the Dinan
- Water Heritage Day 2024 - Barrow Safari with Eanna Ni Lamhna, The Hub, Graiguenamanagh, August.



A citizen science event in Co. Kilkenny

- Buffer Wetland Construction, Mark O'Briens Farm, Bregagh Catchment with Nore River Trust
- Biodiversity and water quality training in Callan Oct and Dec
- Pond development with Johnstown Tidy Town, Coláiste Mhuire
- Thomaston Community Action Group Island Project
- Continued engagement with Environment Section and Climate Action Team

Grants from LAWPRO's Community Water Development Fund were approved for the following organisations and projects in Kilkenny:

- €2,460 Nore River Catchment Trust for the design of a wetland at the Old Water Barracks field, Kilkenny City
- €46,000 in Catchment Support Fund for the Nore Vision Trust to support outreach

€10,000 The Acorn Project for the development of a tree strategy and water quality improvement for the Nore Catchment

Caring for Waters Conference From Nore Vision



Communities Caring for Waters Conference 2024, Athlone

The 5th Communities Caring for Water Conference was held in the Radisson Blu Hotel, Athlone on Saturday, 9th November, 2024. The event was organised by LAWPRO in partnership with The Rivers Trust. The conference theme was “Our Water, Our Future: Empowering Communities to Improve and Protect” with sessions focused on climate change and working with nature, hydromorphology, pressure and solutions, capacity building in community groups and the importance of public participation. At the conference Maura Brennan from the Nore River Catchment Trust spoke about Community Water Stewardship in the Nore Catchment.

Programme Co-ordination

South East Regional Water and Environment Management Committee

The South East Regional Water and Environment Management Committee is chaired by the Chief Executive for Kilkenny County Council, Lar Power and met 4 times in 2024. The Regional Management Committee is a vital link between decision making at higher levels in the River Basin Management Plan governance structure and the implementation of those plans by local authorities. The SE Regional Water and Environment Management Committee is supported by the South East Regional Operational Committee.

SE Regional Operational Committee - Multi-Agency collaboration

The South East Regional Operation Committee is comprised of operational staff from local authorities and different public bodies in the region. It allows for collaboration and knowledge sharing relating to the delivery of water quality actions and measures at regional and local levels. The Committee meet 4 times a year and the September meeting was held in Inistioge, Co. Kilkenny.



Anthony Coleman Tipperary County Council & LAWPRO, Eddie Burgess Teagasc, Margaret Morrissey LAWPRO, Eimear O'Keeffe DHLGH, Marianna Mulligan Waterford City & County Council, Barry Deane & Greg Roche LAWPRO

Mainstreaming of Nature-based Solutions (NbS)

In 2024 LAWPRO provided funding support in relation to the following projects:

- Callan / Thomastown – Provision of Rain Gardens as part of a Safe Routes to School (SRTS) project at Fairview Graiguenamanagh.
- Kilkenny City – Nature-based Solutions within the Local Authority Housing Development at Corkers Hill Kenneyswell Road.



The project in Graiguenamanagh involved the construction of 2 Rain Gardens on an existing public road at Fairview, Graiguenamanagh. The Rain Gardens are contained within kerbed areas, with the provision of slots in the kerbing to allow surface water ingress into a planted Rain Garden area with an engineered soil mix for infiltration.

The larger rain gardens installed at Fairview, Graiguenamanagh

The Nature-based Solutions (NbS) Project within the housing development at Corkers Hill involved the construction of a bio-retention area, a rain garden, a bioswale and 3 tree pits. The NbS installed as part of these projects will provide multiple sustainable benefits including:

- The management and control of surface water run off (slowing the flow).
- Improving Water Quality through their ability to treat surface water run-off.
- Increasing biodiversity and amenity value in public realm areas by the introduction of plants, making for more ecologically valuable and more attractive places.



A tree pit system installed at Corkers Hill, Kilkenny

At the South East Regional Operational Committee meeting in November 2024 in Rathvilly, Co. Carlow LAWPRO hosted an NbS workshop event. The objective of workshop was to share learnings, identify requirements and opportunities and develop synergies based upon the input and information provided by each local authority with a view to mainstreaming of NbS into a larger number of projects across the region. Learnings from the Kilkenny projects were shared with others and discussed at this workshop.

Implementation of the Farming for Water European Innovation Partnership (EIP)

In 2024 LAWPRO, in partnership with Teagasc and Dairy Industry Ireland commenced the implementation phase of the Farming for Water EIP. This project is built on the existing Agricultural Sustainability Support and Advisory Programme (ASSAP) which consists of approximately 50 water quality advisors who give guidance to farmers to address water quality issues on their farms. The Farming for Water EIP provides €50 million of funding for farmers to adopt the supplementary water quality measures (above regulatory compliance) which are recommended during the ASSAP farm assessment process.

1089 farmers applied for funding in 2024, of which 63 were Kilkenny based. Engagement and applications in Kilkenny are being carried out primarily by Tirlán ASSAP advisors for dairy applicants and Teagasc ASSAP advisors for all other sectors. The average application value in 2024 was €10,860 which is a combination of one off and annual payments depending on the measures selected. A tillage pilot was run in the southeast in 2024 to focus on the sowing of catch/cover crops, which is the key measure for tillage lands where nitrate is the significant pressure. Due to the interest and uptake of this measure, this pilot will be expanded in 2025 with assistance from the Teagasc Tillage advisory team.

A key element of the project is working with existing community groups which have a water quality focus. The project offered funding for 5 Community Animators and in late 2024, Nore Vision secured funding for one of these posts and commenced recruitment. This Community Animator will focus on Nore Visions existing work area initially and then will expand to other priority areas, guided by LAWPRO in line with the targeted nature of the EIP. They will have set annual application targets and will play a key role in communicating positive action and measures adopted by the agricultural sector to protect and restore water quality.

Capital Delivery Office & Parks Department

During the year we continued the process of recruiting staff for the newly established Capital Delivery Office. This office has responsibility for the delivery of a wide and diverse range of projects with varying levels of complexity. The purpose of the office is to maximise the draw-down of funding and to improve delivery of Government Capital Grant Schemes, in particular the Dept. of Rural and Community Development Programmes. During the course of 2024 circa. 30 individual projects were progressed through various stages of delivery via this office. Details on a number of these projects is provided in the following pages.

The Parks Department oversees the development and maintenance of a wide variety of outdoor recreational amenities in Kilkenny City and County, including playgrounds, parks, walking and cycling trails, multi-use game areas and sports pitches which are available for use to people of all ages. It also manages grass cutting, pollinator and biodiversity projects, tree management and the day-to-day upkeep of parks under the charge of the local authority.

It also has the responsibility for the on-going restoration, visitor management and maintenance of Woodstock Gardens and Arboretum in Inistioge.

Kilkenny Countryside Park

Since opening in December 2023, the 24 acre Kilkenny Countryside Park has proven extremely popular with the public, and the dog friendly enclosure in particular has exceeded expectations in terms of usage and feedback. The inaugural Kilkenny Junior Park Run, which took place on Sunday 21st April in the Park, was a great success with 175 participants and 26 volunteers in attendance. This free, fun and friendly 2km event is now held every Sunday morning and is suitable for children of all abilities aged from 4 years to 14 years old. These events offer families the opportunity to get involved and get active in the outdoors. Kilkenny County Council was delighted that our new Countryside Park was identified by Parkrun Ireland and the local volunteer group as the ideal location for the Kilkenny Junior Park Run and numbers attending to date have been very positive with the expectation that the event will grow into the future.



In keeping with the ethos of the Park an environmentally sustainable management plan was rolled out during the year which incorporates a chemical-free approach along with a traditional meadow management regime of the expansive grasslands. The implementation of this plan has proven very successful with many colourful displays of native flora throughout the year all of which are crucial for supporting and increasing the biodiversity of the Park.

Outdoor Recreational Infrastructure Scheme (ORIS)

On foot of securing funding under the Outdoor Recreational Infrastructure Scheme (ORIS) significant progress was made on 11 projects under the various categories throughout the course of year. Some highlights are provided below:

Jenkinstown Wood Enhancement Scheme

Works to deliver the Jenkinstown Wood Enhancement Scheme were completed in the Autumn. The completed work provides for a new 1.2km trail around the Deerpark Walled Garden area which is in close proximity to the carpark and picnic amenity space. This new walk was called the “*Last Rose of Summer Walk*” in acknowledgment of Irish writer and poet Thomas Moore who wrote his poem the *Last Rose of Summer* while staying at Jenkinstown House in 1805. Other works completed include the rehabilitation of c.2km of existing walks, significant enhancements at the picnic area to make this amenity space more attractive and accessible, the provision of bike parking and the installation of hand rails, signage and seating. The completed project saw an investment of c.€227,000 into this popular public amenity.



Millennium Forest - Trail Enhancement and Accessibility Scheme

Completed works on the above scheme include the rehabilitation and surfacing of the existing 2.1km Green Loop. This loop walk, owing to the recent interventions, and its flat terrain, is now fully accessible to wheelchair users, people with reduced mobility and indeed families with prams or small children on bicycles. New picnic and seating areas were also provided along with surface improvements within the carpark. A new wheelchair accessible toilet (Dry-loo) was installed along with new interpretative and directional signage, exercise equipment and fencing. The completed works, costing c.€225,000, now affords the public greater opportunities to exercise in nature in an outdoor amenity on the doorstep of Kilkenny City.

Lacken Boardwalk Replacement Scheme

Works to replace the narrow 1.2m wide timber boardwalk at Lacken, with a new composite structure, were substantially completed before the end of the year allowing same to be opened to the public in advance of the Christmas break. The cross-section width of the new boardwalk extends to 3.6m, a threefold increase on the original. The new boardwalk is now more accessible to wheelchair users and people with reduced mobility or those with prams, buggies as well as dog walkers.

The design specification, demonstrating Kilkenny County Council's commitment to sustainability, utilises a very durable composite recycled material and, with the exception of the metal fixings and the hardwood decking used on the accessibility ramp and stairs section, it was constructed using 100% recycled plastic components. So, as you walk along the boardwalk, you are in fact walking on a mixture of blended plastics from everyday household use items such as drink bottles, food trays, butter containers and plastic film. During the construction of this boardwalk over 163 tonnes of recycled plastic lumber was used.

To help visualise the quantity of plastic that was recycled and repurposed to construct this boardwalk, it equates to just over 7.5 million (500ml) plastic drinks bottles. Had this quantity of plastic waste gone to incineration it would have released approximately 400 tonnes of CO₂ into the atmosphere. Alternatively, if the boardwalk was constructed using traditional timber products approximately 250 mature trees would have been felled for this purpose. This project was delivered under the ORIS Measure 3 and, along with the council's own funds, sees an investment of c.€800,000 in to what we know will be a much used amenity.



GREENWAYS

Woodstock (Inistioge) to South East Greenway Link (Nore Valley Greenway)

Having secured the approval of Transport Infrastructure Ireland (TII) earlier this year a technical consultancy services contract was awarded to RPS Consulting Engineers in March to advance the proposed Woodstock (Inistioge) South East Greenway Link Scheme. The contract delivery period for the prescribed services is 49 months and the scope of the brief provides for Phase 0 to Phase 4 i.e. Scope and Pre-Appraisal to Planning process. In October,



Phase 0 was completed and subsequently approved by TII. The focus has now switched to Phase 1 and it is expected that this Phase will be completed by the end of Qtr.1 2025. A Feasibility Report will be produced at the end of this phase, anticipated to be the end of March 2025, which will then be presented to TII for review and approval to advance to Phase 2 Option Selection.

South East Greenway

The construction of the South East Greenway, from New Ross to Ferrybank over a length of 24km, has been divided into a number of Lots allowing the works to progress on a phased basis. Phase One, a 6km section from Rosbercon to Glenmore, was completed and opened to the public in July 2023. During the course of 2024 construction works advanced significantly on Lot 5a, Phase 2, from Ferrybank to Curraghmore and by years end works were substantially completed on this 5.5km section. In total circa. 15km of the 24km of greenway are now substantially completed and Phase 2 is expected to be opened to the public in early to mid-2025. A new multi-disciplinary engineering consultancy team were also engaged in May to advance the detail design on the remaining sections of the greenway.



South East Greenway - Related Schemes

Greenway Connectivity Link to Glenmore

In May, the Department of Rural and Community Development announced that our funding application under the Rural Regeneration Development Fund (RRDF) to progress this project was successful. This project also incorporates the provision of a new Pink Rock Cycle Loop which will offer greenway users, travelling from the New Ross end, the option of cycling back along an alternative route beside the scenic River Barrow. A tender to engage the services of a multi-disciplinary engineer-led design team to the advance this project through detail design, tender award and construction stage were prepared and advertised in December.

Greenway Link to Slieverue

The Route Selection & Design Options Report to provide a connectivity link between Slieverue village and the South East Greenway was completed in 2023. During this process 5no. route options were considered and it was concluded that a looped route formed by a combination of two sperate links, the Kilmurry Lane route (the Southern Connectivity Link) and the Luffany route (the Northern Connectivity Link) were the preferred options. This overall looped route would best accommodate active travel by locals using the greenway and would provide the best facility to attract tourists to the village and tourism related activities in and around the locality.

A planning application under Part 8 of the Planning and Development Regulations was advertised in September for the Southern Connectivity Link. The public consultation process concluded in October and a Planning Report & Recommendation prepared to go before Council at the January 2025 Council Meeting.

Callan Heritage Trail

In April, a new heritage trail was completed in Callan that provides a coherent, informative and attractive experience for both locals and visitors alike. It showcases the rich heritage of the town and its many historical sites some of which date back to the 13th century. The project was progressed in collaboration with Kilkenny LEADER Partnership and Callan Macra na Feirme. The trail commences at the Fairgreen, thereafter taking in 12 points of interest across the town, with information provided across 10no. interpretive panels. This project was conceived locally and the information provided by the Callan Heritage Society was very much appreciated as it added so much richness to the story of Callan told through this new trail.



*Callan
Heritage Trail*



Playgrounds

The importance and value of playgrounds to communities across the City and County cannot be underestimated. So it was with delight in 2024 that an additional budget could be provided to the Parks Department to allow the roll-out of a significant repair and enhancement programme. This budget, amounting to just over €200,000, was collected over the years through specific planning contributions for playground use. Through this programme, which is over and above our general maintenance regime, a significant replacement and repair programme of high value play components was undertaken in our older playgrounds, namely Castlecomer, Coon, Ferrybank, Thomastown, and Graiguenamanagh. In addition, to this work, the budget allowed for 12no. of our 35no. playgrounds to be painted.



A new multi-use games area (MUGA) in Ferrybank Neighbourhood Park was also completed and opened in June and has proven very popular. This project was funded through a combination of Sports Capital funding, specific development contributions and the Council's own funds. While in Kilmacow playground a new wheelchair accessible roundabout was installed which was funded in part under (DCEDIY) Capital Grant Funding Scheme for Play and Recreation 2024.



Sports Capital and Equipment Programme

In Qtr. 3 the Department confirmed that all four of our grant applications were successful. Works on the projects listed below will now progress in 2025:

- Garringreen Recreational Amenity Area Refurbishment: The upgrade of the existing multi-use games area along with enhancements to the grass soccer pitch;
- Kilkenny Countryside Park: Provision of spectator fencing around the ball wall area. The development of a compound area to store maintenance equipment for the upkeep of the Park;
- Ballyragget Recreational Amenity Area – The Green: Construction of a 1.8m wide unbound pathway around the perimeter of the playing pitch along with goal mouth improvements;
- Waterbarracks Basketball area, Kilkenny City: Upgrade of basketball court and introduction of Boules court.

Woodstock Gardens and Arboretum

Throughout 2024, significant strides were made in maintaining, enhancing and promoting Woodstock Gardens. The year was marked by notable progress in conservation efforts, new planting schemes and successful visitor engagement initiatives.



Works to secure the rear elevation of Woodstock House, facing the Winter Garden, were completed. This phase of the project involved stabilising the rear façade and the removal of significant vegetation, internal and external, that was impacting the structural integrity of the wall. The next phase, planned for 2025, with focus of similar works to the front elevation, these works are being progressed via funding secured under the Historical Structures Fund.

Woodstock Gardens featured on the RTÉ Programme 'Tracks and Trails' in May, showcasing the scenic walks and rich history of the estate whereby the host, Dr. Ruth Freeman, discussed the story of the gardens with head gardener John Delaney. The programme, which attracts a national and international audience, also highlighted the South Leinster Way from Graiguenamanagh to Inistioge along with the Nore Valley Walk.

Refurbishment works in the Walled Garden also progressed, with extensive new planting to restore its historic character. Espalier fruit trees and fruit bushes were pruned and rejuvenated as part of the winter works program. Elsewhere in the gardens, summer and autumn flowering perennials were added throughout the herbaceous borders, ensuring vibrant displays across the seasons. Major tree surgery work continued along the Noble Fir and Monkey Puzzle Avenues, with compensatory planting undertaken to preserve these historic tree line avenues for generations to come.



A key focus in 2024 was increasing visitor engagement and promoting the gardens to a wider audience. To this end, an extensive online promotion campaign was rolled out that included a seasonal campaigns



to highlight the beauty of Woodstock throughout the year, during the summer Woodstock Free Wednesdays was launched, leading to a notable increase in visitor numbers. This initiative's success was reflected in increased sales at the Tea Room Conservatory and coffee truck, which benefited from the higher footfall.



We continued our food and beverage offering during the peak tourist season, which included the Tea Room Conservatory, coffee truck and ice cream parlour, along with the provision of our tented seating area for outdoor dining.

Amenity Grant Scheme

The Amenity Grant Scheme is invaluable in assisting community groups across the City and County to maintain and enhance their neighbourhoods. Works eligible under this scheme include tree, shrub and flower planting, grass cutting and the purchasing was small gardening equipment. The main objective of this scheme is to encourage a sense of ownership and pride in local public spaces and to aid communities undertake maintenance and small-scale improvement works. In 2024, the Amenity Grants Scheme was approved by the Elected Members in May and a total of 174no. applicants were awarded grants totalling €140,000.

Local Enterprise Office/Economic Development & Tourism

<p>Oifig Fiontair Áitiúil Local Enterprise Office</p>  <p>Local Enterprise Office Kilkenny 2024 Awards</p>	<p>A total of €565,656 in direct financial assistance has been approved for 23 manufacture / export service businesses located through out the county.</p>	
<p>€357,014 awarded in Business Expansion Grant assistance and €60,000 in GradStart assistance</p>		<p>€107,480 awarded in start-up / priming assistance</p>
<p>€41,162 awarded in feasibility study grant assistance</p>	<p>10 Technical Assistance for Micro Exporter grants awarded to support businesses in exploring new export market opportunities</p>	<p>22 Businesses have commenced LEAN one to one consultancy programmes to investigate possible resource efficiencies and process improvements of their businesses</p>

 <p>Oifig Fiontair Áitiúil</p> <hr/> <p>Local Enterprise Office</p>	<p>13 Businesses are availing of the Digital Start Programme to prepare and implement a plan for the adoption of digital tools and techniques across the enterprise</p>	<p>1,081 employed in the LEO Kilkenny portfolio of businesses. 70 net new jobs created in LEO supported businesses in 2024.</p>
<p>62 Businesses have been approved a Trading Online Voucher totaling €126,427 to support the enhancement of their online trading capacity</p>		<p>22 Green For Business supports awarded with 7 businesses awarded an Energy Efficiency Grant. These schemes support businesses to becoming greener and environmentally friendly.</p>
<p>1,244 people participated on focused small business training, including 94 people participating on the Starting Your Business Programme</p>	<p>9 applicants have been supported to make loan applications to the Micro Finance Ireland loan Fund</p>	<p>485 businesses have availed of specialised business specific mentoring on a variety of topics including finance, marketing, social media and HR.</p>

National Enterprise Awards



A Kilkenny City based software business, Mindaclient, represented County Kilkenny at 24th National Enterprise Awards which took place in the Round Room at the Mansion House, Dublin on May 23rd. MindaClient is a software platform that provides tailored solutions to businesses and organisations.

National Women's Enterprise Day 2024



130 female entrepreneurs took part in the Kilkenny and Carlow National Women's Enterprise Day event which took place on Thursday 17th October in The Woodford Dolmen Hotel.

Launch of Kilkenny Photobook

In May 2024, Kilkenny County Council invited amateur and professional photographers from across the County to submit photographs capturing the spirit and essence of Kilkenny and its citizens.



The resulting collection of images showcases the natural beauty and vibrant culture of Kilkenny City and County. The new photobook, "Kilkenny – Live, Work, Enjoy," was launched at the Parade Tower during December 2024. The event saw a large turnout of photographers and poets who contributed to the project.

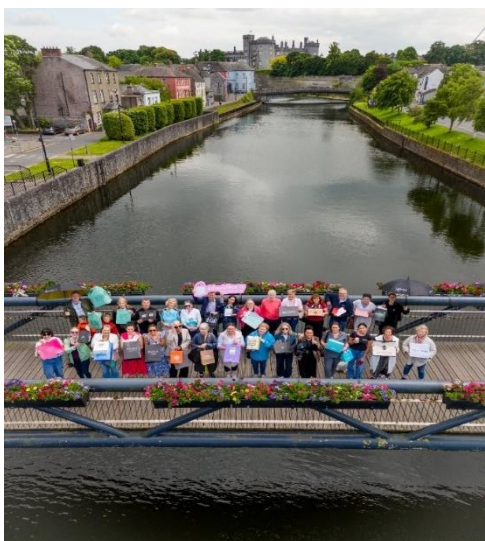


CareersKilkenny 2024

Kilkenny County Council staged an extensive careers event on Saturday, February 3rd at St. Canices Cathedral. 750 people attended the event, visiting stands from a range of local employers including Tirlán, State Street, Abbott, Connollys Red Mills, Bank of Ireland, Security Risk Advisors and CF Pharma. The event included a presentation from key note speaker Dermot Whelan on managing stress and work life balance and a number of CV and interview preparation workshops.



New Medieval Mile Video launched as part of Shopkilkenny Campaign



During 2024, Kilkenny retailers joined forces with Kilkenny County Council to create an eye-catching video to drive footfall and showcase the City's retail offering and visitor attractions along the route of Ireland's Medieval Mile. The video and related article outlining the reasons why Kilkenny is the ideal location for shoppers went live on Independent.ie on October 24th and can be seen through the below link:

[Kilkenny: Five reasons why Ireland's Medieval Mile is the ideal location for shoppers | Irish Independent](#)

Green Case Studies launched as part of International Climate Action Day



The official launch of a series of Green Case Study videos took place in County Hall on October 24th 2024 to celebrate International Day of Climate Action 2024. The initiative was undertaken to highlight the challenges faced by business in the sustainability journey, and also to showcase the progress that has been made to date by business in the County.

Four businesses of varied types and sizes participated in this initiative, and the video output demonstrates the success that can be achieved in the green transformation through small steps in the right direction and ongoing commitment to change. The four participating businesses were Connolly's Red Mills, Gores bridge; Murphy Jewellers, High Street; Peter Walsh & Sons, Three Castles and Nicholas Mosse, Bennettsbridge. The videos are available now on the County Council YouTube Channel [kilkennycoco - YouTube](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCkennycoco)

Digital



Kilkenny County Council is developing a three-year Digital Strategy for the County covering the period 2025 – 2027.

The Broadband Officer organised internal and external stakeholder consultation during 2024 to assist with the development of the Digital Strategy.

Our Kids Code

'Our Kids Code' is a research project based in Trinity College Dublin. The first 'OurKidsCode' programme commenced over July and August 2024 in the Kilkenny Mayfair Library with six taster sessions delivered to families. This is a fun and engaging way for parents and kids to explore STEM and coding together, aimed at children aged 7-12. The 'OurKidsCode' programme took place in September and October in Muckalee Community Centre (Broadband Connection Point (BCP)).

Night Time Economy Pilot

2024 saw the commencement of the two-year night time economy pilot for Kilkenny City. The Night Time Economy refers to the diverse social, cultural and economic activity occurring during specified evening and night time hours. It balances the needs of the inter related communities that co-exist to bring it to life and create a special sense of shared place.

Launch of Night Time Economy Action Plan

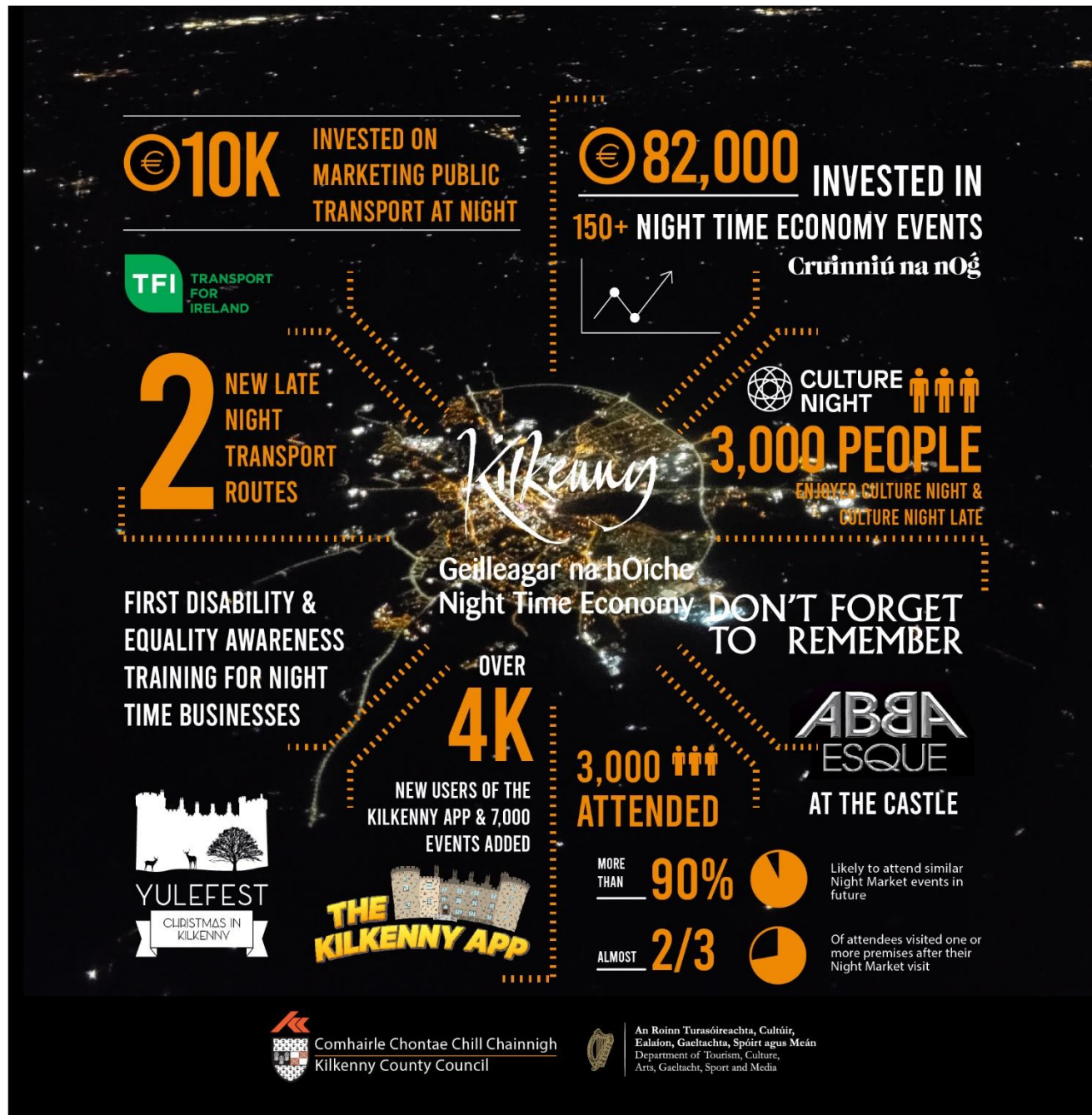


The plan was formally launched at St Canice's Cathedral on 30th April. A dedicated stakeholder forum representing cross business sector and community interests has been formed to oversee the pilot. Following a thorough consultation process, a night time economy action plan was developed for the City.

The four key pillar areas under the Night Time Economy for Kilkenny City:

- (i) Placemaking, Mobility & Accessibility
- (ii) Safety & Security
- (iii) Evening & Night Time Activity
- (iv) Marketing and Promotion

NTE Pilot Outcomes for 2024:



Savour Food Festival Night Market

In collaboration with Taste Kilkenny and the Savour Night Market, the first night market was introduced. A free Abbaesque concert was held in Kilkenny Castle in conjunction with the Night Market where over 2,000 people attended. The feedback was very positive with over 90% of attendees saying they would attend the night market again and 66% of attendees visiting one or more premises in the City after the night market.

TOURISM INCLUDING FESTIVAL SUPPORT

TOURISM INCLUDING FESTIVAL SUPPORT

Kilkenny County Council plays a significant role in promoting and developing tourism in Kilkenny. The council is responsible for developing and implementing policies and initiatives that enhance the visitor experience to our County and promote the County as a world class tourism destination.

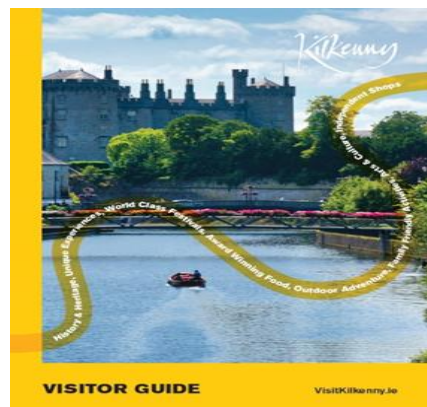
Kilkenny Destination Experience Development Plan



Kilkenny's Destination Experience Development Plan (DEDP) was launched at St Canices Cathedral in April 2024. The 5-year Failte Ireland plan focuses on improving and increasing the tourism experiences available to visitors to Kilkenny both City and County, emphasising Kilkennys rich cultural and creative design history, its vibrant City and the wonderful outdoor and adventure activities.

Kilkenny Visitor Guide

Kilkennys new visitor guide was designed and launched in Q2 of 2024. Kilkenny County Council worked in partnership with Kilkenny Tourism CLG to design and distribute the guide which was made available for all businesses in the sector to use for promotional material throughout the season. The guide is an addition to the assets developed such as out suite of maps to allow visitors to easily access our City and County when they visit.



Kilkenny Tourism CLG Marketing



2024 was successful year for Kilkenny Tourism CLG in its role to market and promote Kilkenny as a world class, year-round tourism destination. The campaign report for 2024 shows a strong overall performance across all campaigns throughout the year.

Festivals and Events



Kilkenny County Council continues to support a year-round calendar of events. 2024 budget application has been spent in full with all supported festivals and events taken place. KCC's Festivals Kit is also available to event organisers who might want to consider outdoor events as part of their programme.

Bloom 2024



Bord Bia Bloom took place over five days on the June Bank Holiday weekend. Bloom has been deemed one of the nations' favourite summer events and takes place across 70 acres in the Phoenix

Park. Kilkenny Tourism supported by Kilkenny County Council exhibited at Bloom 2024 to showcase Kilkenny as a great domestic tourism destination to the festivals 100,000 attendees.



Kilkenny Tourism Summer Networking



Kilkenny Tourism, supported by the Council and the Local Enterprise Office, held its annual networking event in June where all tourism & hospitality businesses in Kilkenny were welcomed to the wonderful Rothe House and Gardens. The event gave both existing and prospective members of Kilkenny Tourism the chance to meet and discuss ways to work together to promote Kilkenny as a great tourism

destination. Guests heard tourism thoughts & insights from leading entrepreneur in the hospitality sector Bill Wolsey who was guest speaker on the evening.

Iverk Show 2024



Feedback from our volunteers on the day was that there was great interaction from Waterford, Wexford, Tipperary visitors in particular

Kilkenny Tourism welcomed all guests of Iverk Show to Kilkenny on 24th August. Attendance was estimated at 20,000 with Kilkennys Tourisms stand located in Enterprise Section of the site.



2024 International Travel Award for Kilkenny

Kilkenny was honoured with the prestigious title of “Cultural Destination” at the 2024 World Luxury Travel Awards. This accolade recognises Kilkenny’s exceptional commitment to providing unparalleled luxury experiences to travellers from around the globe. Valerie O’Sullivan, Board member of Kilkenny Tourism CLG, who collected the award at the awards ceremony hosted at Galgorm, Co Antrim on 19th October, was delighted to accept the award on behalf of the entire Tourism and Hospitality Sector in Kilkenny.



The tourism team supported Bo Media productions to produce a Christmas special for RTÉ One that aired on Christmas Eve, featuring the Nativity story. This new production was a fantastic opportunity to showcase Kilkenny’s attractions and local culture during the festive season and will potentially be aired for the next number of years on RTE. [Watch The Kilkenny Nativity on YouTube](#)

Taste Kilkenny 2024



2024 saw Taste Kilkenny continue in its support of our local food producers and local hotels and restaurants. The web-site was revamped in March of 2024. Taste Kilkenny was also represented at our annual Savour Kilkenny Food Festival with a demonstration stand throughout the weekend featuring all local Kilkenny producers.



Comhairle Chontae Chill Chainnigh
Kilkenny County Council

DIRECTORATE OF FINANCE, INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY, FACILITIES MANAGEMENT

MARTIN PRENDIVILLE
HEAD OF FINANCE



The Finance Department is responsible for the overall control and management of the Council's finances. The main services being provided under this directorate are Financial Planning and Control, Income Collection, Treasury Management, Property Management, and Motor Taxation

Statement of Comprehensive Income *(formerly Income & Expenditure Account)*

The Statement of Comprehensive Income is set out in page 13. The total expenditure incurred on the provision of services by the Council in 2024 was €125.8m. The net surplus for the year was €31k, bringing the cumulative surplus to date to €160k. The adopted budget for the year was €111m. Housing, roads and development management accounted for 87% of the increase in expenditure over budget. A significant portion of the additional expenditure in housing was funded from additional rental income. Additional roads grant income was received to offset against the overspend in roads. One-off grants relating to business incentives totalling €7.6m were paid in 2024. The council received 100% funding in relation to these grant payments.

Public lighting costs were €560k higher than budget. This was mainly due to increased energy costs. The net operating cost of the fire service was €1m higher than budget due to increases in payroll and training costs. Additional expenditure was also incurred in tourism, festivals, library operations, maintenance of parks and open spaces and in the provision of additional match funding for the various grant schemes. A reduction in rates strike offs and additional rates income helped to fund these overspends.

An additional pension provision of €1.3 was also required to meet the ever increasing pension liability. This is a national issue and not just an issue for Kilkenny County Council. This cost was offset by additional compensation for Payroll cost increases of over €1m.

Financial Position *(formerly Balance Sheet)* **at 31st December 2024**

The Council has maintained a relatively strong balance sheet as at December 2024. A strong focus was maintained on cash management throughout the year. The Bank overdraft facility was not utilized during 2024. The closing cash balance at the end of December was €46.4m compared with €47.2m at the end of 2023. Of the total cash balance on hand, €19.1m is ring-fenced to provide funding for capital projects.

The total non-mortgage bank loans outstanding at the end of the year amounted to €12.5m, a decrease of 0.9m from previous year. No new non-mortgage loan finance was drawn down during the year. The total mortgage loan balance at December 2024 was €32.99m, a decrease of €0.35m from the previous year.

Following an increase in the commercial rates arrears in 2023, the arrears were reduced in 2024 by €878k. The collection rate for the year was 90%. The bad debt provision required has also been reduced.

The collection rate on housing rents decreased by 1% to 95% following an increase in the rent arrears by €120k to €617k. Council continues to work with the tenants in arrears to find an appropriate solution. Arrears on housing loans remained static during the year.

The historical income collection performance since 2019 is set out in the following:

	Percentage Collection					
	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Commercial Rates	94	83	87	95	87	90
Rents & Annuities	95	96	97	96	96	95
Housing Loans	90	90	90	90	90	90

Capital Project Funding Arrangements

The total expenditure on capital projects delivered under the Capital Programme in 2024 was €87.8m. 81% of the expenditure was incurred in Housing and Roads. The outstanding balance on completed capital projects at December 2024 was €8.9m. The annual budget provides for repayment of this commitment over a period of up to 8 years.

An ambitious six-year Capital Programme for the period 2024 – 2029 has been adopted by the Elected Members with a total spend of €832m. The match funding to be provided by the Council is €70.2m.

Conclusion

This financial report reflects the significant increase in operational delivery in 2024. The council is committed to delivering of projects included in the six-year Capital Programme. It is critical that the Council continues to manage its finances in a prudent manner to ensure that the Council has the capacity to provide the match funding required.

FINANCE TABLE

Expenditure by Division					
		Gross Expenditure	Income	Net Expenditure	Net Expenditure
		2024	2024	2024	2023
	Notes	€	€	€	€
Housing & Building		32,579,218	32,660,864	(81,647)	(915,928)
Roads Transportation & Safety		32,019,091	24,735,885	7,283,205	6,514,689
Water Services		7,701,071	7,545,687	155,384	(123,775)
Development Management		21,316,177	14,228,474	7,087,703	6,173,993
Environmental Services		18,154,261	6,899,936	11,254,325	9,012,507
Recreation & Amenity		8,445,644	456,668	7,988,977	7,233,268
Agriculture, Food and the Marine		684,842	487,862	196,979	191,185
Miscellaneous Services		4,915,931	8,296,006	(3,380,075)	(2,379,612)
Total Expenditure/Income	15	125,816,234	95,311,382		
Net cost of Divisions to be funded from Rates & Local Property Tax				30,504,852	25,706,326
Rates				21,906,819	21,350,380
Local Property Tax				13,318,189	11,744,898
Surplus/(Deficit) for Year before Transfers	16			4,720,156	7,388,952
Transfers from/(to) Reserves	14			(4,688,381)	(7,369,800)
Overall Surplus/(Deficit) for Year				31,775	19,152
General Reserve @ 1st January 2024				127,922	108,770
General Reserve @ 31st December 2024				159,697	127,922

STATEMENT OF INTERNAL FINANCIAL CONTROL

Introduction

I, Lar Power, Chief Executive (CE) of Kilkenny County Council am responsible for the annual financial statement (AFS), prepared by the Director of Finance, in accordance with the accounting code of practice issued by the Minister under section 107 of the Local Government Act, 2001.

I certify that the financial statements of Kilkenny County Council for the year ended 31 December 2024, are in agreement with the books of account and have been prepared in accordance with the accounting requirements of the Minister of Housing Local Government and Heritage.

The AFS is subject to external audit, by an auditor of the Local Government Audit Service, whose purpose is to form an independent opinion of the accounts and state whether the annual financial statement presents *fairly the financial position* of the local authority and of its income and expenditure for the period in question, and whether the transactions of the local authority under which they purport to have been carried out.

The AFS reports on the day-to-day activity of Kilkenny County Council in the form of the Statement of Comprehensive Income & Expenditure, summarised by Division. The Statement of Financial Position outlines the Kilkenny County Council overall financial position as of the 31st December, 2024.

The *Statement of Comprehensive Income* represents expenditure and income on the day-to-day running of the Kilkenny County Council.

The key sources of income for Kilkenny County Council are as follows:

	Current Year €	Previous Year €
Goods & Services	29,728,277	30,042,167
Grants & Subsidies	65,460,055	50,541,113
Rates	21,906,819	21,350,380
Local Property Tax	13,318,189	11,744,898

Activity on the Income and Expenditure account for 2024 is as follows: The total expenditure incurred on the provision of services by the Council in 2024 was €125.8m. The net surplus for the year was €31k, bringing the cumulative surplus to date to €160k. The adopted budget for the year was €111m. Housing, roads and development management accounted for 87% of the increase in expenditure over budget. A significant portion of the additional expenditure in housing was funded from additional rental income. Additional roads grant income was received to offset against the overspend in roads. One-off grants relating to business incentives totalling €7.6m were paid in 2024. The council received 100% funding in relation to these grant payments.

Public lighting costs were €560k higher than budget. This was mainly due to increased energy costs. The net operating cost of the fire service was €1m higher than budget due to increases in payroll and training costs. Additional expenditure was also incurred in tourism, festivals, library operations, maintenance of parks and open spaces and in the provision of additional match funding for the various grant schemes. A reduction in rates strike offs and additional rates income helped to fund these overspends.

An additional pension provision of €1.3m was also required to meet the ever increasing pension liability. This is a national issue and not just an issue for Kilkenny County Council. This cost was offset by additional compensation for Payroll cost increases of over €1m.

	Current Year €	Previous Year €
Income	130,536,390	113,745,294
Expenditure	125,816,234	106,356,343
Transfers to Capital	(4,688,381)	(7,369,800)
Exceptional Item	0	0
Surplus for 2024	31,775	19,152
Prior Year Adjustment	0	0
Opening Revenue Reserve	127,922	108,770
Closing Revenue Reserve	159,697	127,922

The net surplus for the year was €32k, bringing the cumulative surplus to date to €160k.

The *Statement of Financial Position (Balance Sheet)* represents the total financial activity of the council for the year together with comparative year figures as appropriate.

The statement includes assets and liabilities as follows:

- Assets both recently constructed/purchased and historical assets
- Work in progress and preliminary schemes- mainly roads and housing
- Long Term Debtors – housing loans
- Current Assets- including Stock, Debtors, Cash at bank
- Current and long term liabilities- mortgage and non-mortgage loan borrowings
- Various Reserves/Balances

The Net Assets Kilkenny County Council at the end of 2024 total €2,936,119,794 and are as follows:

	Current Year €	Previous Year €
Fixed Assets	2,898,451,962	2,841,613,377
Works in Progress	10,609,727	34,334,613
Long Term debtors	75,784,911	69,545,754
Current Assets	55,024,632	57,120,038
Current Liabilities	21,018,148	23,004,244
Net Current Assets/ (Liabilities)	34,006,483	34,115,794
Creditors (Amounts greater than 1 year)	82,733,290	77,822,227
Net Assets/ (Liabilities)	2,936,119,794	2,901,787,311

A *Statement of Funds Flow* was introduced as part of AFS 2011. While the guidance of International Accounting Standard 7 Statement of Cash Flows has been followed, the business of local authorities is substantially different to most private sector organisations and therefore some minor changes to the format have been agreed to ensure the data displayed is meaningful and useful within the local government sector.

System of Internal Financial Controls

As CE of Kilkenny County Council, I acknowledge my responsibility for ensuring that an effective system of internal financial control is maintained and operated by the Kilkenny County Council. This responsibility is exercised in the context of the resources available to

Kilkenny County Council. Also, any system of internal financial control can provide only reasonable and not absolute assurance that assets are safeguarded, transactions authorised and properly recorded, and that material errors or irregularities are either prevented or would be detected in a timely manner. Maintaining the system of internal financial controls is a continuous process and the system and its effectiveness are kept under ongoing review.

Financial Control Environment

As CE of Kilkenny County Council, I confirm that a financial control environment containing the following elements is in place:

- Financial responsibilities have been assigned at management level with corresponding accountability.
- Reporting arrangements have been established at all levels where responsibility for financial management has been assigned.
- Formal procedures have been established for reporting significant control failures and ensuring appropriate corrective action.
- There is an Audit Committee which as part of its work programme regularly review the internal financial control system.
- Procedures for all key business processes have been documented.
- There are systems in place to safeguard the assets.

Administrative Controls and Management Reporting

As CE of Kilkenny County Council, I confirm that a framework of administrative procedures and regular management reporting is in place including segregation of duties and a system of delegation and accountability and, in particular, that:

- procedures for key business processes have been documented
- there are systems aimed at ensuring the security of the ICT systems
- there are systems in place to safeguard the assets of the local authority and
- there are appropriate capital investment control guidelines and formal project management disciplines in operation.

Procurement Compliance

Kilkenny County Council ensures that there is an appropriate and ongoing focus on good practice in tendering and purchasing and that procedures are in place to ensure compliance with all relevant procurement guidelines.

Internal audit and Audit Committee

As Chief Executive, I can confirm that Kilkenny County Council has an internal audit function with appropriately trained personnel, which operates in accordance with a written charter. Its work is informed by analysis of the financial risks to which Kilkenny County Council is exposed and its annual internal audit plans are based on this analysis. I am satisfied that there are procedures in place to ensure that the reports of the internal audit function are followed up.

I can confirm that Kilkenny County Council has an effective audit committee which carries out an annual effectiveness review of their activities. I can also confirm that an Audit Committee is in place in accordance with the requirements of Section 122 of the Local Government Act 2001 (as amended).

The statutory functions of audit committees as set out in section 59 and 60 of the Local Government Reform Act 2014 are as follows:

- (i) to review financial and budgetary reporting practices and procedures within the local authority that has established it;

- (ii) to foster the development of best practice in the performance by the local authority of its internal audit function;
- (iii) to review any audited financial statement, auditor's report or auditor's special report in relation to the local authority and assess any actions taken within that authority by its chief executive in response to such a statement or report and to report to that authority on its findings;
- (iv) to assess and promote efficiency and value for money with respect to the local authority's performance of its functions; and
- (v) to review systems that are operated by the local authority for the management of risks.

I recognise that the audit committee plays a crucial role in the governance framework of local authorities, particularly in the context of increased public sector accountability. They have an independent role in advising the Council on financial reporting processes, internal control, risk management and audit matters as part of the systematic review of the control environment and governance procedures of the local authority.

I acknowledge the Audit Committee's role in the risk management process and in the continuing review of the control environment and governance procedures in Kilkenny County Council.

Risk and Control Framework

Kilkenny County Council has implemented a risk management system which identifies and reports key risks and the management actions being taken to address and, to the extent possible, mitigate those risks.

A corporate risk register is in place which identifies the key risks and evaluates and grades them according to their significance. The register is reviewed and updated by the Management Team on a regular basis. There is also a risk register in place for each service division and these are also reviewed and updated on a regular basis.

The outcome of these assessments is used to plan and allocate resources to ensure risks are managed to an acceptable level. The risk register details the controls and actions needed to mitigate risks and responsibilities for the operation of controls are assigned to specific staff.

As Chief Executive, I confirm that key risks and related controls have been identified and processes have been put in place to monitor the operation of those key controls and report any identified deficiencies.

The Statement of Internal Financial Control will be included in the draft Annual Report submitted to Council Members by 30th April 2025.

Signed by:



Chief Executive

Kilkenny County Council is committed to the use of information systems to expand and increase the efficiency and quality of service delivery to staff and to the public. The Information Services Department looks after the Information Systems requirements of the County Council and County Library. The Key achievements for 2024 were:

- Carried out Accessibility improvements on the County Council Web Site.
- Completed an upgrade of the Travel and Subsistence system.
- Completed updates to our customer relationship management (CRM) system.
- Implemented various online surveys and application forms.
- Maintained GDPR and data protection compliance for our websites.
- Managed and supported our consultation portal consult.kilkenny.ie
- GIS support provided to the Assets Register, Habitat Mapping and Active Travel Scheme projects.
- Updated the public Geographical Information System (GIS) viewers.
- Updated the internal GIS Portal for staff.
- Ongoing additions, updates, and security enhancements to the various local authority web sites.
- Continued support for the Central Credit Register process
- Completed the provision of ICT services to Mayfair Library, Community Office in the Butt's Green and to the new Urlingford Fire Station
- Final migration of IS Services into Patricks Court for 9 departments.
- Upgrade to network connections for Ferrybank AO and Castlecomer AO
- Preparation for migration of UE sites into UE network
- Implemented enhanced provision of services to Library Public PCs
- Completed updates of iHouse and iReg systems
- Completed work on upgrade to the iPlan system
- Completed migration of payroll system for firefighters to the cloud
- Completed move of firefighter's pay frequency from quarterly to fortnightly
- Assisted with implementation of ICOB Grants system
- Commenced preparation for move to a single central Electoral Register
- Commenced preparation for migration of our Financial Management System to the cloud
- Improved email security systems
- Upgrade of Remote Working facilities for staff
- Continued the expansion in the use of mobile devices to staff
- Expanded the use of MS Teams Deployment to staff.
- Continuation of the email migration project
- Ongoing rollout of new PCs and laptops
- Ongoing updates to servers and PCs to maintain security of the network
- Expanded the use of Two Factor Authentication
- Additional Security Systems rolled out.
- Maintained GDPR compliance for our websites
- Continued the migration to cloud services

Kilkenny County Council's Procurement Unit have continued to facilitate the progress of an ongoing flow of contract opportunities in line with the organisation's ambitious public works programme. Approximately €39 million of Kilkenny County Council's Revenue spend and €70 million of capital spend is procured on various works, services and goods from suppliers mainly based locally or nationally.

Key Achievements for 2024

- 42 Tenders loaded and advertised on the *eTenders* procurement portal
- 34 Mini tenders and Quotations advertised on the *SupplyGov* portal
- The Office of Government Procurement and the Local Government Operational Procurement Centre work closely with local authorities to provide national frameworks that local authorities can draw from. Kilkenny County Council drew on these frameworks in 2024 in the areas of public utilities, fleet, ICT, professional services, PPE and Debt Collection.
- Further measures to promote Green Procurement Policies (GPP) including the roll out of extensive training in GPP for key tendering sections across the organisation. Contract notices are now expected to highlight where the tender adheres to and promotes Green Procurement and Social Considerations.
- Participation by staff at internal and OGP training courses.
- Completion of Draft Procurement Plan, Policies and Procedures Manual and GPP for 2024-2027

Some of the Key Tenders Delivered in 2024 include:

- Completion of the tendering process for various Architectural, Structural Conservation, Engineering works and design for special projects such as elements of the South East Greenway, the Kilkenny Countryside Park, the Tholsel Building and the Abbey Quarter.
- Various housing tenders throughout Kilkenny City and County.
- Successful completion of a number of tenders under the Active Travel Programme and the Town and Village Regeneration and renewal programmes.
- Provision of Services for Grass Maintenance in Kilkenny City and County.
- Procurement by way of open tender of a number of machines that will facilitate road maintenance and improvement throughout the City and County.
- Completion of various services tenders for Corporate, LEO, Planning and Housing
- Award of contracts for Roads Projects following various tender competitions by open tender and by drawing on the South Eastern Pavement Framework which has Kilkenny as the Lead Authority.
- Kilkenny was the lead authority for 6 counties in setting up a Multi-Supplier Framework for the provision of Design and Build Dwelling Projects with values between €5,000,000 and €18,000,000.

SPECIAL PROJECTS

Abbey Quarter – Masterplan

Work on the implementation of the Abbey Quarter Masterplan has continued in 2024.

The Abbey Quarter Masterplan was updated in 2023 to take into consideration policy and legislation changes since the original Masterplan was approved in 2015 and to review the works that have been undertaken to date in the Abbey Quarter.

Abbey Quarter - New Buildings

(by Kilkenny Abbey Quarter Development Partnership)

Planning permission for the next building on the Abbey Quarter was granted in May 2023, but this permission was subsequently appealed to An Bord Pleanála. An Bord Pleanála granted permission for this building on the 9th July 2024.

The proposed use of the building will be office use with commercial or retail uses on the ground floor. The AQ Development Partnership is considering the timing for going to construction at present.



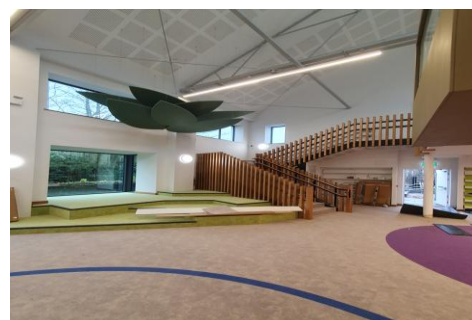
Abbey Quarter - Mayfair Library



The new Kilkenny City Library is located within the Mayfair Building on the Abbey Quarter site.

The Mayfair Building is a very significant building in the social heritage of Kilkenny having housed the Mayfair Ballroom from 1943 to 1973.

Designated as main contractors for the Mayfair Library project in September 2021. The project programme was adversely affected in 2022 & 2023 with supply chain issues for construction materials associated with COVID 19 and the war in Ukraine. The building was opened to the public in April 2024 to broad public appeal.



Abbey Quarter - Public Realm Areas

Kilkenny County Council are responsible for the development of the extensive areas of public realm areas in the Abbey Quarter Site with 60% of the former brewery site to be developed as public realm. The development of areas of High-Quality Public Realm through the site is considered to be critical to the integration of the former Brewery Site into the City Centre.

Funding for the works completed to date has been provided through the Urban Regeneration and Development Fund (URDF), the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) through the Designated Urban Centres Grant Scheme and Kilkenny County Council's own funds.

Abbey Quarter - Horse Barrack Lane

The construction contract for the redevelopment of the Brewhouse Building included the redevelopment of Horse Barrack Lane and Brewhouse Square, with these projects completed in May 2022. The development of the Mayfair Library includes the completion of the landscaping works to Horse Barrack Lane, with the works substantially completed in 2023. Full completion and opening was completed in early 2024.



Abbey Quarter - Urban Street and Park Project

Additional detailed design work was completed on aspects of the Urban Park & Street in the Abbey Quarter during 2024 and the final tender documents were completed by mid Q2 2024. After URDF Gate 2 approval to proceed to tender, the tender was issued during early Q3 2024. After the tender assessment processes were completed the request for URDF Gate 3 approval to award was submitted in late Q4 2024 and approval to award is expected in early Q1 2025.

The Urban Park centred around the National Monument of St Francis Abbey will be the central focus of the Abbey Quarter Site and is designed to accommodate outdoor events associated with the many festivals held in the City throughout the year. The development of the Urban Street which will be of pedestrian and cyclist priority will facilitate the development of the proposed new buildings within the Abbey Quarter Site.



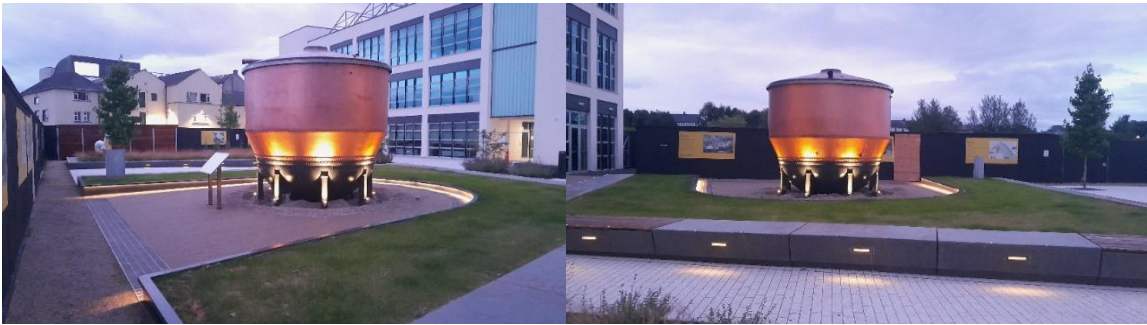
Abbey Quarter - Greensbridge Boardwalk

With the completion of the Riverside Garden through the former Smithwicks Brewery site, the last missing link in the existing Riverside Walks through the City Centre is a short 150m length of walkway immediately north of Greensbridge.

An application for Planning Approval for the project was submitted to An Bord Pleanála in Q3 2023 and planning approval received in May 2024. Detailed design and the preparation of tender documents was completed during Q3 2024. The tender documents were issued via etenders in late Q4 2024. It is expected that the Gate 3 approval request for permission to award will be submitted in early Q1 2025.

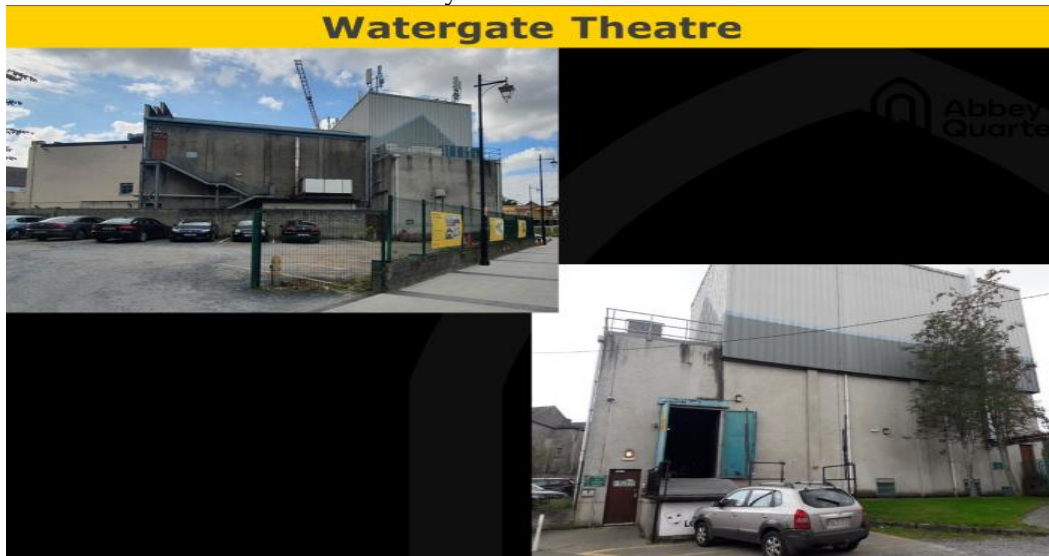
Abbey Quarter Brewhouse Square -Copper Tank Artistic Feature.

The tank was preserved from when the Smithwicks Brewery was decommissioned and installed in Brewhouse Square to honour the brewing traditions of the site. The project was commenced in late Q4 2024 and completed by Q2 2024. The project was funded through Failte Ireland.

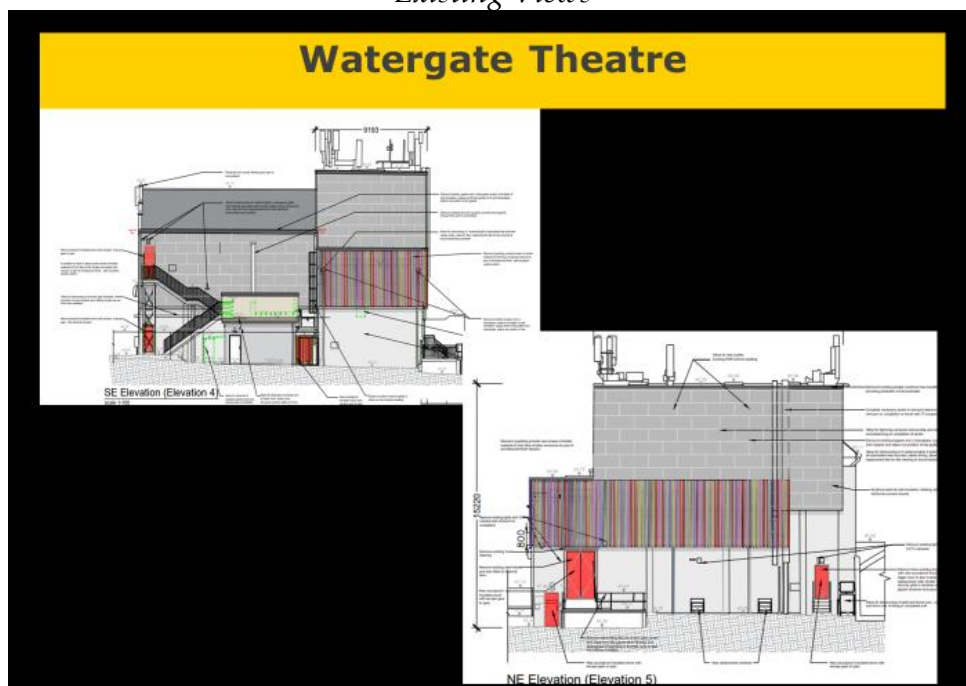


Watergate Theatre.

The design in respect of the energy efficiency works in respect of the Watergate Theatre proceeded during 2024. An application for Part 8 planning approval was submitted during late Q4 2024 with a decision due in early 2025.



Existing Views



Proposed Views

Tholsel Project

Work on the detailed design of the Tholsel Project was completed in 2023 and tenders were received for the main construction works during 2024. Approval by the National Monuments Section to allow the awarding of the construction contract was received in late 2024 and the contractor appointed with works expected to commence in Q1 2025.



The Tholsel is to be renovated and will incorporate a new Tourist Visitor Attraction whilst retaining the civic function of the building. Work on the Visitor Exhibition has also been advanced in 2024.

Thomastown Library

The new Thomastown library will replace the existing Thomastown Library which does not meet with the requirements of a modern-day library. The new library is located a very short distance from its current location on Marshes Street and directly adjoins the former Community Sports Hall.



The detailed design and tender documents for the project were completed in 2023. Tenders were received for the main construction works and funding for the project was confirmed in December 2023.

The project proceeded to construction in May 2024 with substantial completion expected by July 2025. Following fit-out it is expected to open to the public in November 2025. The project is part funded through the Rural Regeneration & Development Fund (RRDF).

Piltown Garda Station

Construction work on the renovation of Piltown Garda Station for its reuse as a part remote working hub & Garda Station proceeded through construction during 2024. Substantial completion was achieved by late Q4 2024. As noted the building will continue to be used as a Garda Station but the area formerly used for residential accommodation will be repurposed as a remote working hub. The project is part funded by the Department of Rural and Community Development through the 2021 Town and Village Renewal Scheme. The works were completed by Richard McEvoy Contracting Ltd during 2024 with handover expected in early 2025.



