



Kilkenny County Council
Comhairle Chontae Chill Chainnigh



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IN FOCUS

GRAIGUENAMANAGH

REGENERATION

Ár dTodhchaí
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Message from the Cathaoirleach Kilkenny County Council



Welcome to the 3rd issue of the Kilkenny County Council Town & Village Renewal and Rural Regeneration projects *IN FOCUS* update. The first *IN FOCUS* edition highlighted projects in Callan while the second issue looked at Thomastown. In this issue we have a closer look at projects completed and presently underway in Graiguenamanagh.

Kilkenny County Council has been successful in securing significant funding and implementing key projects in Graiguenamanagh and these projects are now having a very positive impact on the town. Kilkenny County Council look forward to continuing to work with our local communities to further develop projects in our rural towns and Villages.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the Executive of Kilkenny County Council and Local Community Groups in Graiguenamanagh for their efforts in assisting in the delivery of the various regeneration projects over the last five years.

Yours sincerely

Fidelis Doherty
Cathaoirleach
Kilkenny County Council



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GRAIGUENAMANAGH HISTORY



The name Graiguenamanagh (Graig na Manach) means 'Grange (Valley or Village) of the Monks'. The town has a rich heritage dating back to the founding of Duiske Abbey in 1204. The town has a rich heritage and may yet have unidentified sites/features of archaeological activity associated with the settlement of Graiguenamanagh-Tinnahinch area.

It is believed that the Abbey takes its name from the Duiske or Black Water that cascades from Brandon Hill into the River Barrow. Duiske Abbey is a fully restored Cistercian church, reputedly the longest in Ireland (approx. 70m). Duiske is the daughter house of Stanley, situated in Wiltshire. As with many other monastic sites in Ireland, the Abbey was dissolved in 1536 by Henry VIII. The Abbey prospered with the establishment of a nearby mill and the export of wool. The trade flourished with the arrival of Flemish weavers in the 1600s.

One of their descendents, Mr. Cushen, established the Cushendale Woolen Mills in the 1800s, featuring traditional colourful textiles in natural fibres. Graiguenamanagh expanded beyond the Abbey as a market town, aided by the development of the Grand Canal and the navigation of the River Barrow, which ultimately connected the town with Dublin, New Ross, Waterford and Carlow. The production of wool was historically important to the town's economy and sheep rearing remains a predominant agricultural activity in the hinterland.

GRAIGUENAMANAGH LOCAL AREA PLAN PLANNING FOR THE FUTURE

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Graiguenamanagh-Tinnahinch Joint Local Area Plan 2021 'Graiguenamanagh/Tinnahinch Tourism and Recreational Project Concept Study' set out goals and objectives for the development of the tourism industry. This study sets out a number of goals and objectives for the settlement which have been provided for as objectives within the County Council Area Plan to give a statutory context and ensure they are accomplished. The Strategic Vision is based on issues raised during the pre-draft public consultation period, detailed analysis of the profile, functions and activities of Graiguenamanagh-Tinnahinch in line with its position in its respective County's Settlement Hierarchy: 'The Joint Area Plan will promote pop-

ulation growth of Graiguenamanagh and Tinnahinch, reversing the recent trends of population decline. The plan envisages a consolidated town centre with enhanced east-west connections for pedestrians and cyclists, combined with a range of traffic management proposals which will improve accessibility to and vitality of the consolidated town centre. The Plan will also encourage job creation by capitalising on local strengths, including the towns' unique setting, natural and built heritage and by enhancing the interface with the River Barrow, thereby supporting opportunities to sustainably exploit the river as a visual, recreational and tourism amenity.

NATIONAL POLICY

National Policy Objective 16 of the National Planning Framework sets out to 'target the reversal of rural decline in the core of small towns and villages through sustainable targeted measures that address vacant premises and deliver sustainable reuse and regeneration outcomes.' The responsibility for the implementation of policies and objectives contained within this Draft Joint LAP will be dependent on a number of possible funding sources, including EU programmes and grants, the National Government, the County Council and the private sector.

Of particular relevance is the €1bn Rural Regeneration and Development Fund (RRDF) which will apply to all settlements and rural areas with fewer than 10,000 people, which will operate under the Department of Rural and Community Development. In response to current issues around town centre vacancy, dereliction and underutilisation particularly in Graiguenamanagh-Tinnahinch the Councils will support future funding applications under this scheme.

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PROJECT FUNDING

A wooden boardwalk with railings leads through a lush green forest towards a body of water. The boardwalk is made of light-colored wood and has dark railings on both sides. The forest is dense with green trees, and the water is visible in the background on the left side.

To date Kilkenny County Council has been successful in securing significant funding for Grai-guenamanagh under the Rural Investment Fund and this document will give you an overview of some of these projects.

This funding stream is committed by Government to be invested in rural Ireland over the period 2019 to 2027. The purpose of the fund is to support job creation in rural areas, address de-population of rural communities and support improvements in our towns and villages.

The fund also assists and supports economic recovery in rural areas. It includes a number of integrated funding interventions.

Examples include;

- Rural Regeneration and Development Fund.
- Town and Village Renewal Scheme.
- Outdoor Recreation Infrastructure Scheme.
- Local Improvement Scheme.
- LEADER.

The Town & Village Renewal Scheme has played a key role in funding projects in Graiguenamanagh

Since 2017, Kilkenny County Council has been successful in applying for, securing and administering funding for numerous projects in Graiguenamanagh. One of these funding streams includes the Town and Village Renewal Scheme. This scheme was first introduced in 2016 and is funded under Project Ireland 2040.

The scheme is targeted at towns and villages with a population of 10,000 or less and all projects funded under the scheme must be completed within a 12 to 18 month period. The Town and Village Renewal Scheme is one of a series of national and local support measures designed to rejuvenate small rural towns and villages throughout Ireland.

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TOWN & VILLAGE RENEWAL



Rural Regeneration Development Fund

Funding secured under the Rural Regeneration Development Fund is provided to further the aims of Our Rural Future, which highlighted the need to build strongly on existing investment and to strive for even greater ambition to achieve significant and rapid progress on the objective of balanced regional development. The fund is supporting coordinated and integrated projects between government departments, state agencies, local authorities, other public bodies, communities and, where appropriate, philanthropic funders and/or the private sector, which will have an impact on sustainable economic and social development in rural areas.



RURAL REGENERATION DEVELOPMENT FUND

GRAIGUENAMANAGH REGENERATION PROJECTS UPDATE



SILAIRE WOODS



The picturesque Silaire Wood along the river Barrow in Graiguenamanagh, is the only remaining woodland of the once extensive monastic woods to have escaped the ravages of time. In the mid 1990's the civic minded people of Graiguenamanagh raised funds to purchase the wood from Coillte, in response to fears that the wood would be cleared and felled. Thereafter, the stewardship of the woods rested with the voluntary Graiguenamanagh Development Company who continue to protect and enhance this wonderful amenity for the enjoyment of the public.



BEFORE

AFTER

Under the Outdoor Recreation Infrastructure Scheme (ORIS), an initiative of the Department of Rural and Community Development, Kilkenny County Council secured funding in 2020 to construct a new 400-meter boardwalk. It replaced the former timber boardwalk that was destroyed by a severe flood event in 2015. Apart from the nuts and bolts the new boardwalk is made from 100% recycled plastic. As you walk along the boardwalk, you are in fact walking on a mixture of blended plastic from household items such as bottle caps, plastic film and margarine tubs. It is estimated that this boardwalk could be made up of approximately 13.5 million bottlecaps. The total cost of this element of the project was €265,000, with €200,000 grant funded through ORIS and the balance provided from Kilkenny County Council's own funds.

In addition to the above, in 2020 funding was also secured under the LEADER Programme 2014-2020, to undertake trail and car-park rehabilitation works and to



800 YEAR OLD TREE



In 2021 a large majestic Oak tree at Silaire Rock succumbed to the passage of time having fallen on the boardwalk. Kilkenny County Council made arrangements to remove the tree and repair the subsequent damage to the boardwalk.

In the interests of health and safety an extensive programme of tree surgery was also undertaken in Silaire Wood to remove dead and dangerous trees overhanging the main path network and in particular the boardwalk. The majority of the trees reduced or removed were ash which sadly are in decline nationally due to ash dieback. All resulting wood has been left on the forest floor for invertebrates and new planting is underway following the preparation of a woodland plan for the site.



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BARROW VALLEY ACTIVITIES HUB



The Barrow Valley Activities Hub was successful in securing €92,000 under the 2021 Town & Village Renewal Scheme. The activities Hub is a bespoke Community facility on the Old Dock Road, Graiguenamanagh (formally known as the Pitch & Putt). Strategically placed on the banks of the river Barrow and in the heart of the town. It was designed to fade into the landscape and as a platform into the Barrow Valley & its hinterland. The Activities Hub facilities include changing and shower facilities, kitchen, secure storage and a large glassed training/gathering space facing out on to the area's natural assets. The building is located on a site of four acres that acts as a natural town park and is central to local walks, swimming facilities (including diving boards) and the picturesque town of Graiguenamanagh.



The facilities located by the river is also suitable for hosting large groups, Camper Vans and as a location for large community sporting events and festivals. The Activity hub is an ideal venue for visiting groups or School trips where the focus is outdoor activities. The site also boasts an eighty meter by forty All-Weather pitch which can be used by visiting groups as part of their overall program of activity. Well done to all involved.



THE HARRISTOWN POCKET PARK

In 2019 local people gathered for the official opening of the town's newest public space 'The Harristown Pocket Park' by the then Cathaoirleach of Kilkenny County Council, Peter Chap Cleere.

The new Pocket Park which adjoins Fairview Housing Estate and the Borris Road was delivered by Kilkenny Co. Council and funded under the Department of Communication, Climate Action and Environment 2019 Anti-Dumping Initiative Programme. The works consisted of both hard and soft landscaping which incorporated age friendly seating. The planting is pollinator friendly and a wildflower area will be planted in Spring to compliment the works already complete.

Frank Stafford, Senior Engineer, Kilkenny County Council, expressed his wish that the residents of Fairview and Harristown take ownership of this new public space. Treating it as an extension to their gardens and use it as a place to meet up with neighbours and friends for chat or simply to sit and watch the world go by. He also thanked local business man Frank Doherty, Daybreak Service Station, for his assistance in getting the project off the ground.



THE TURF MARKET CAR PARK



There is limited on-street and off-street public car parking in Graiguenamanagh, particularly in the Lower Main Street and Riverbank area, which in turn creates a barrier to the economic growth and development of the area. It had been a long-standing objective of Kilkenny County Council to increase the parking provision serving the commercial heart of the town. The identification and delivery of new off-street

parking provision was defined as a policy action in the Graiguenamanagh Local Area Plan, 2009. Part 8 Planning was granted in 2018 to cater for 15 vehicles on the old Murphys signs site in the middle of Town. €40,000 was granted under Town and Village Renewal Accelerated Measures due to Covid in Q3 of 2020. Works commenced and were complete in December 2020.



FESTIVAL TENT

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GRAIGUE OUTDOOR FESTIVAL TENT



In 2017 Town & Village applications were submitted under a competitive call for proposals. The focus was on projects that would enhance and develop towns socially, economically and culturally. The selection of projects was undertaken by the Department of Arts, Heritage, Regional, Rural & Gaeltacht Affairs from a competitive process on the basis of applications submitted from all Local Authorities. Full involvement by community interest and business interests was an essential factor of the successful projects. Graiguenamanagh was successful in securing €41,000 for the provision of a festival tent, a Town of Books book store /artisan hub and a Marketing and PR Campaign.



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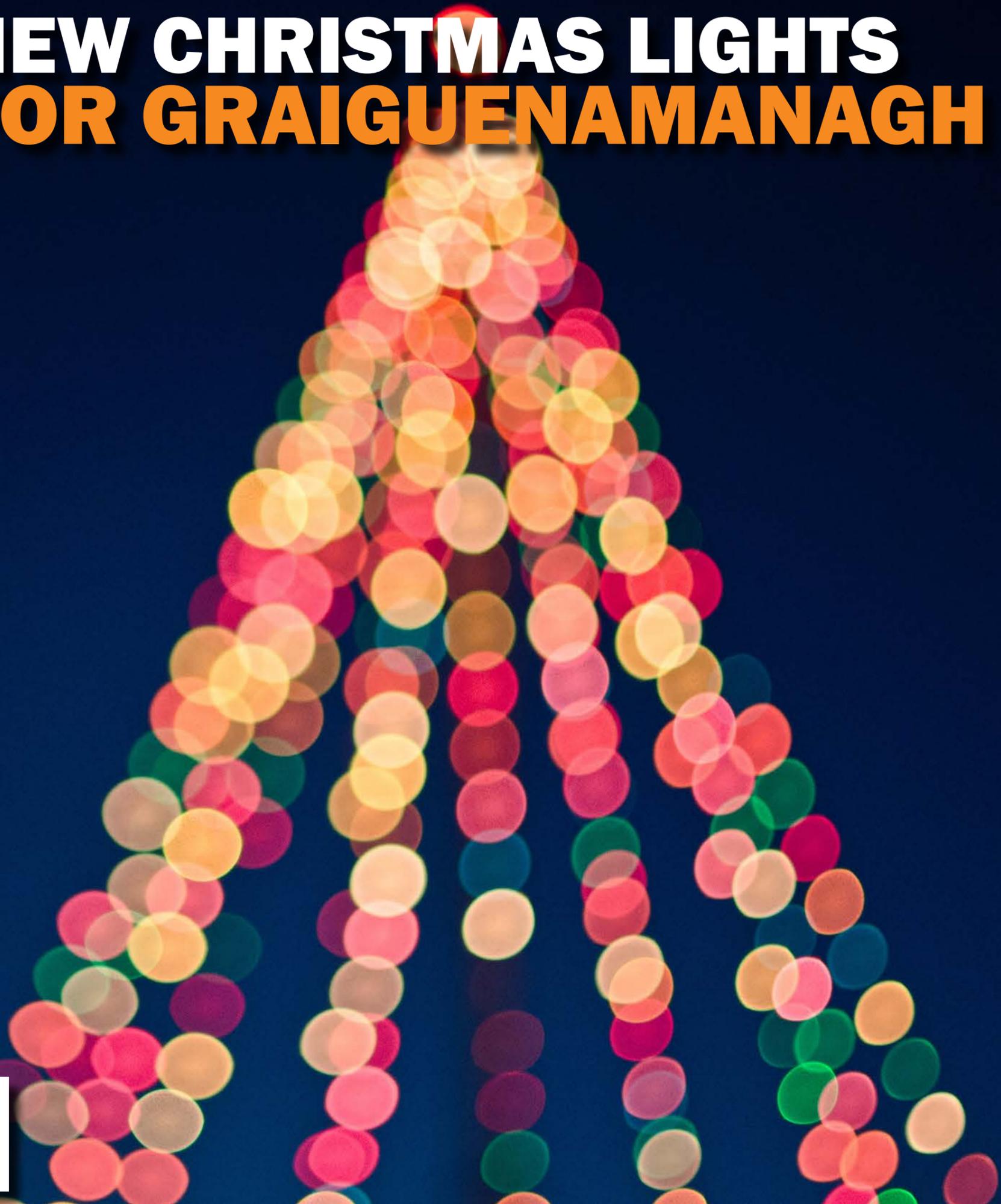


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Comhairle Chontae Chill Chainnigh



Kilkenny County Council was also successful in securing funding under the Town & Village Renewal Scheme for new Christmas lights in Graiguenamanagh. Having consulted with the local community, the upgrading of the festive lights was identified as a key priority. The funding was used for the provision of a much-needed upgrade of the older Christmas lights.

NEW CHRISTMAS LIGHTS FOR GRAIGUENAMANAGH





ABBHEY HALL

RECREATIONAL AMENITY

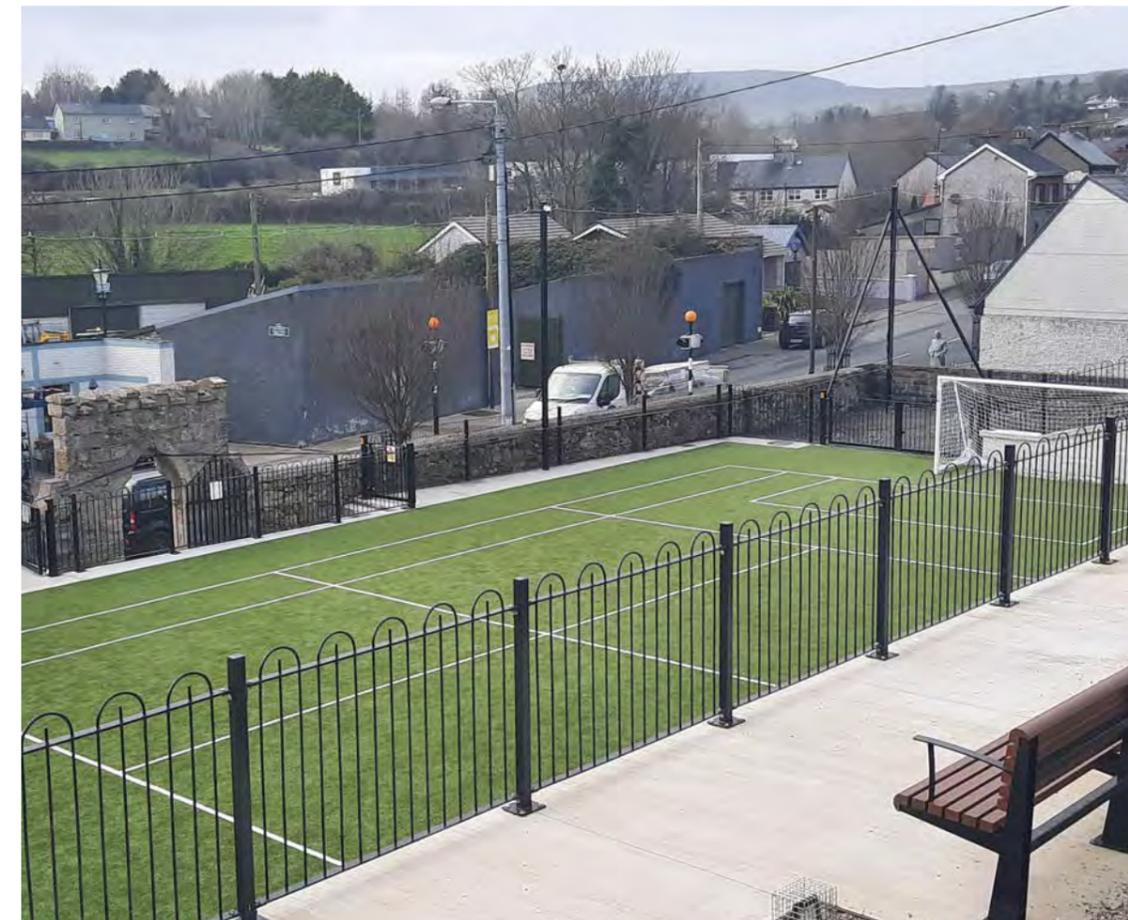
Works commenced in May 2020 on the rehabilitation of the Abbey Hall grounds in Graiguenamanagh. The completion of this project will bring a much loved public amenity in the heart of the town back into use for public enjoyment. Works include;

Main Street Level / Lower Level

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



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Mid-Level

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

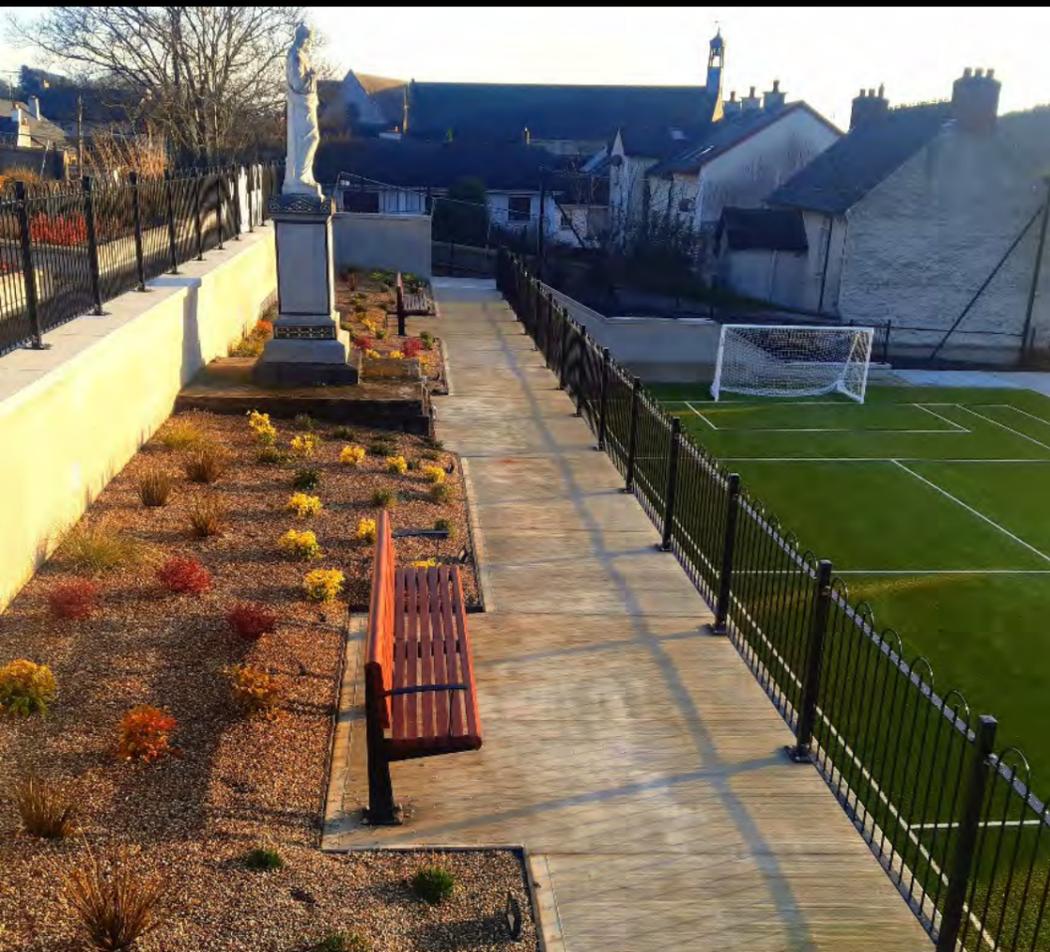
Upper Level

Replacement of existing defective low-quality railing along top of retaining wall with ornate protective railing and replacement of defective surface on the access and maintenance routes. The works also include the restoration of the Abbey Hall town clock



and installation of a replica bell which was completed in May.

The total cost of this project was c.€180,000, of which €135,000 is funded through the LEADER Programme 2014 -2020, €9,000 from the local community directly with the balance coming from the Council's and Kilkenny LCDC funds. To assist with the advancement of this project Kilkenny Co. Co. is providing technical assistance with respect to design, procurement and contract administration.





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TOWN MURAL

In 2021 Artist Paul Bokslag completed the beautiful Mural in Grai-guenamanagh. A stylised representation of the town on the gable end of the Anchor derelict pub. You'll see it just before you cross the bridge over the river Barrow into Tinnahich, Co. Carlow. It depicts Brandon Hill, Duiske Abbey, the seven-arch hump back bridge, Abbey Hall, the lock keeper's cottage in Lower Tinnahich and two local shoppers.

Commissioned by Kilkenny County Council and the Chamber of Commerce as part of their Shop Local campaign and supported by the Department of Rural and Community Development.

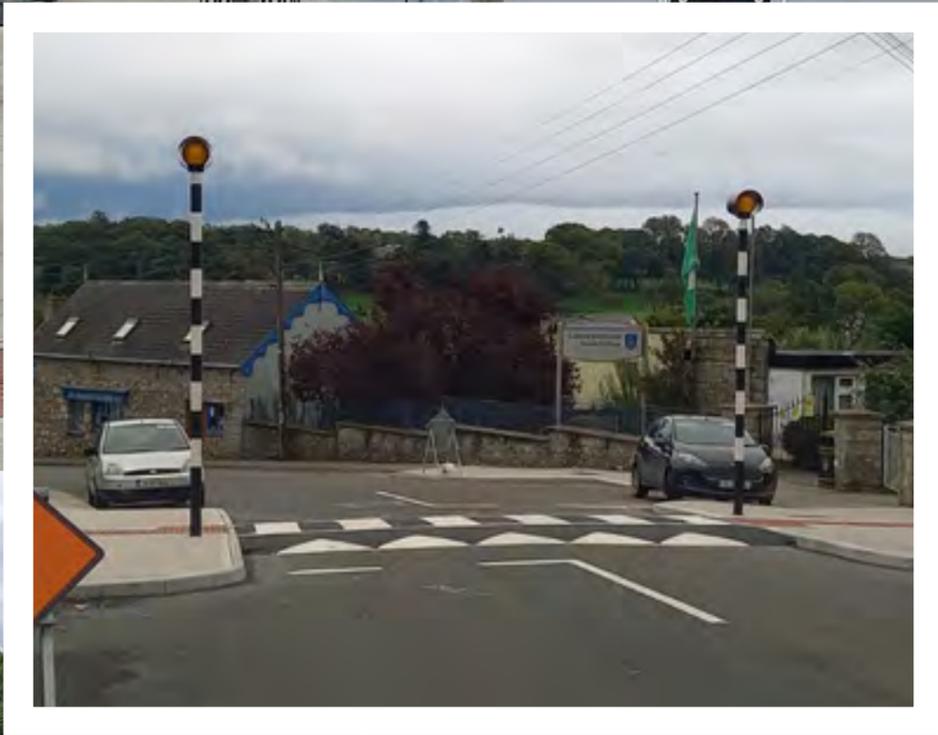


The '#shopkilkenny – keep it in the County' campaign was designed to support retailers in key towns throughout Kilkenny by promoting the shop local - shop safely message, which in turn will support jobs in our local communities. A legacy of the project is a mural in a key town which encapsulates that message.





ACTIVE TRAVEL PROJECTS



ACTIVE TRAVEL

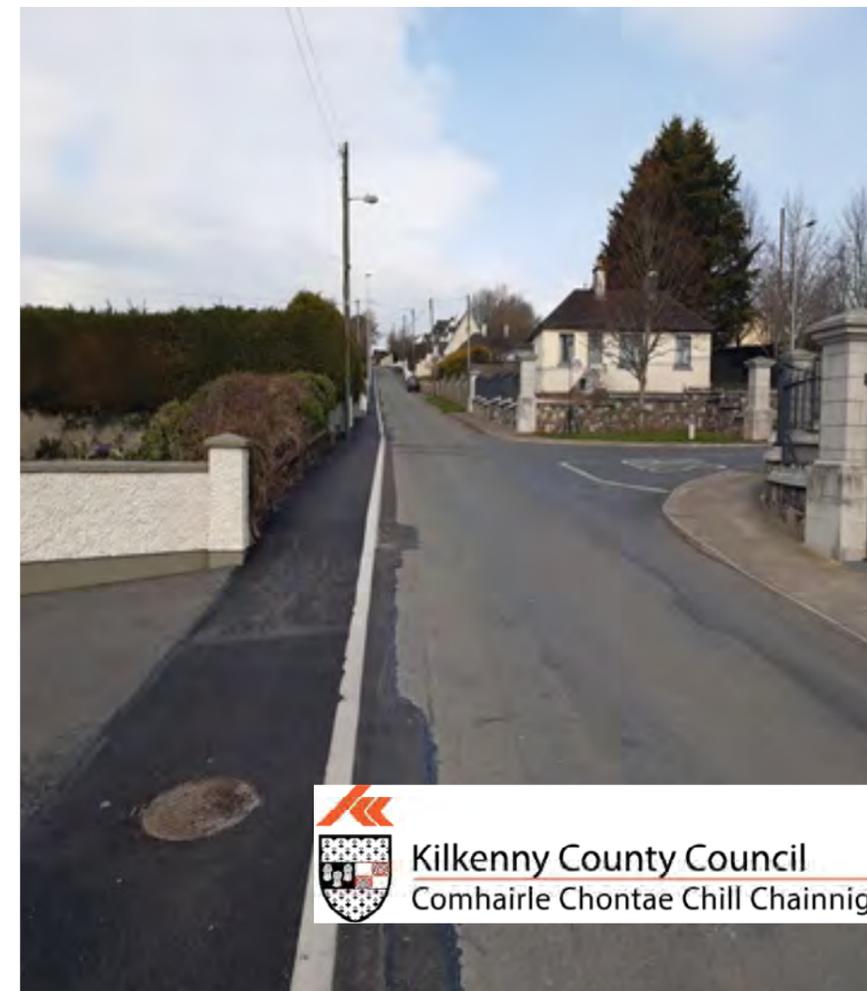
Kilkenny County Council has been successful in receiving funding under the Rural Active Travel Investment Programme for Active Travel projects. These projects are improving connectivity in and around the town. Examples of projects completed include a New Pedestrian Crossings at Duiske College and the Old Bank and a new footpath on the Moneen Road linking back to the town. Also a new Quayside Carpark with road markings was developed and now provide a number of new parking spaces.

Provide safe access for pedestrians residing or travelling on the Harristown Road to Graiguenamanagh Town Centre.

In 2021 the works completed comprised of the construction of a new footpath at Harristown that connects the town with existing housing estates. This new footpath runs from the junction of the R703 and now provides safe access for cyclists and pedestrians. The project covered 450m in length and extended out to the 50/80kph speed limit location.



ACTIVE TRAVEL



GRAIGUENAMANAGH FLOOD RELIEF SCHEME





Kilkenny County Council are the lead authority, in partnership with Carlow County Council in advancing a flood relief scheme for the communities of Graiguenamanagh-Tinnahinch. This project is funded by the OPW and is part of the €1bn National Fund announced by the Government for Flood Relief Schemes back in May, 2018. Graiguenamanagh-Tinnahinch was awarded €9.06million for the project.

Since then, Byrne Looby Consulting Engineers were appointed to design a flood relief scheme that is socially, environmentally, technically and economically viable for the effected communities.

The Project is currently in Stage 1 – Design Phase. The Hydrological analysis has been completed for the scheme with the hydraulic model substantially complete. These results will feed into the options appraisal for the scheme in order to determine a preferred scheme. The Environmental work has progressed on the project with a number of baseline surveys completed on site. A number of constraints have been identified on the site namely with the rich cultural heritage fabric of the town and its Archaeological setting.

The Next steps for the project are to include a Public Consultation event mid-summer in Graiguenamanagh where we encourage the community to

come in and view the proposed options for the flood relief scheme and share their views with the team. A landscape Architect has been a recent addition to the team to design and manage open spaces with the objective to provide an aesthetically pleasing sympathetic urban environment to incorporate a flood relief scheme. Invasive Species Treatment Contract has been awarded for 2022 and will commence in June on site. This is year 2 of the treatment programme.

It is programmed to close out Stage 1 by the end of 2022 and commence Stage 2 - Planning in early 2023.

GRAIGUENAMANAGH-TINNAHINCH FLOOD RELIEF SCHEME





The Graiguenamanagh Men's Shed

In April 2021 a contract to retro-fit and refurbish the disused toilet block on the Convent Road to facilitate a new workshop for the Graiguenamanagh Men's Shed was signed. Whilst the main purpose of the project is to re-purpose the existing building into a workshop it will also provide for a new green living roof to help our pollinators and enhancement works to the area in front of the heath centre and local library. The latter will provide a space for visitors to these services to relax in green comfortable setting. The total cost of this project is €106,000, of which €78,000 is funded through the LEADER Programme 2014-2020, €5,000 from the local community with the balance coming from Kilkenny County Council.





BRANDON HILL SIGNAGE

Outdoor Recreational Infrastructure Scheme (ORIS)

The Brandon Hill Summit Walk was delivered in 2021, and included way-mark signage, large trailhead map-broad signs in both the Deerpark and Raheendonore car park and an information sign on “Freaney the Robber”. The marker post signage provides direction, length and duration to and from the summit. In conjunction with the above, in acknowledgment of the popularity of the route, Coillte agreed

to construct a 20-bay car park on their lands at the Raheendonore access point and increased the capacity of Deerpark car park.





GRAIGUENAMANAGH PLAYGROUND

Work continues on enhancing the very popular Graiguenamanagh playground. It is hoped that as many people as possible continue to have the opportunity to enjoy this playground in a safe environment. In order to continue to keep this amenity up to a high standard, we ask the general public to respect the space by avoiding littering and bringing dogs into the playground.

The playground is intended for use by children between the ages of 1 to 14 and all children using the playgrounds must be supervised by an adult at all times.



ENERGY EFFICIENT PILOT BUILDING PROGRAMME

Development of 2 apartments at the Old Fire Station site.

Construction has begun on new energy-efficient homes in Graiguenamanagh that are part of the Interreg North-West Europe Housing 4.0 Energy (H4.0E) project. The pilot homes are a part of the overarching goal of the EU-funded H4.0E project to lower embodied emissions in house builds and, in time, reduce the cost of construction; this is done by utilising a Design for Manufacture and Assembly (DfMA) model and ensuring the houses are built to nZEB (near Zero Energy Building) standard by using prefabricated timber-frame closed panels or low-carbon GGBS cement composites and energy-saving efforts, like the installation of photovoltaic cables and heat pumps.



- A recent investment of €420,000 in Graiguenamanagh library has resulted in the full replacement of the roof, installation of new windows and internal painting of all areas. The library is 35 years old and this investment now ensures a safe and modern space for current users as well as future proofing the building for future library users.

GRAIGUENAMANAGH LIBRARY



GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE & RECREATION

looking to the future

As highlighted in the 2021 joint Local Area Plan, the environmental and heritage resources of Graiguenamanagh-Tinnahinch can be described as its Green Infrastructure. The Green Infrastructure network is the network of natural and semi-natural areas that support the natural environment by providing habitats for wildlife, air and water filtration and surface water management, recreational and tourism opportunities and “greener” neighbourhoods. Green infrastructure networks include waterways, wetlands, woodlands, wildlife habitats, greenways, parks and conservation lands, forests and other open spaces that surround and thread through our towns and cities.

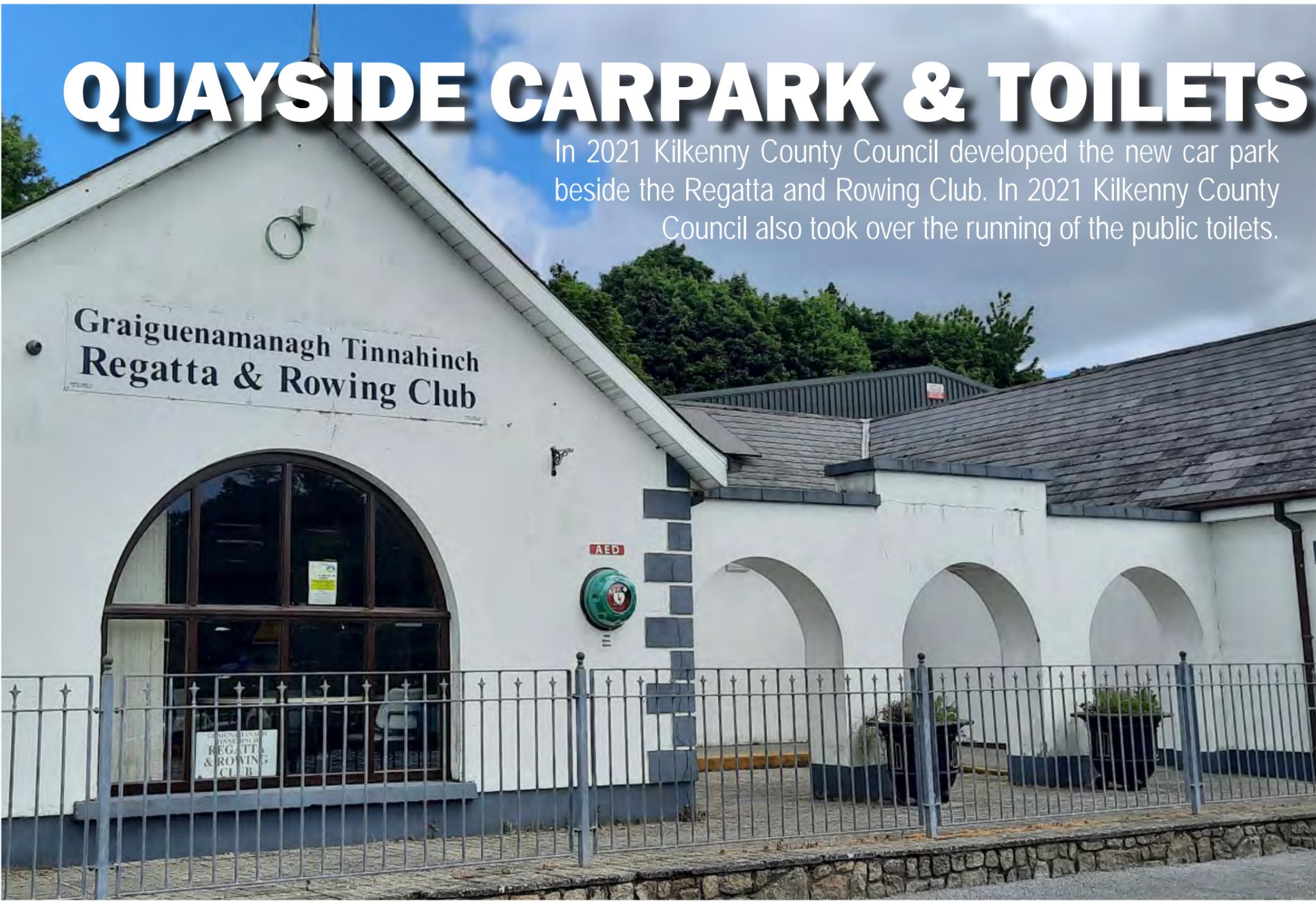
The emergence of Green Infrastructure planning is a response to the growing recognition of the many benefits which green space provides at a strategic level and of the need to plan for its protection, provision and management in tandem with plans for growth and development. It has a significant role to play in assisting in the protection of Natura 2000 sites and biodiversity and meeting the requirements of the Habitats Directive. The green infrastructure belt in Graiguenamanagh-Tinnahinch runs primarily along the east west



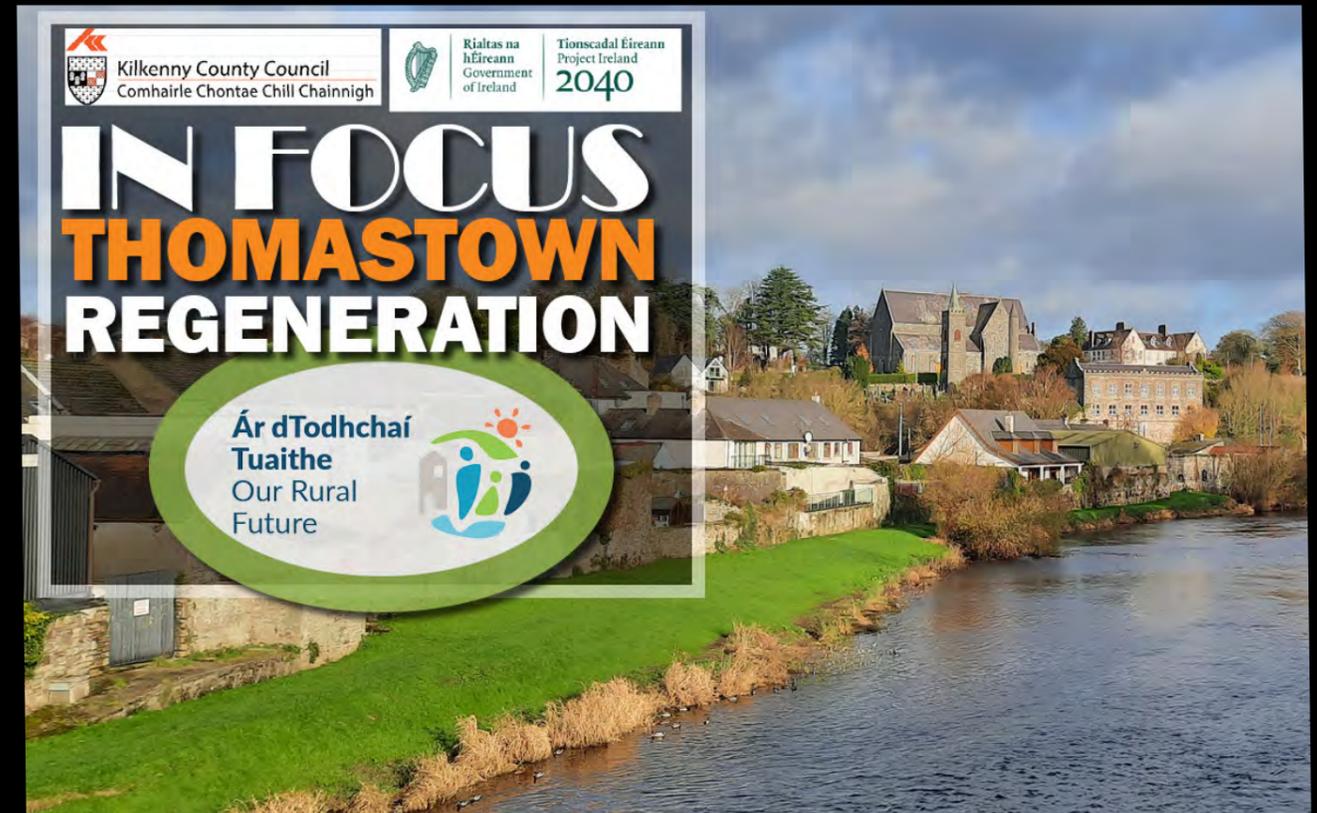


QUAYSIDE CARPARK & TOILETS

In 2021 Kilkenny County Council developed the new car park beside the Regatta and Rowing Club. In 2021 Kilkenny County Council also took over the running of the public toilets.



**Click on the image below for details on
Regeneration Projects completed and
underway in Callan and Thomastown**



Message from the Chair of the Callan/ Thomastown Municipal District Kilkenny County Council



I would like to take this opportunity to thank all of the groups and individuals in Graiguenamanagh who have participated in the development of these projects.

I would also like to take this opportunity to thank the Executive and the staff of Kilkenny County Council who applied for the funding and facilitated the development and implementation of these very significant projects in Graiguenamanagh

Yours sincerely
Michael Doyle
Chair Callan/Thomastown Municipal District
Kilkenny County Council

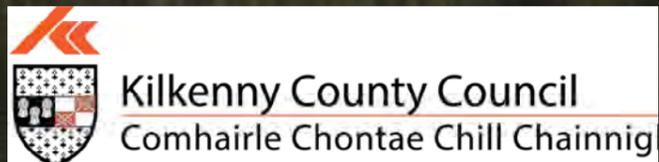


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Callan - Thomastown Municipal District



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