



COMHAIRLE CHONTAE CHILL CHAINNIGH
KILKENNY COUNTY COUNCIL
TUARASCÁIL BHAINISTÍOCHTA MÍOSÚIL
MONTHLY MANAGEMENT REPORT
FEABHRA - FEBRUARY 2021

EXECUTIVE FUNCTIONS

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

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

Amenity Grants

The amenity grant scheme for 2021 is being advertised in February.

City & County Development Plan

Consultation period runs from the 22nd December, 2020 to the 12th March, 2021 inclusive.

Local Enterprise Week

Will take place virtually from 1st to 5th March.

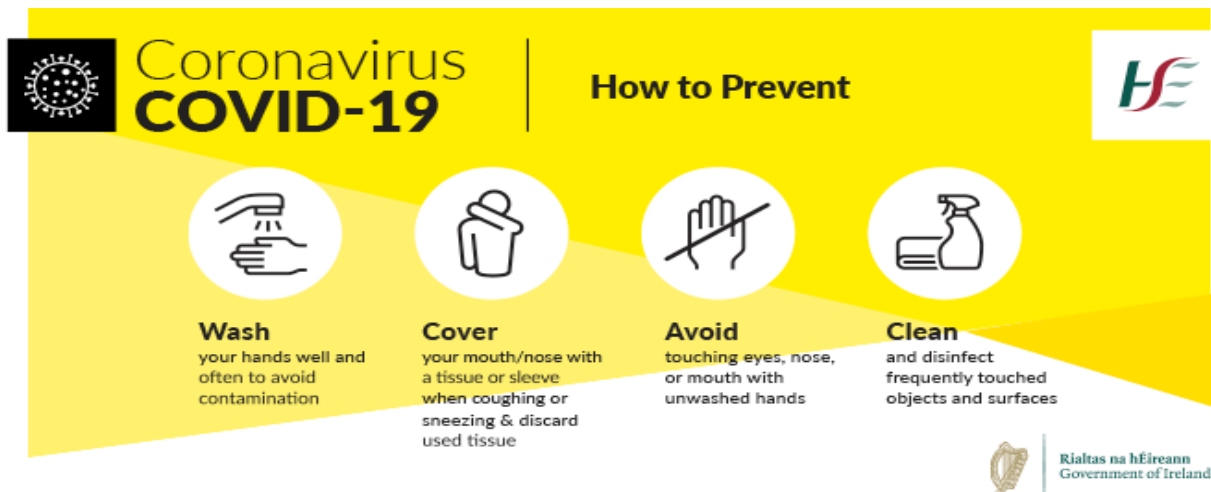
REPORT AT A GLANCE

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



IF YOU ARE NOT FEELING WELL

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

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

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

IF YOU ARE FEELING WELL

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

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

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

If you develop symptoms of coronavirus:

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





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

Graphic: Paul Scott/IRISH TIMES GRAPHICS



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CORPORATE

St. Patrick's Festival 2021

Our St. Patrick's Day Festival is a time to celebrate our community and county. It is a day to show off our creativeness and achievements. Due to COVID-19 restrictions we will have a different approach to the festival this year and will be coming up with a programme of events that can be enjoyed by everybody while we stay at home to keep our community safe.

Work is underway by the St. Patrick's Day Committee and there will be a whole host of interactive events, ideas for people to get creative at home, greening our County and looking back on years gone by while looking forward to the years to come. There will be something for everyone and events to encourage people from all ages and all corners of the community to get involved in this year's celebration.

The Council will be turning the City green and will be supporting communities in greening our County. Our iconic buildings in the City including County Hall, City Hall and Kilkenny Castle will be lit up in an emerald glow. We will be encouraging people to take a snap of their favourite Kilkenny spot and upload to St. Patrick's Festival social media accounts where we will be showing images of #kilkennyingreen.

Fáilte Ireland has identified that an opportunity exists for Regional St Patrick's Day Parades and Festivals to play a more significant role in driving Ireland's tourism performance outside of the tourism hot spot areas during the shoulder season and position Ireland as the only place to be for St. Patrick's Week Celebrations.

Kilkenny is one of six locations in Ireland which has been successful in securing funding under Fáilte Ireland's regional support scheme for St. Patrick Day Celebrations initiatives. This is an ongoing development programme and due to the inability to hold events this year as a result of

COVID-19 restrictions the focus is on building towards 2022 St. Patrick's Day events.

Therefore, we will be laying the foundation this year in order to position ourselves for a bigger and better festival in 2022 and will partner with the Festival Team in Fáilte Ireland, who will develop a support package of financial investment, business supports and international sales and marketing support. A maximum number of 3 St Patrick's Day Parades and Festivals may be funded under this initiative.

ROADS

NATIONAL ROADS

KILKENNY MAJOR SCHEMES:

N25 Glenmore to Waterford Scheme

The scheme is within the concluding stage of Phase 2 - Option Selection. A preferred route corridor is expected to be announced in early Q1 2021.

N24 Waterford to Cahir Scheme

Arup and Partners Ireland Ltd are working in the early stages of this project which take approximately 60 months. The project website will be launched in late February and members will be notified shortly of a briefing before the launch.

KILKENNY MINOR SCHEMES:

A number of minor schemes are progressing through various stages in conjunction with TII on the national road network.

N24 Tower Road

Planning approval for the proposed scheme was secured in 2019. Approval of the Compulsory Purchase Order for the scheme was given by An Bord Pleanála on the 5th August 2020. We are presently undertaking the administrative procedures necessary to give effect to that decision. It is expected that construction will commence in 2021.



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N77 Ballyragget to Ballynaslee

Simultaneously a planning application under 177AE and a Compulsory Purchase Order application has been made to An Bord Pleanála for the above project in December 2020.

N24 Carrick Road

The section of N24 proposed to be improved is rural in nature and located immediately North West of the village of Mooncoin in County Kilkenny. The overall length of the scheme is 1.9km. We are currently preparing the necessary documentation to make a simultaneous application to An Bord Pleanála for approval under 177AE and also Compulsory Purchase Order approval for the scheme. It is expected that the application will be made in Q1.

NON NATIONAL ROADS

We are currently working on essential services in the MD areas. This work includes road repair/patching and drainage works. We are also maintaining environmental services in our towns and villages. An announcement is imminent on the non-national roads allocation for 2021 which will feed into the road works scheme for 2021.

PLANNING

Development Management - January 2021

| <i>Planning Summary</i> | <i>Total to January</i> | |
|--------------------------------|-------------------------|-------------|
| | <i>2020</i> | <i>2021</i> |
| Planning Applications Received | 52 | 48 |
| Planning Applications Granted | 64 | 62 |
| Planning Applications Refused | 3 | 4 |
| Complaints Received | 12 | 10 |
| Warning Letters Issued | 12 | 12 |
| Enforcements Notices Issued | 2 | 1 |
| Cases Closed | 9 | 6 |

The Planning Department is open for business subject to Covid-19 restrictions for the protection of customers and staff. Visits to the Planning Office are by pre-booked appointment. Appointment can be made by telephoning the planning office at 056 7794010 or by email to planning@kilkennycoco.ie

FORWARD PLANNING

City & County Development Plan

The draft City and County Development Plan 2021 - 2027 was approved by the Members and went on public display for its statutory public consultation, which runs from the 22nd December, 2020 to the 12th March, 2021 inclusive. The draft Plan is available to view on Consult.Kilkenny.ie. and updates on the process are provided on the dedicated portal for the draft plan at Ourplan.Kilkenny.ie.

Hard copies of the Draft Plan can be purchased directly from the Planning Department. There are 3 books in the set. The hard copy of each book costs €100. Book 1 is the Plan for the City & County. Book 2 contains the appendices to the Plan and Book 3 contains the Environmental reports (*the Strategic Environmental Assessment, the Flood Risk Assessment and the Natura Impact Assessment*).

A series of four public consultation meetings have been held online on the draft Plan.

A Series of secondary meetings will also be held with interest groups. A meeting took place with Comhairle na nOg on the 28th of January. Further meetings are planned for February.

People can make submissions directly through the Council's online portal at <https://Consult.Kilkenny.ie/> or by email to ourplan@kilkennycoco.ie or in writing, marked "Draft City and County Development Plan", to the Planning Department, Kilkenny County Council, County Hall, John Street, Kilkenny R95 A39T.

Graiguenamanagh Local Area Plan

A joint draft Local Area Plan for Graiguenamanagh and Tinnahinch has been finalised by Carlow County Council and Kilkenny County Council. The Draft Plan went on public display in December a public consultation webinar was held on 11th of January 2021, on public display for 8 weeks from 13th and approximately 40 people attended the event. The



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submissions period is now closed. The next step will be the report by the Chief Executive to the Members.

Masterplans

In a parallel process a number of masterplans are being prepared for the areas of Loughmacask, St Canice’s Campus (*the former St. Canice’s Hospital*) and the Fairgreen area of the City. These were also impacted by Covid 19. Work is continuing with the preparation of these masterplans with the first of these Loughmacask being the furthest advanced. Members will be briefed on the resolution of these before any draft masterplans are placed on public display.

Conservation

Applications are currently being received for both Conservation Grants: Built Heritage Investment Scheme and Historic Structures Fund. The closing date had been extended to the 12th February.

Historic Towns Initiative

Application has been submitted to the Heritage Council’s Historic Town Initiative 2021, for Phase 2 of the repair works to the railings of Saint Mary’s Church in Callan.

Building Control

Number of Valid Commencement Notices Received Monthly Cumulative Totals 2021 & 2020

| Year: End of Month | 2021 | 2020 |
|--------------------|------|------|
| January | 8 | 30 |

Number of Valid Disability Access applications received monthly cumulative totals 2021 & 2020

| Year: End of Month | 2021 | 2020 |
|--------------------|------|------|
| January | 4 | 8 |

Taking in Charge

The Taking in Charge Team updated each Municipal District of the status of each of the 42 estates currently on the Taking in Charge programme at the respective MD Meetings in January. The estates listed below have been agreed to be prioritised for progression in 2021:

- Banager Court, Piltown
- Bellfield, Ferrybank
- Newpark Crescent, Kilkenny
- The Green, Ballyfoyle
- Friary Walk, Callan
- Brookfield, Ballyhale
- Haven Court, Ballyragget
- Rath Ullord, Kilkenny
- Whitescastle, Knocktopher
- Lakeside, Kilkenny
- Roseleigh, Mooncoin

Works are continuing on the remaining estates. All non-essential construction works are closed during current Level 5 restrictions, to be reviewed by Government on 5th March next. It should be noted therefore that the timelines in the agreed programme for Taking in Charge may be adversely impacted if restrictions are to remain in place for a longer time period.

Vacant Sites

- Following the annual review of sites around the county, a total of 7 sites were added to the Vacant Sites Register on 31st December 2020. To date we have received notification of two appeals to An Bord Pleanála of these entries.
- Two sites in Kilkenny City were recently cancelled from the Register due to activation.
- A total of 32 sites are now on the Register.
- Sites that have been on the Register for over a year are now liable for the 7% levy, and payment demands will issue this month. Two sites have had their levy discharged to date.
- The number of cancelled entries due to site activation or improvement now stands at 16 sites which is a demonstration that the vacant site levy is having the desired effect.

PARKS

Parks & Playgrounds

The results of the annual independent inspections of playgrounds are now being reviewed. In general, the playgrounds have been given a good bill of health with some minor repairs to be carried out in playgrounds around the county.



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This report will form the basis of our maintenance works programme for 2021. A previous extensive programme of works to repair and upgrade playgrounds was completed in 2020, thus maintaining playgrounds to a high standard year-round.

Subject to cost estimates we hope to resurface the Thomastown playground to improve ground conditions to enable it to withstand flooding which occasionally occurs from the river Nore nearby.

Works will commence on Piltown playground when restrictions are eased. The site, located to the rear of the old Garda Station, Main Street Piltown is an attractive riverside location. The playground will be developed by the local community with assistance from the Parks Department and funding from the Community and Cultural Capital Facilities Scheme. In addition, the Park will be a sensory garden and play area which will be of interest to those with sensory processing issues such as autism.



Picture of the Piltown Site

South East Greenway

In late 2020 the Department of Tourism, Transport and Sport announced they would be providing grant-aid of €15.5m to cover the total estimated cost needed to construct the South East Greenway. The project is well underway and is anticipated it will take 18-months to complete.

Rail and sleeper lifting are now completed and tenders have been awarded for the first two sections of greenway to be constructed, in the urban areas of Ferrybank and Rosbercon.

In December an on-line public consultation was held to assist in identifying a suitable site for a public car park in Ferrybank. As part of this process the Council was also keen to highlight the need to develop links from surrounding residential areas to increase permeability and accessibility to the greenway for local users. A further meeting was held in late January with further site options being discussed. These will be assessed further for feasibility and a decision regarding the final site selection will be made by end of February prior to submitting a Part 8 Planning application.



Lifting of old rails and sleepers along the route of the South East Greenway



View of track near Bellfield following clearance



Artists impression of new surface along the Greenway



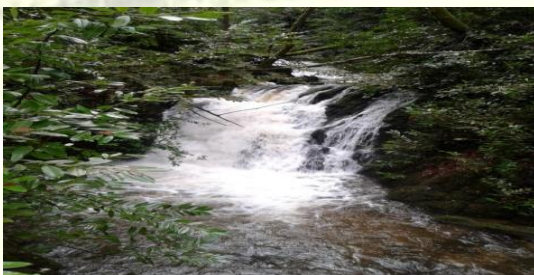
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Woodstock Estate



Works to improve the formal Winter Garden are ongoing with the last of the topiary planting to be added when restrictions are lifted. The two panels of the formal garden furthest from the house have been temporarily seeded with a pollinator friendly wildflower meadow. In time there will also be formally planted to the original layout of the Victorian period.

A decision is being awaited on an ORIS application made to the Department of Rural and Community Development to continue the Woodstock estate walks further south. This would involve development of the trails network towards the Brownsford Stream and Waterfall, returning to Woodstock via the 'American Road' which is so called as it was the way emigrants left Ireland for the last time in the 1800s travelled for the boats to the US. The waterfall is a stunning feature in Woodstock which is little known as it is tucked deep into the woodland.



Waterfall at Brownsford Stream in the Woodstock Estate

Amenity Grants

The amenity grant scheme for 2021 is being advertised and the closing date for applications is 12th March. 166 groups applied for grant assistance under the Amenity Grant Scheme in 2020 and we expect a similar number to apply again in 2021. The main objective of the scheme is to encourage and aid small-scale works to improve the local environment and encourage community involvement in the upkeep and maintenance of public amenities. In 2021 there will be an increased focus on supporting pollinators through projects which are funded. Community groups will be encouraged to manage amenities in a more sustainable manner in line with the Pollinator Plan which the Council has adopted and in line with actions set out in the Council's Climate Action Policy.

Outdoor Recreation Infrastructure Scheme (ORIS)

A recent announcement of funding under the ORIS scheme was welcomed under **Measure 1** (Max grant €20,000) for the following projects:

- Freshford Loop Walk - further trail improvements
- Cois Bearbha, Goresbridge, Riverside walk
- Woodstock communications and marketing
- Nore Valley Walk signage upgrade
- Brandon Hill Walk Upgrades
- Kilmacolliver Loop walk surface upgrades (Via KLP)
- Gathabawn Loop Walk signage, stiles and drainage (Via KLP)



Brown's wood Freshford following recent trail upgrades



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Decisions regarding funding are still awaited for the following projects:

Measure 2 (Max grant €200,000)

| Location | Scheme |
|----------------------------|---|
| Woodstock Estate | Woodstock Estate- Continuation of Loop Trail improvements |
| Castlecomer Discovery Park | Upgrade Tree Top Walk |
| Westcourt Callan | Continuation of Moat Field Loop Trail |

were accepted up to the 5th February. Thereafter, a Planning Report will be prepared which will go before the Elected Members at the March Meeting for their consideration.



Measure 3 (Max grant €500,000)

| Location | Scheme |
|----------|---|
| Dunmore | Kilkenny Biodiversity & Recreational Countryside Park |

We are still awaiting an announcement from the Department of Rural and Community Development with respect to the Measure 3 of the Outdoor Recreational Infrastructure Scheme (ORIS). An application for funding has also been submitted under the Sports Capital & Equipment Programme to add recreational features throughout the Park.

ENVIRONMENT

Recommended Minimum Criteria for Environmental Inspections (RMCEI) Plan

The 2020 RMCEI returns are currently being prepared for submission to the EPA. In tandem the 2021 RMCEI Plan is also being drafted for submission to the EPA before the end of February. Similar to last year's Plan the 2021 Plan will include for c.5,000 planned inspections across Waste, Water, Noise and Air. Progress updates will be provided on the 2021 RMCEI Plan in monthly reports. However, we anticipate that COVID-19 will continue to have an impact on the delivery of planned inspections as we progress through 2021.

This is an extremely exciting project for Kilkenny, to repurpose the closed 17-acre old landfill site at Dunmore into a high-quality amenity. The overall ambition is to develop a parkland that will create a regional destination for health and wellbeing, attracting fitness and outdoor enthusiasts of all abilities, nature lovers and educational providers. Another key objective of the proposal is to create connectivity back into the City along the River Nore Linear Park and onwards to the Nore Valley walking trail, in turn creating a key element in the Kilkenny City and Environs Green Infrastructure offering.

Kilkenny Biodiversity & Recreational Countryside Park

Over the last quarter of 2020, and after many months of work, significant project milestones were achieved to bring this proposal closer to a reality.

On the 11th December, the proposal went out to public consultation under Part 8 of the Planning and Development Regulations. The proposal remained on public display until the 22nd January and submissions / observations relating to same





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Litter Management Plan 2021-2023

The draft Litter Management Plan 2021-2023 has been circulated internally and now fully reflects the Council's litter and waste management services across its different services. Later this month, the draft Litter Management Plan will be circulated to each Elected Member and the public consultation phase will commence. The Environmental Awareness Officer will be attending each Municipal District meeting in March to discuss any issues pertinent to each area. The final document will be presented to SPC4 in April and afterwards presented for adoption at the May Council meeting. Your input into this policy document is appreciated as it sets out priorities, targets for litter management over the next three years.

Temporary Sign Policy

The Temporary Signage Policy is being reviewed to determine if the procedure can be streamlined for the applicant, the Municipal District Office that processes the temporary signage applications and the environmental enforcement team which enforces the policy through the Litter Pollution Act.

The aim of this Policy is to support good, creative and necessary temporary signage in appropriate places for appropriate events. It will ensure that the overall presentation of the City and County and the image which it portrays to residents, visitors and potential investors is not negatively affected by inappropriate and unauthorised signage. The aim is not to be anti-business or anti-community but rather to support economic activity, quality of standards and consistency in decision-making.

Once reviewed, it will be presented at each Municipal District meeting to ensure the Elected Members can input into the draft Policy. The revised draft Policy will undergo a public consultation phase prior to being presented to SPC 4 and then to the full Council for adoption.

IBAL (Irish Business Against Litter)

Kilkenny City has once again been deemed cleanest of 37 towns and cities surveyed by business group Irish Business Against Litter (IBAL) for 2020. It finished at the top of the table edging out Killarney, Ennis and Tullamore. It was the fifth time Kilkenny scooped the top award and *the result is a huge tribute to the work of the Kilkenny City Area staff that rise early every day to ensure the citizens of Kilkenny City wake up to a clean and litter free City, the garden department who tend the green areas dotted across the city, not to mention the numerous floral displays which provide dashes of colour throughout the year. Voluntary groups such as Keep Kilkenny Beautiful Committee and Kilkenny Sub Aqua who work annually with the Council to keep our roadways, streets and rivers clean and litter free were also acknowledged*



National Anti-Dumping Initiative Campaign 2021

Kilkenny County Council is proud to be joining local authorities across Ireland in the Anti-Dumping Initiative Campaign which has been created to highlight the importance of eliminating illegal dumping activities across Ireland, a campaign which will run throughout 2021. Funded by the Department of Communications, Climate Action and Environment, it acknowledges that the problems caused by illegal dumping is a matter of individual responsibility and compliance with the law. While enforcement is down to each local authority, a multi-faceted approach must be taken to tackle the problem, incorporating enforcement, public awareness and education.



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The campaign assets were developed by the Regional Waste Office and they will be publicised and used throughout 2021. The first advert appeared in the Kilkenny Green Supplement last month and the Council will promote the campaign through its available channels throughout the year.

Christmas Trees



In January large numbers of the public availed of the free Christmas tree disposal service provided across the County by the Environment Section. In total circa. 24 tonnes of trees were disposed of and the trees once collected were brought to the Bord na Mona composting facility in Kilberry, Co. Kildare.

ENERGY

Public Sector Energy Efficiency Strategy - 2020 Targets

SEAI has finalised the Measurement and Reporting Figures for 2019. Kilkenny County Council is delighted to be able to confirm that the 2020 target which is a 33% improvement in energy efficiency has been exceeded. The Council is currently reporting a 34% improvement in energy efficiency when compared to the baseline year of 2009. The data set for 2020 is currently being finalised by way of a meter validation exercise.

Energy Management - ISO50001

In January, the Energy Team undertook the final stage in the process to deliver a long-term

objective in obtaining ISO 50001 Energy Management Certification for the organisation. As part of this process, SEAI approved, independent auditors were engaged to assess the Council's energy management system. Stage 1 of the certification audit process took place in late November 2020 with stage 2, the final stage, undertaken in January.

The feedback from the Auditor with respect to both stages was extremely positive and he noted that no findings were recorded. It is now anticipated that this Certification will be officially awarded to the Council over the coming weeks. This certification will demonstrate that the Council has a robust energy management system in place to manage the energy consumption and the performance of significant energy users.

This in turn will greatly aid the organisation as it works towards achieving the necessary energy saving, as defined within the Public Sector Energy Efficiency Strategy, and carbon reduction targets up to 2030 and beyond.

Better Energy Communities Programme (BEC)

The Better Energy Communities Programme (BEC) is SEAI's national upgrade programme to support the retrofit of Ireland's building stock and facilities to high standards of energy efficiency, thereby reducing fossil fuel, operational costs and greenhouse gas emissions. The deadline for submission for the 2021 program was the 29th of January. Kilkenny County Council submitted 5 separate applications under this programme for a range of energy efficiency measures within County Hall, the Machinery Yard and public lighting. Successful applications under this programme attract 30% funding of the total cost.

CLIMATE ACTION

Eastern & Midland Climate Action Regional OFFICE (CARO) - ISO 50001 Seminar

Kilkenny County Council in their role as partner authority of the E&M CARO are organising a seminar in partnership with the SEAI on the Energy Management System ISO 50001 which



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shall take place in March. Certification to ISO 50001 will put in place a robust energy management system to manage energy consumption and the performance of significant energy users and realise energy saving and carbon reduction targets up to 2030 and beyond.

COMMUNITY

The Community Forum

The Community Forum continue to meet regularly. The Forum was formed to ensure a co-ordinated community response and to enable all voluntary and statutory agencies to collaborate in support of the community and it's most vulnerable members. The Forum is made up of representatives from across a number of state agencies, such as the HSE, An Garda Síochána and other groups such as ALONE, Citizens Information, religious groups, etc.

Keep Well Campaign

The Council submitted their plan under the Keep Well Campaign. Under this campaign Kilkenny was allocated €67,225 to be spent across three themes of the campaign, namely, "Your County", "Switching Off and Being Creative" and "Staying Connected". All actions under the Plan must be completed by March 2021.

The following actions commenced/completed in January:

- **Light Hearted Radio Show** on KCLR for older adults, 'The Tonic', every Thursday from 6-7pm (January 14th to April 1st). This radio programme is Coordinated by the Older Person's Council and KCLR.
- **'My Home Place'**: A weekly radio slot dedicated to local history, heritage and culture. Stories told by the older generation will be podcasted and played to young people in Ossory Youth. Each story will be transitioned and expressed into art. <https://kclr96fm.com/documentary/my-home-place/>
- **Dial-A-Story**: this initiative is led by the libraries in Kilkenny. This is a free phone

number and you have a choice of ten stories to listen to. These stories are from local story writers in Kilkenny

- **Road Signage** displayed reflecting the key themes and local activities for the campaign in towns and villages: Clogh, Piltown, Ferrybank, Danesfort, Thomastown, Kilkenny, Urlingford & Freshford.
- **Digital Connection**: Twenty-four Tablets for older people in Nursing Homes and older people living in rural areas. Coordinated by the PPN and Age Friendly
- **Healthy Kilkenny and Healthy Carlow** 6-week radio schedule of interviews (KCLR Live/The Way It Is) on KCLR. Interviews will have linkage to the key themes & activities of the campaign including essential information and signposting options.

Town & Village Health Checks

Kilkenny County Council was been awarded funding under the Town and Village Scheme 2020 to undertake a number of health checks in the county. Johnstown/ Urlingford, Castlecomer and Goresbridge in the North of the County. Mullinavat in the South of the County and Thomastown in the East of the County. Turley Consultants have been appointed to undertake the health checks on behalf of KCC.

There are four stages involved in the health check process.

- **Stage 1** is developing demographic profiles for each of the named towns/villages.
- **Stage 2** is a consultation phase with local people, groups, organisations as well as statutory agencies.
- **Stage 3** is the development of Town Teams for each of the areas. Stage 4 is the development of a draft Town Plan for each of the areas.

Callan Town Team

The Callan Town Team continue to meet monthly to discuss actions and progress in the Callan Town Implementation Plan (last meeting 13th



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January). A review of the existing Callan Town Implementation Plan is presently under way. This review will update the community on progress of actions and will be used to showcase the numerous actions that have been completed from the plan.

2021 Grants Booklet

The Kilkenny County Council Grants booklet has been finalised and is presently with the printers. This year an additional interactive version of the booklet will be released which will allow citizens in Kilkenny to navigate and access all information online using various mobile devices.

2020 Tidy Estates Awards

Kilkenny County Council has announced the winners of the 2020 Tidy Estates Competition. The aim of this competition is to encourage the residents of Kilkenny County Council's Housing Estates to take an active role in improving the physical appearance of their estate. Unfortunately, the annual Awards Ceremony that would take place as a thank you to all cannot be held this year due to the Level 5 restrictions of the COVID 19 pandemic.

Winners & Runners Up:

There were three categories in the 2020 awards the categories include:

- Larger
- Medium and
- Smaller Sized Estates.

Large Estate

1st Fairview, Graignamanagh, Co. Kilkenny

2nd Newpark Lower, Kilkenny

3rd Bellfield, Ferrybank

Medium Estate

1st De La Salle Place, Kilkenny

2nd Assumption Place, Urlingford

3rd Brandon Park, Graignamanagh

Small Estate

1st St. Patricks Close, Mullinavat

2nd Shamrock Grove, Kilmacow

3rd Fr. Rafter Place, Moneenroe

Pride of Place 2021

Nominations for representative's in the 2021 Pride of Place competition are presently being compiled. The 2021 categories for the national competition will be announced on the 10th of February 2021.

HERITAGE

Commemorative Memorials & Plaques

Planning on erecting a memorial or plaque in 2021, organisers are kindly requested to apply for permission at least 2 months advance to Kilkenny County Council, as per the Council's Commemorative Memorials Policy. This applies in particular to applications for memorials and plaques commemorating events which happened in 1921. In order to avoid any delays to your projects please apply early.

The application form and policy can be downloaded here

https://www.kilkennycoco.ie/eng/Publications/Council_Publications/Naming-and-Commemorative-Memorial-Policy-adopted-.html. Completed application forms should be emailed to Corporate Services Catherine.walsh@kilkennycoco.ie

Please note that Kilkenny County Council will not be responsible for maintenance and upkeep of memorials approved under this policy, and that financial support for memorials will not normally be made available by Kilkenny County Council, except through existing appropriate County Council grant schemes. To find out more about the existing 300 memorials and plaques in Co. Kilkenny <https://kilkennyheritage.ie/2017/01/kilkenny-monuments-and-plaques-monuments-and-plaques/>

Help your Sports Club become Pollinator Friendly

The Heritage Office is encouraging all sports clubs in the county to get onboard with a national initiative to help sports clubs to be more pollinator friendly. The All-Ireland Pollinator Plan has a new advice leaflet for sports clubs and the Heritage Office will shortly be sending out copies



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to all clubs in Kilkenny. If you are involved in a sports club and would like a copy please email us at heritage@kilkennycoco.ie, or download at <https://pollinators.ie/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/Pollinator-Sports-Clubs-guide-WEB.pdf>

Kilkenny's Citizen Scientists record 7 bat species in Kilkenny

Volunteers in Co. Kilkenny who took part in the All-Ireland BATLAS 2020 Survey have recorded 7 different bat species in the county. The Heritage Office funded Bat Conservation Ireland to train the volunteers. BATLAS 2020 is an Ireland wide survey of bats funded by the National Parks and Wildlife Service, and supported by Local Authority Heritage Officers. To find out more about the bats in recorded in Kilkenny see <https://kilkennyheritage.ie/2021/01/batlas-2020-citizen-scientists-record-kilkennys-bats/>

LEO/ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Spring Training Programme

LEO has developed its Spring Training Programme which will continue to be delivered online to support local businesses and ensure that they have the relevant expertise to manage and grow their business. The programme consists of programmes as follows:

- Prepare your Business for Customs
- Bright Start SE - Remote Working Start Up
- Start Your Own Business Course
- Digital Marketing for Beginners
- Instagram Advanced
- Facebook Advertising and Understanding the Results
- Re-Assess your Business Finances
- Content Writing / Marketing
- GDPR Compliance Social Media and Website
- Food Safety Awareness Workshop (Food Hygiene, HACCP & Allergen Awareness Training)
- Develop online videos for your Business

- Basic Bookkeeping & Taxation for the Small Business
- Visual Storytelling Workshop
- Regional Food Starter Programme
- How to Adapt of Managing People in changing times
- Facebook for Beginners
- Your Responsibility as a Company Director
- Primary course in Food Safety EHAI program Level 2.
- Your Responsibility as a Company Secretary
- Building a Strong Brand
- Digital Marketing Advanced Programme
- Media Skills (Preparing for Media Interviews)
- Successful Tendering

Programmes are available to book online via our website www.localenterprise.ie/onlinebooking or alternatively businesses can contact the office at (056) 7752662 to discuss which programme is most relevant to the business requirements.

Brexit Advisory Service & Customs Training

As Brexit is now a reality for our local businesses, LEO is focused on delivering a range of supports to assist businesses with issues that they have been facing since the 1st January. Businesses have availed of expert Brexit advice in the form of one-to-one mentoring and participated on our 'Prepare Your Business for Customs Training' which provides participants with a clear understanding of the Customs paperwork arising from Brexit. Businesses can contact the LEO at (056) 7752662 or info@leo.kilkennycoco.ie.

'EVOLVE' - Small Business Management Development Programme

LEO has developed a Management Development Programme entitled 'EVOLVE' for Kilkenny business owners and managers of small/medium sized businesses who have a strong commitment to sustaining and growing their business in the current challenging economic climate (*Brexit & COVID19*) and who wish take their business to the next stage of the business cycle. The programme will commence on 4th March and will run over 12 weeks. It is a joint initiative between LEO



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Kilkenny and LEO Carlow and combines management theory, peer learning, networking and action learning approaches. Participants will develop a strategy for their businesses for the future. Interested businesses can contact Aileen Mc Grath at 087 6030872 or aileen.mcgrath@leo.kilkennycoco.ie.

Mentor Panel 2021 to 2023

One-to-one business specific mentoring is a core service offered free of charge to Kilkenny businesses whereby they can access a broad range of professional mentors to assist with issues and challenges within their business. A public procurement process took place in late 2020 on the public procurement portal E-tenders to form a new mentor panel for the period 2021 – 2023. The new mentor panel is currently being finalised and will be in place from March 2021. This is one of the most beneficial services offered by the LEO for businesses and we would encourage you to ensure that the wider business community are aware of same and ask them to contact the office at (056) 7752662 to discuss challenges that they are facing within their business.

Trading Online Voucher Scheme

The Trading Online Voucher Scheme is an initiative of the LEOs to assist micro enterprises (*i.e. business with up to 10 employees*) develop and enhance their trading online presence and this support has never been so important. Businesses can avail of assistance in the form of funding to a maximum value of €2,500 or 50% of eligible expenditure (exclusive of VAT), whichever is the lesser, in order to develop or enhance their trading online presence *i.e. ecommerce shop, online payments system or booking systems via their website*. Interested businesses can contact Catherine Hennessy at (086) 3886580 or catherine.hennessy@leo.kilkennycoco.ie.

Local Enterprise Week will take place virtually from 1st to 5th March. There will be both national local events taking place online aimed at supporting small businesses and fostering entrepreneurship. Planned events include:

- the launch of a new Green for Micro Programme to encourage businesses to look at how their business can achieve savings through green initiatives;
- a Lean Workshop to enable businesses to look at their processes in order to introduce efficiencies thus ensuring competitiveness in the marketplace;
- A Creative Connections Workshop - Enabling your B-2-B Online Opportunities;
- Health Checking your Business for its Forward Journey;
- A range of one-to-one mentoring clinics on specific topics relevant to business needs.

Details are currently being finalised and further detail will be available via our website www.localenterprise.ie/kilkenny.

HOUSING

Housing Capital Delivery 2021

The capital schemes expected to be delivered in 2021 are outlined in the table below:-

| Project Name | Number of Units | Project Status |
|--|-----------------|---|
| AHB CALF Turnkey | | |
| Cois Na Bearu, Graignamanagh [Cooperative Housing] | 14 | Completed |
| Margaret's Field, Callan Road, Kilkenny City [Respond] | 40 | Completed |
| Nuncio Road Phase 3 | 22 | Site Closed due to Level 5 restrictions |
| SHIP CONSTRUCTION | | |
| Glebeside, Donaguile, Castlecomer | 33 | Onsite |
| Station Road, Ballyragget | 22 | Onsite |
| Pairc Nua [The Broguemaker], Kilkenny | 18 | Onsite |
| New Road & Chapel St, Mooncoin | 6 | Works on Hold |
| Ayrfield, Kilkenny City | 8 | Onsite |



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| | | |
|--|------------|---|
| Blackwater Grove, Lower Kilmacow, Co. Kilkenny | 16 | Onsite |
| Pennefeather Court Hebron Road Site 2, Kilkenny City | 8 | Site Closed due to Level 5 restrictions |
| CAS CONSTRUCTION | | |
| Grennan Villa, Thomastown [Camphill Communities] | 5 | Onsite |
| | 192 | |



Construction Works at Station Avenue Phase 2 – Ballyragget – Jan 2021



Blackwater Grove, Kilmacow – under construction January 2021



Construction nearing completion – Glebeside, Castlecomer – January 2021

Other Units 'Under Construction' at 31st January 2020 – 83 units

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

Note that these 3 sites are currently closed under Level 5 restrictions

KCC Turnkey Projects due to start

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

Pre Tender Stage [119 units]

- 88 units (houses/apartments) and community facility at Crokers Hill, Kennyswell Road, Kilkenny (*KCC direct build*)
- 6 units at Golf Links Road, (*Mulhalls Shop*) Kilkenny (*KCC direct build*)
- 25 Units at Ladywell, Thomastown (*KCC direct build*)

Detailed Design / Pre -Tender Stage [8 units]

- 2 Units at Inchacarron, Mullinavat
- 2 Units at Old Fire Station, Graignamanagh
- 1 Accessible bungalow, Circular Road, Kilkenny
- 1 Accessible bungalow, Haggardsgreen, Callan (*Buy & Renew*)
- Reconfiguration of 1 apt to 2 units- Ayrfield, Granges Road

Vacant Homes

- Compulsory Purchase Order procedures have been advertised for 10 properties in the City and County. Five are proceeding without any interests claimed with the remainder either contested or owners taking action to activate the units.
- Repair to lease and buy and renew options are being explored on 15 sites at present.



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January Monthly Statistics

| | |
|--|----------|
| Number awaiting social housing support at 31 st January (<i>Gross Need</i>) | 1,904 |
| Number of assessment interviews carried out in January: | 32 |
| LA/RAS/Leasing allocations up to end of January (<i>offers made</i>): | 17 |
| Number of HAP tenancies to 31 st January: | 854 |
| Number of LA tenancies surrendered in: | 3 |
| Anti-social behaviour cases in January: | 65 |
| New Homeless Presentations in January: | 18 |
| Maintenance Calls for 31 st January: | 522 |
| Maintenance Calls year to-date | 522 |
| No. Housing Loans Approved to date (<i>Annuity/Construction</i>) | 2 |
| Amount of Loans Approved to 31 st January 2021 | €266,518 |

Housing Waiting List

The current **gross** Housing demand at 31st January and a comparative analysis with previous years is outlined below:

| Year | Number on Housing List |
|--------------|------------------------|
| January 2021 | 1,904 |
| January 2020 | 1,899 |
| January 2019 | 1,988 |
| January 2018 | 2,067 |
| January 2017 | 2,180 |
| January 2016 | 2,059 |
| January 2015 | 2,744 |

(Statutory Assessment 2016)

Housing Loan Activity

1st January to 31st January, 2021

Loan Type: Annuity/RI Home Loan

| | |
|-----------------------|----------|
| Received..... | 3 |
| Approved | 2 |
| Amount Approved | €266,518 |
| Number Paid..... | 0 |
| Amount Paid..... | €0 |

Private Grants

Kilkenny County Council approved a budget of €1.5m for all three private grants (HOP/MAG/HGD). The Council recoups 80% of all eligible expenditure from the Department. Projects already committed and approved for 2021 are in excess of the allocated budget. Only emergency cases can be processed for the remainder of 2021. The estimated position at 31st January 2021 is as follows:

| Grants Paid 2021 | | |
|-------------------------------------|------------|-------------------|
| Scheme | No. | Paid |
| HGD - Housing Adaptation Grant | 10 | €88,336 |
| MAG - Mobility Aid Grant | 4 | €18,740 |
| HOP - Housing Aid for Older Persons | 13 | €78,687 |
| Total | 27 | €185,763 |
| Grants Approved & Committed 2020 | | |
| Scheme | No. | Paid |
| HGD - Housing Adaptation Grant | 42 | €471,612 |
| MAG - Mobility Aid Grant | 14 | €62,824 |
| HOP - Housing Aid for Older Persons | 75 | €471,351 |
| Total | 131 | €1,005,787 |

Homeless Statistics for 2020 and January 2021

| | Jan -Dec 2020 | January 2021 |
|--|---------------|--------------|
| Homeless Presentations | 252 | 18 |
| Homeless Assessment Outcomes | | |
| Prevention & Interventions | 121 | 9 |
| Emergency Service | 88 | 5 |
| Not eligible / Did not avail of service | 43 | 4 |
| HAP Placefinder Service | | |
| No of tenancies @ 01.01.2020 & 01/01/2021 | 22 | 70 |
| No of tenancies created during 2020 & 01/01/2021 | 48 | 3 |
| No of tenancies in place @ 31.12.2020 | 70 | 73 |
| No tenancy breakdowns | 1 | 0 |



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As at 31st January 2021

5 households in Emergency Homeless Hotel accommodation (2 families)

5 households in Transition Emergency Accommodation (1 family)

TOURISM

Kilkennys Tourism Recovery Taskforce agrees it's priorities for Tourism Resilience Plan 2021

Kilkennys' Tourism Recovery Taskforce met in January and agreed it's priority areas of work for the coming year. The key priorities for the taskforce this year will be:

Priority 1: Kilkenny for Families

Objective: Develop a concentrated focus on the family market supported by best in class approaches to packaging, itinerary development and collective marketing to target family business. Develop a major family event e.g. Hurling Heroes & Heritage to launch the 2021 family focus.

Priority 2: Brand 2021

Objective: Deliver a 2021 Kilkenny brand action led programme supported by a roll out programme embraced by all tourism partners to deliver business across the City and County through increased day trips and overnights.

Priority 3: Kilkenny in the Evening

Objective: Develop a series of new evening time experiences in Kilkenny through activities and attractions partners and with the support of the retail sector to create a vibrant evening time experience for visitors.

Priority 4: Public Places/Calendar Niche Events

Objective: Activate public realm investment in new and interesting public spaces to deliver a calendar of niche events to communicate Kilkenny as an 'always on' destination.

Priority 5: Digital Capacity

Objective: Deliver an industry digital skills programme to improve the capacity of all tourism partners to maximise the potential of online marketing / social media to contribute to the 2021

brand messaging and stimulating interest in new reasons to stay and visit Kilkenny.

Kilkenny Tourism and visitkilkenny.ie

Kilkenny Tourism continued it's work in preparing Kilkenny's marketing and PR plans for 2021. Springs 2021 campaign will aim to keep Kilkenny to the forefront of the domestic visitors mind for when they are able to travel again. By showcasing Kilkenny's wonderful outdoor activity offering alongside all that the City and County has to offer for families, we are aiming for Kilkenny to be top of the visitors "must see" destination for their 2021 staycation. Check out www.visitkilkenny.ie for further details.

Kilkenny Co. Council Festival Grant Scheme

Kilkenny County Council has provided funding for festival organisers to aid with the development and promotion of festivals with a significant tourism impact.

The main purpose of the Festival Support Grants scheme is to support festivals which drive tourism in Kilkenny, underpinning Kilkenny County Council's Tourism Strategy and improving the visitor experience in Kilkenny City and County.

To be considered for funding, applicants will be asked to provide details demonstrating the following:

Tourism Impact

- Visitor numbers / participation
- Organisational expertise
- Future viability of event
- Financial planning

Application deadline for festivals grant was 29th January, 2021. The applications received are currently being assessed and a recommendation for award of grants will come to the Council for approval.

FIRE SERVICES

Capital Projects

It is planned to submit a revised Part 8 Planning submission in February for the new fire station in Urlingford.



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Work is underway to identify and purchase a new site for Kilkenny City Fire Brigade.

Fire Safety Certificates

3 applications for fire safety certificates were received in January 2021.

Fire Services Acts 1981 and 2003

3 Licence Applications were processed under Section 24 of the Fire Services Acts 1981 & 2003.

ARTS

Literature

Our commitment to Kilkenny writers will continue this year with the rollout of a five-week online programme titled "The Short Story" with writer and tutor, Emmaleene Leahy. Participants will explore the genre of the short story in its various forms.

Creative Writing Bursary - Words For Thought

As part of our annual programme the Arts Office focusses on engaging with and encouraging young people and children to create, experience and participate in the arts.

To this end we devised a new bursary to support secondary schools in providing creative writing opportunities for their students. The bursary has been devised with transition students in mind but it can be utilised to provide creative writing workshops for any year.

Kilkenny Poetry Broadsheet - 21st edition

Poet, dramaturg, librettist and creative writing teacher Jessica Traynor will edit the 21st edition of the Kilkenny Poetry Broadsheet and facilitate a workshop with Kilkenny poets. Participants will have an opportunity to meet the editor and gain a perspective on the editorial process. They will also get feedback on their work, generate new writing, learn approaches to revision and increase their knowledge of poetic techniques. For those hoping to submit work to the Broadsheet or just looking to deepen their poetry skills in general, this is a unique and exciting opportunity.

Arts Office Grants

The Arts Act Grants, Tyrone Guthrie Bursary and The Moth Bursary were all advertised in December with a closing date of 18th January 2021. We have received 26 applications and they will be assessed in February by an independent panel.

Partnership with Visual Artists Ireland

Kilkenny County Council Arts Office has partnered with VAI (Visual Artists Ireland) to offer a wide range of webinars, clinics and workshops, each exploring a specific purpose aimed at visual artists throughout Co. Kilkenny. Beginning in mid-January, these events took place online.

On 19th January, the webinar focused on the topic of Ireland and beyond - an artist's talk on international practice led by New York City based Irish visual artist and environmental activist Katie Holten. This webinar focused on Katie's journey, graduating from NCAD, Dublin to traversing pastures new and further afield within her practice.

Thursday 28th January was the first of a two-part online peer critique session chaired by Laura McCafferty (Public programmes curator at CCA Derry). Across the two sessions eight Co. Kilkenny based artists shared their work with the rest of the working group.

Platform 31

A nationwide artist development scheme offering the opportunity for artists to develop their practice. This project is a partnership with thirty other local authorities and the Arts Council of Ireland. The assessment process has now been completed and the successful arts practitioners have been selected.

Creation 2021

This Collaborative project is a year-long artists development project which will concentrate on discovering and supporting artists in the region who work in the area of street arts, performance and spectacle. Approx. 10-12 artists from Wexford, Waterford, Kilkenny, Carlow, Kildare and Dublin will secure residencies across the year.



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LIBRARY

Door to Door Library Service



249
Deliveries made in January



1,195
Items delivered in January



Door to Door Delivery Service extended to over 65s

Our Door to Door service continued across the County in January, with **249** deliveries made and **1,195** books, audiobooks and DVDs delivered to library members aged 65 and over.

We are seeing an increase in the numbers of people in need of this service, and continue to invest in new stock to offer those at home a wider selection of reading materials.

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

Online Services use:



1,590
eBooks borrowed
▲ 129% on 2020

1,102
eMagazines borrowed
▲ 49% on 2020



5,546
eNewspapers borrowed
▲ 19707% on 2020

1,016
Songs accessed
▲ 3663% on 2020



1,928
eAudiobooks borrowed
▲ 90% on 2020

2,433
Online Course sessions
▲ 349% on 2020



132
Language sessions
▼ 37% on 2020



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Digital Archive



We are putting the final touches to an exciting programme to support the national Keep Well campaign, with writers such as Rick O'Shea, Liz Nugent, Donal Ryan and Alan Nolan in the line up. Full details will be available on our website shortly.

Dial A Story Freephone line continued to operate throughout January, with great interest in the work of local writers.

We continue to promote Kilkenny Digital Archive offering a flavour of the collections that can be accessed from home through our social media platforms, encouraging people all over Kilkenny City and County, and even beyond, to remember and reminisce on the days gone by. Pictured above is the Creamery at Clogharinka, Muckalee, County Kilkenny, taken as part of the Industrial Archaeological Survey, 1989.

Online Programming and Resources

Our staff have prepared, recorded, edited and published 323 posts on our social media platforms. These ranged from storytime videos and craft videos for children to book recommendations and online library resource promotions for adults.

Our videos were viewed 8,635 times.



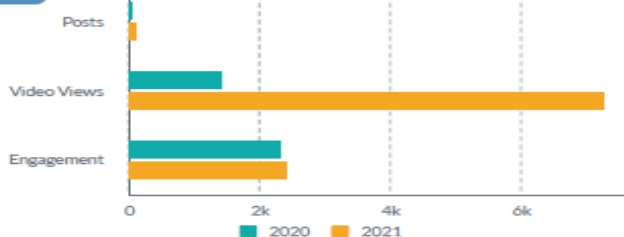
Website: January

Users 1,011

Pageviews 5,520



Facebook January 20 v 21



Twitter January 20 v 21





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FINANCE

The expenditure by service division to the end of January is set out in table 1. Total Expenditure for the period was €5.7m compared with the annual budget of €89.9m.

| Table 1 | Actual YTD January 2021 | Budget Full Year 2021 |
|---|--------------------------------|------------------------------|
| | €'000's | €'000's |
| Housing & Building | 1,722 | 20,085 |
| Road Transport & Safety | 1,086 | 25,500 |
| Water Services | 583 | 7,115 |
| Development Management | 749 | 10,679 |
| Environmental Services | 356 | 11,748 |
| Recreation & Amenity | 504 | 6,647 |
| Agriculture, Education, Health, Welfare | 43 | 672 |
| Miscellaneous Services | 694 | 7,516 |
| OVERALL TOTAL | 5,737 | 89,962 |

The bank overdraft facility was un-utilised for the month of January 2021.