

CHIEF EXECUTIVE REPORT

JUNE 2024 ISSUE

EXECUTIVE FUNCTIONS

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

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

- 12th July to 30th August**
Draft Masterplan for Kilmacow on public display
- 31st July**
The deadline for receipt of applications under the 2024 Conservation Advice Scheme
- 17th to 25th August**
National Heritage Week – Connections, Routes and Networks.
- 20th to 22nd September**
“Team Up to Clean Up” will take place.

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CORPORATE

Local Elections 2024 – Statistics

Total Electorate	77,208
Total Poll	40,249
% Turnout	52.13%
Total Invalid Votes	577
% of Invalid Votes	0.014%
Total Valid Poll	39,672
Number of Seats to be filled	24

Results of Election

Fianna Fáil 11 Seats	Jenny Catt Slattery, Peter ‘Chap’ Cleere, John Coonan, Deirdre Cullen, Michael Delaney, Pat Fitzpatrick, Ger Frisby, Joe Malone, Michael McCarthy, Andrew McGuinness, Joe Sheridan
Fine Gael 7 Seats	John Brennan, Mary Hilda Cavanagh, Fidelis Doherty, Michael Doyle, Patrick Dunphy, David Fitzgerald, Joe Lyons.
Labour 2 Seats	Tomás Breathnach, Seán Ó hArgáin,
Green Party 1 Seat	Maria Dollard
Independent 2 Seats	Eugene McGuinness, Maurice Shortall,
Sinn Féin 1 Seat	Stephanie Doheny

Election of new Cathaoirleach & Leas Cathaoirleach

At the Annual Meeting of the Council held on Friday, 21st June, 2024 in the Council Chamber, Cllr. Michael McCarthy was elected Cathaoirleach of Kilkenny County Council for 2024/2025. Cllr. Peter ‘Chap’ Cleere was elected Leas Cathaoirleach.



Election of Cathaoirleach & Deputy Cathaoirleach of Municipal Districts

Following the Annual Meetings of the Municipal Districts the following were elected as Chairperson & Deputy Chairperson:

Kilkenny City Municipal District

Cllr. Andrew McGuinness, Fianna Fáil, was elected Mayor of the Kilkenny Municipal District at the Municipal District AGM held on Friday, 28th June, 2024.

Cllr. Joe Malone, Fianna Fáil, has been elected Deputy Mayor of Kilkenny City Municipal District.



Callan/Thomastown Municipal District



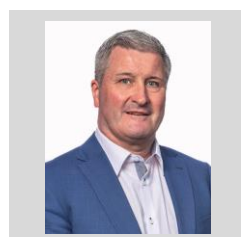
Cllr. Peter ‘Chap’ Cleere, Fianna Fáil, was elected Chairperson of the Callan/Thomastown Municipal District and Cllr. Jenny Catt Slattery was elected Leas Cathaoirleach was elected Deputy Chairperson.

Castlecomer Municipal District

Cllr. Mary Hilda Cavanagh, Fine Gael was been elected Chairperson of the Castlecomer Municipal District and Cllr. Pat Fitzpatrick was elected Deputy Chairperson.



Piltown Municipal District



Cllr. Ger Frisby, Fianna Fáil was elected Chairperson of the Piltown Municipal District and Cllr. Eamonn Aylward was elected Deputy Chairperson.

ROADS

MAJOR PROJECTS

N24 Waterford to Cahir Scheme

- Date for Publication of the Option Selection Report is Q3 2024.
- To date no funding has been provided in 2024 to extend the project beyond Phase 2.

MINOR PROJECTS

N77 Ballyragget to Ballynaslee

Construction of the scheme commenced on Tuesday 6th February 2024 with an expected 12-month time frame. Works are progressing well and are on schedule.



N24 Carrick Road

Kilkenny Council has received formal notification that An Bord Pleanála has approved the 177AE Planning Application subject to conditions and has confirmed the CPO without modifications as of 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 applicants in May 2024. Timelines for the Judicial Review are not currently available.

Pavement Schemes

The design work is ongoing in respect of the N76 Callan By Pass Pavement Scheme together with the preparation of tender documentation. 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.

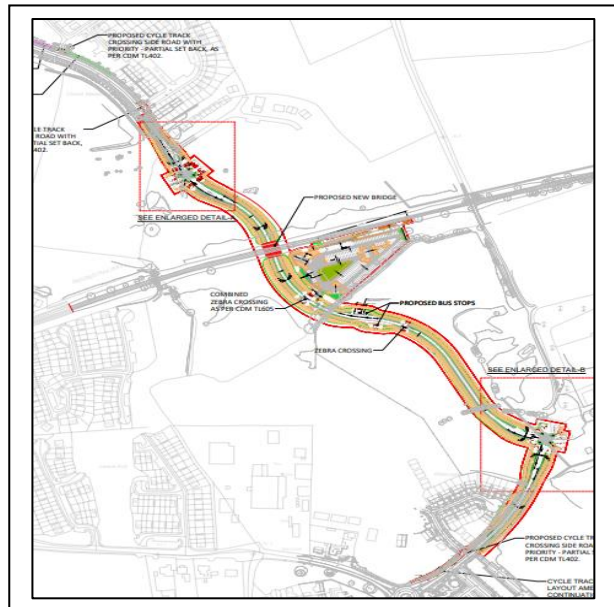
URDF

South North Access Road

The South North Access Road (*Belmont Road to Abbey Road*), Ferrybank scheme is under review by the Planning Department and it is expected that it will be submitted for Part 8 Planning in the coming weeks.

The scheme is c.940m in length with:

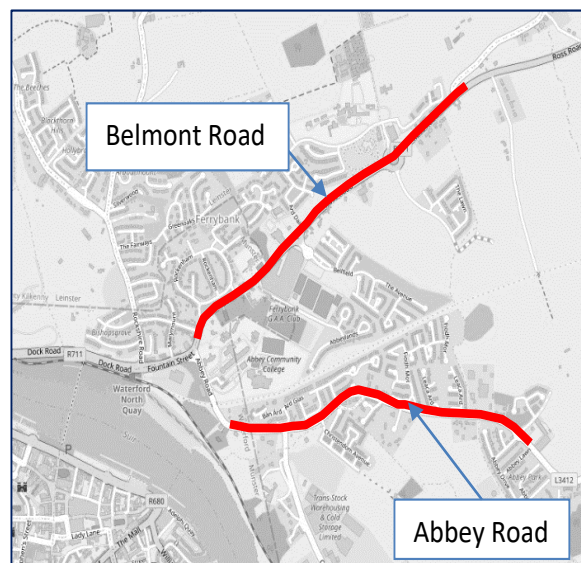
- Two signalised crossroad junctions
- Segregated pedestrian/cycle facilities
- Two zebra crossings
- Off-line bus stops
- Greenway car park (*c.172 parking bays*)
- Link to Greenway and
- Accommodation Works



Sustainable Links

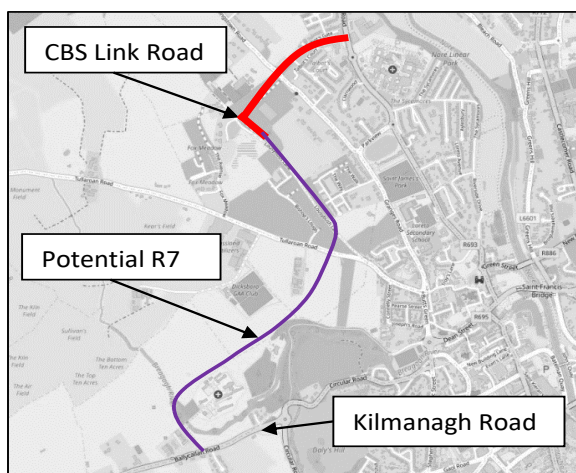
The sustainable links, Ferrybank scheme is out to tender to appoint a Consultant for all stages of works (*Design, Part 8, tendering for construction, Resident Engineer and handover*).

The works will include traffic calming and active travel measures over c.3km of road on Belmont Road and Abbey Road. Tenders are due back by July 26th and a Consultant should be appointed by September.



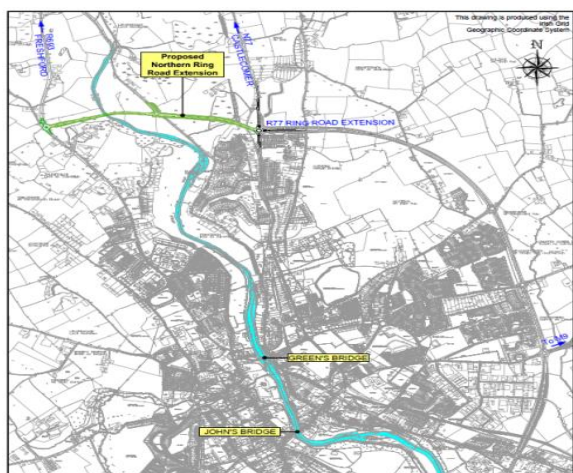
Kilmanagh to Freshford Road

The Road Design Section are currently engaging Consultants in a scoping exercise to conduct a traffic analysis of the proposed R7 road connecting the Kilmanagh Road to the Freshford Road. The traffic analysis will assess what benefits the proposed route will have on the surrounding network/junctions will be used in support of further project appraisals and funding applications. It is expected Consultants will be appointed in August with traffic data gathered in September following the return of schools.



Kilkenny City North Transport Project

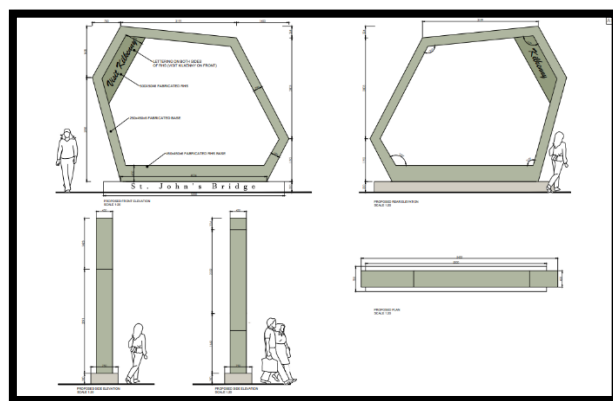
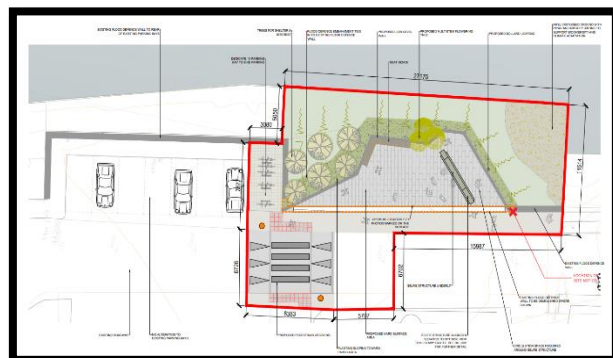
Kilkenny County Council has submitted the final Project Outline Document for the Kilkenny City North Transport Project for Gateway 1 Approval following a review and discussions with the Department of Transport. The project includes extending the Kilkenny City Ring Road from the Castlecomer Roundabout over the River Nore to tie-in with the R693 Freshford Road. It is expected that Consultants will be appointed in Q4 2024 to deliver the project to the preferred option.



Urban Animation Scheme

Under the Failte Ireland Urban Animation Scheme funding was awarded to Kilkenny

County Council to progress with a “selfie” opportunity to locals and visitors to the City. Members are informed that we intend to proceed public consultation and Part 8 for a structure at the Pocket Park on Bateman Quay which will capture Kilkenny Castle in the background.



ENVIRONMENT

CLIMATE ACTION

Trial of Shared EV for Council staff: Saving CO2
Wednesday, 12th June saw the launch of a 3 Month EV Trial in partnership with the Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland and Enterprise Rent a Car. On the day a representative from Enterprise Rent a Car was available for demos and any questions. We were pleased to see the uptake and interest in the Shared Trial. The “Cupra Born” EV will be based in County Hall and will be available to book by any staff member who has a valid, full Irish drivers licence for business related travel.

This trial EV project will support Kilkenny County Council’s “Going Green” focus in the Kilkenny County Council Climate Action Plan, and will also support the National EV Infrastructure Strategy. This is an excellent opportunity to learn more about EV’s and how they can play their part in reaching Ireland’s 51% emissions reduction target by 2030.

To accommodate this trial, two 22kwh chargers have been installed at the John Street exit to County Hall, beside the ESB Chargers, one charger is available for staff/the public to use, and one is dedicated to the Shared EV.



*Lar Power (Chief Executive),
Tim Butler (Director of Services),
Sean McKeown (Director of Services)
Abbad Khalid (Enterprise Rent a Car)
trialing the shared EV for staff travel.*

Kilkenny Community Groups Receive funding for Climate Action Projects

Kilkenny County Council and the Department of Environment, Climate and Communications are delighted to award €511,000 to 22 Kilkenny communities who will deliver a variety of local climate action projects.

Following a very competitive process with a large number of applications received, these 22 groups were successful in obtaining funding under the Community Climate Action Programme. The objective of this programme is to support and empower communities to take climate action and build low carbon, sustainable communities which help to contribute to national climate and energy targets.

Welcoming the funding, Cathaoirleach Cllr. Michael McCarthy said “*This funding is a significant boost and recognition for communities in Kilkenny who are taking practical climate action measures in their areas. With these much-needed funds we hope to continue to see many more sustainable community initiatives being made in to a reality*”.

The projects funded include lighting upgrades on community buildings, bike shelters to encourage cycling, water fonts to reduce plastic bottle use, planting for wildlife, EV charging points at community facilities, community allotments, rainwater harvesting and much more. The Climate Action Office of Kilkenny County Council will support the communities in the delivery of the projects and will share updates on the projects as they progress. There will be another round of funding opening for the Community Climate Action Programme in the future. Kilkenny County Council are awaiting an update from the Department of Environment, Climate and Communications on this and details will be announced once confirmed.

Applicant	Funding Received	Applicant	Funding Received
Paulstown Development Association	€13,000	Stoneyford Development Group	€45,000
Coolagh Pattern Committee	€1,800	Lisdowney Comm. Centre & GAA Club	€26,000
Castlecomer Enterprise Group	€13,000	Tullaroan Development Association	€42,000
Callan Community Energy	€3,000	Windgap Tidy Towns	€21,700
Piltown AFC	€4,600	Iverk Agricultural Show	€20,000
Happe House & Millennium Court	€7,500	Tullahought Community Dev. Group	€25,000
Kilkenny Aqua & Canoe Club	€5,000	Graiguenamanagh Hall	€25,000
TCAT: Three-fold Community Asset Trust	€4,200	Ballyfoyle Development Group	€83,700
Kilkenny Walking & Cycling Campaign	€5,000	Mullinavat Community Group	€59,300
Thomastown Community Allotments	€3,200	Urlingford Town Team	€53,900
Inistioge Tidy Towns	€2,800	Kilmacow Community Centre	€46,300

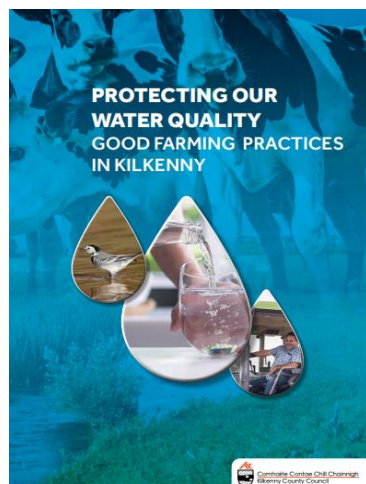
Climate Action Newsletter Issue 1

ISSUE 1 of a new Climate Action Digital Newsletter was released in June 2024. This is a bi-annual digital newsletter to provide updates on climate action activities, events, funding, and inspiring ideas that are happening within the Local Authority and throughout the County. The newsletter is part of an overall communications strategy to inform on the Council's progress in implementing actions in the Kilkenny County Council's Climate Action Plan 2024-2029. Click here to see [ISSUE 1](#).

ENVIRONMENTAL AWARENESS

Protecting Our Water Quality

Kilkenny County Council has 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 Water Framework Directive [WFD] and the National Water Policy to maintain healthy rivers, lakes and groundwater.



IBAL 2024

Kilkenny has retained its position of 4th out of 40 cities and large towns in the latest Irish Business Against Litter (IBAL) Survey. This is a fantastic achievement and testament to the commitment and hard work of our Environmental Team.

Staff in the City MD Area Office in particular our outdoor staff, and KKB (our Tidy Towns Group) local residents and businesses.



- Skate Park received a Grade A status as it was virtually absent from litter. This was a huge improvement on last year's 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.

National Food Waste Prevention Week 2nd to 9th June 2024

During National Food Waste Recycling Week we aim 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 Shopping Centre on Wednesday 5th June to highlight the proper use of the brown bin, provide information and 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 bin 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.

Anti-Litter and Anti-Graffiti Grant 2024

Kilkenny County Council offered community groups an opportunity this year to promote anti-litter and anti-graffiti awareness in their local community. The grant aims to mobilise 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 comes directly from the Department of Communications, Climate Action & Environment. 20 applications were received from Community and Environmental organisations within the City and County and the funding approved totalled €16,500.

Team Up to Clean Up-Together for Kilkenny

The formal launch of the “Team Up to Clean Up-Together for Kilkenny” took place on Monday 27th May.

This year’s “Team Up to Clean Up” will take place on the weekend of 20th to 22nd September 2024.

Team Up to Clean Up-Together for Kilkenny

The formal launch of the “Team Up to Clean Up-Together for Kilkenny” took place on the week of the Monday 27th May.

This year’s “Team Up to Clean Up” will take place on the weekend of 20th to 22nd September 2024.



The County-Wide Clean Up initiative brought together residents, businesses and local organisations to collaborate in a mass effort to enhance the cleanliness and sustainability of our County.

Last year we saw over 200 groups register with over 500 volunteers participate. This culminated in a collection of just over 24 tonnes of litter.

The “Team Up to Clean Up” event created a sense of community ownership and pride by engaging participants in a variety of cleanup activities, awareness campaigns and environmental educational programmes. It created a sense of ownership and focus for many communities, with significant additional interest by many groups and individuals outside of national campaigns such as the annual National Spring Clean which takes place during the month of April. All cohorts of society engaged resulting in the “Team Up to Clean Up” exemplifying best practice in the areas of social inclusion and environment. We aim to take this event one step further this year by investing in the next generation of stewards through the Green Schools Programme and developing a series of education and awareness workshops. Community groups, schools and residents committees can register via our online portal - cleanup.kilkenny.ie | [Team Up To Clean Up - Together for Kilkenny](#)

WASTE

Bring Banks Usage

The Council provides and manages 46 Bring Centers across the City and County. A total of 1,029 tonnes of recyclables were collected from our Bring Centers so far in 2024. This represents decrease of circa 1% compared to the same period last year. Loughboy Shopping Centre - Kilkenny City (14 tonnes collected), Aldi - Kilkenny City (12 tonnes collected), Lidl - Johnswell, Kilkenny City (11 tonnes collected) are the busiest locations in the City. Aldi - Ferrybank (13 tonnes collected), Lidl - Thomastown (7 tonnes collected) and Graiguenamanagh (7 tonnes collected) are the busiest 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 long weekends and holiday periods.

Dunmore Civic Amenity Site

June 2024 saw a slowdown in the intake of some waste and recycling streams at the Dunmore CAS with circa 135 tonnes of Municipal Solid Waste collected, down 16% compared to May, 92 tonnes of Municipal Dry Waste collected down 9% on May and 51 tonnes of green garden waste collected, representing an increase of circa 4% compared to May.

The various other recycling streams deposited at Dunmore CAS can be seen in Table 1 below.



Table 1

Recycling Stream	Quantity (Tonnes)	
Cardboard	7.4	↓14%
Plastic	4.5	↓13%
Paper	9.4	↑32%
Food Waste	1.0	↓23%
Mattresses	3.2	↑3%
Metal	11.8	↓5.6%
Timber	12.1	↑37%
Textiles	3.0	↑66%
Tetra-pac	0.3	↓40%
Waste Oil	1.1	
WEEE	14.1	↓13%

The month of June also saw 80 tonnes of landfill Leachate from Dunmore CAS tankered off site for treatment.

AIR NOISE WATER

Water Quality – Farm Inspections

Follow up farm inspections are ongoing. Many farmers are contacting the Environment Section with regard to works carried out from inspections at the end of 2023. The Environment staff are currently working off advisory notices with a plan to follow up on warning letters from 2023.

Septic Tank Inspections

A new block of septic tank inspections have been identified with commencement due to start from 1st July. All these households fall between Zones 1 and 2. Septic tank grant applications are ongoing. The Environment Office are currently dealing with a large volume of queries in relation to the criteria for eligibility for the grant.

Noise Action Plan Round 4

Kilkenny County Council is currently in the process of drafting Round 4 of the Noise Action Plan. The Environment Section is currently in consultation with other Sections in the Council on selecting priority sites for inclusion. Links to EPA Noise Mapping in County Kilkenny can be located using the following link <https://gis.epa.ie/EPAMaps/>

Environment Complaints

All Environmental complaints received are logged on the CRM (Customer Relations Management) System. The number of complaints that have been received and logged for June 2024 is 76 compared to 70 for the same period last year. The nature of these complaints ranged from littering, illegal dumping, burning of waste and abandoned cars. The majority continue to be related to littering and illegal dumping. Whilst every effort is made to bring unacceptable environmental practice into compliance, Environment Enforcement staff continue to manage significant enforcement cases progressing through prosecution cases.

PARKS & SPECIAL PROJECTS

Outdoor Recreational Infrastructure Scheme (ORIS) - Funding Announcement

We are delighted to advise that Minister Heather Humphreys, Department of Rural and Community Development, announced in June that the following applications have been successful under Measure 2 & 3 of the ORIS:

Scheme Measure	Project Name:	Project Description	Total Estimated Expenditure	Funding Secured
<i>Measure 2</i>	Woodstock Gardens & Arboretum – Accessibility & Inclusivity Enhancement Scheme	Rehabilitation of Victorian pathways and enhancement works to make the amenity offering more accessible regardless of the users mobility.	€224,000	€200,000
<i>Measure 2</i>	The Ennisnag Loop Walk – Walking Trail and Amenity Area – New Amenity	The development of a new 2.3km way-marked loop walking trail from the village of Stoneyford out into the townlands of Lawcus, Ennisnag and Cotterelsbooly.	€220,700	€198,630
<i>Measure 3</i>	Castlecomer Discovery Park Bike Trail (Phase One of Two)	To construct Phase One of an 8.5km long bike trail within the confines of the Castlecomer Discovery Park. Under Phase One 6.9km's will be delivered and works will include trail signage, seating, bike parking and all other associated works.	€560,096	€500,000

Lacken Boardwalk Replacement Scheme

Works are progressing well on the construction of the replacement boardwalk at Lacken. This new bespoke piece of amenity infrastructure will be made using 100% recycled plastic components.

In order to minimise disruption to the public, in terms of access to the Canal Walk and the Nore Valley Walk, the project is divided into two phases. Phase One extends from Lacken (*City side*) to the link with the path to the Ring Road while Phase Two extends from the Ring Road link to the southern end of the Boardwalk. The timber boardwalk within Phase One is now removed and installation of the recycled plastic piles is progressing, works on this Phase are expected to be completed in mid-August. Thereafter, works will commence on Phase Two with final project completion expected in October.



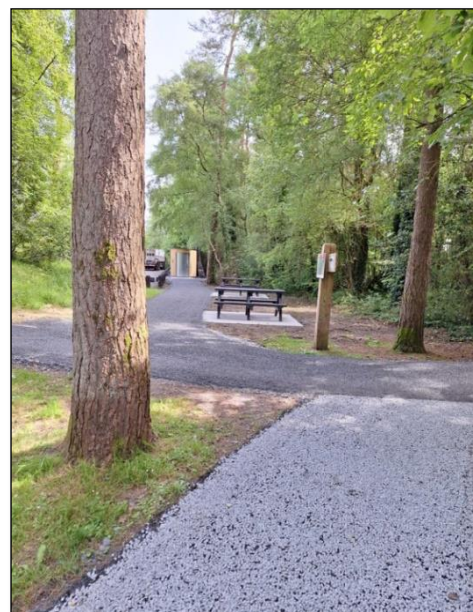
The completed project will see the replacement of the existing 1.2m wide timber boardwalk with a c.3.6m wide boardwalk made from recycled composite materials. Funding for this project was secured last year under Measure 3 of ORIS

Phase One – Image of Pile Installation

Millennium Forest - Trail Enhancement and Accessibility Scheme

Significant progress has been made on the above over the past few months. The 2.1km Green Loop has now been fully rehabilitated and surfaced, rendering same universally accessible which will be of great benefit to wheelchair users, people with reduced mobility and indeed families with prams or small children on bicycles. New picnic and seating areas have also been provided and improvements have also been completed within the carpark. The wheelchair accessible toilet (*Dry loo*) is now also open to the public. Other works planned for the coming weeks include the installation of new signage, exercise equipment and fencing.

It is acknowledged that this project and the recently completed Jenkintown Wood project are being undertaken with the support and assistance of Coillte.



South East Greenway

Glas Civil Engineering Ltd. commenced works in late 2023 on Lot 5A of the Greenway, a 5.5km section, from Ferrybank to Curraghmore. Over the past few months, significant progress has been made on the permanent Greenway Carpark at Ballyverneen, Glenmore. Works also continue on a number of road and agricultural crossing locations as does the construction on Kilmurray Lane access ramp. The Greenway sub-base is now installed and fencing, screening and embankment reshaping work continues. The programme remains on track for completion by December 2024. A tender for the provision of Technical Services for a

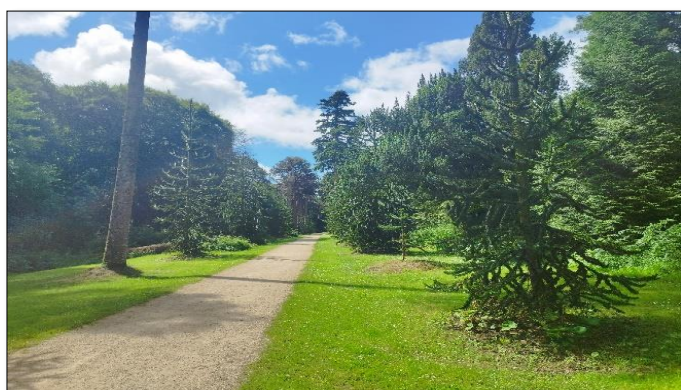


multi-disciplinary Engineering Consultancy Team for the completion of all remaining phases of the Greenway was awarded to Fehily Timoney and Company Limited in May.

Woodstock Garden & Arboretum

During the month of June our food and beverage offering was available at weekends only so we are delighted to announce that this offering has now been extended to 7 days a week, between 11.00 a.m. and 5.00 p.m. for the months of July and August.

Visitors can enjoy a delicious selection of freshly baked cakes and teas or coffees in the glass conservatory Tea Room. We also provide a variety of takeaway hot and cold drinks, sweet treats, and ice creams from our Coffee Truck and Ice Cream Parlour situated beside the car park and playground.



Woodstock Gardens have been enhanced with a range of summer and autumn flowering perennials throughout the herbaceous border, promising a vibrant display of colours in the coming months. Major tree surgery work on the Noble Fir and Monkey Puzzle Avenues is near completion, with significant compensatory planting to replace fallen trees.

This effort will ensure the historic treelines are preserved for future enjoyment.

Playgrounds & Parks

Enhancement works and repairs were carried out in several playgrounds across the City and County during June and July. These works included the painting of playground timber play components in Paulstown, Graiguenamangh, Mooncoin and Kilmacow, bringing the total of playgrounds painted this year to twelve. New basket swings were also installed in the playgrounds in Blackthorn Hill, Castlecomer Discovery Park and Assumption Place.



Image of Paulstown Playground



The new Multi-use Games Area (MUGA) in Ferrybank Neighbourhood Park was opened in June and has proven very popular. This project was funded through a combination of Sports Capital, specific development contributions and the Council's own funds.

Image of New MUGA Ferrybank Park

PLANNING

Development Management

Planning Summary	Total at End April	
	2023	2024
Planning Applications Received	447	387
Planning Applications Granted	287	327
Planning Applications Refused	57	29
Complaints Received	49	88
Warning Letters Issued	47	42
Enforcements Notices Issued	24	24
Cases Closed	27	47

FORWARD PLANNING

Masterplans:

Ballyragget/Paulstown/Kilmacow

Masterplans have been prepared for the settlements of Ballyragget, Paulstown and Kilmacow. Three public meetings, one for each town have taken place. The feedback/ inputs from these meetings have been incorporated into the draft Masterplans. The draft masterplans for Ballyragget and Paulstown were presented to Elected Members at the March Castlecomer MD meeting and placed on public display for a 4 week period from Friday 5th April until close of business on Friday 3rd May. Public drop in sessions were held in Paulstown and Ballyragget during the public display periods.

Submissions on both these Plans were received and are currently being assessed. A Chief Executive's Report is being prepared.

The Draft Masterplan for Kilmacow was circulated to the Elected Members in the Piltown Municipal District. The Municipal District Members have agreed to place the Draft Masterplan for Kilmacow on public display for a period of 7 weeks from Friday 12th July to Friday, 30th August. A Walk-in public meeting is scheduled for Kilmacow during the public display on Wednesday, 7th August. Public notice to this effect will be given in the coming weeks.

Local Area Plans

Ferrybank/Belview Local Area Plan (LAP)

An Issues Paper was published for the Ferrybank/Belview LAP and a public consultation event took place in the Abbey Community College, Ferrybank on Wednesday

19th of June during the afternoon and evening. More than 100 people attended the sessions. Submissions are now being taken up to 5 pm on the 12th July. A Chief Executive's Report will be prepared on the process and presented in early September. The drafting of the LAP document and associated environmental reports will continue over the coming weeks with a view to publication of a draft plan in early October.

Castlecomer Local Area Plan (LAP) Review Process

The process of reviewing the Castlecomer Local Area Plan has commenced. An Issues Paper and submissions period will be advertised during July. There will be significant collaboration between the Community and Planning Sections in this process, as the Castlecomer Town Team has recently been established. All interested parties are encouraged to register with the Council's consult.kilkenny.ie website, and opt in to receive notifications, so that they will be kept up to date on the process.

Amendment 1 to Callan Local Area Plan (LAP) 2019-2028

Amendment 1 to the Callan LAP, to change the zoning on three sites in the Clashacollare area was placed on public display for a 6 week period from 15th May to the 26th June 2024. A total of 4 submissions were received, and the CE's Report on these will be brought to the July Council meeting.

Cluster Housing Design Guidelines for Co. Kilkenny

Consultants, Place +Urbanism Ltd, were appointed in February to carry out Cluster Housing Design Guidelines for County Kilkenny after the process initially involved several weeks of gathering data, site inspection and review. Further work is required following initial concepts on addressing the challenges facing all settlements within the County. The Planning Section will continue to work on the document with a view to progressing to a draft document for discussion in Q3 2024.

Taking in Charge

- Lime Grove in Ferrybank has progressed through initiation stage and the Developer has been asked to progress final works.
- Works are also continuing on various estates throughout the City and County.

The following schemes are being initiated for taking in charge in July:

- Clonkill in Callan,
- Beechwood in Kilkenny City,
- Village Gardens in Kilkenny City.

Active Land Management

A Draft Annual Map of lands in scope for the new Residential Zoned Land Tax (RZLT) was published on the 31st January 2024. A total of 8 submissions were received on inclusions or exclusions to the land in scope for the tax and determinations on these submissions were notified to the landowners during June. Three submissions were received to the second submissions period, for landowners to make requests regarding a rezoning of their land and the decisions on these will be notified to the landowners before the end of July. Following that, the next step will be the publication of the Final Map in January 2025.

There are 18 Vacant Sites on the Vacant Sites Register and the number of cancelled entries due to site activation or improvement is now 29. The most recent cancellations were VSR21-8 on the Circular Road, and VSR20-10 on the Sion Road in Kilkenny City and VSR19-14 in Kingscourt, Callan. Payment demands (for 2023) were issued in May for 13 sites and the owners had an opportunity of appeal to An Bord Pleanála. Notification of one appeal has been received to date. The Vacant Site levy (VSL) will be replaced by the RZLT from 2025, but any outstanding VSL's will remain due to be paid to the Council.

Conservation

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 colleagues, while the conservation grants and funding applications are also delivered.

Built Heritage Investment Scheme: Meetings have taken place with owners and project agents. Projects will now be tendered for suitable contractors.

Historic Structures Fund: Meetings have taken place with owners and project agents. Projects will now be tendered for suitable contractors.

2024 Conservation Advice Scheme: The National Built Heritage Service (NBHS), Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage has announced the launch of the 2024 Conservation Advice Scheme. The Scheme will provide grants for expert conservation advice to owners of vacant traditional houses who are availing of, or considering, the Vacant Property Refurbishment Grant.

The deadline for applications is 31st July next. More information is available at:
<https://www.gov.ie/en/service/7241b-conservation-advice-grant-scheme-for-vacant-traditional-houses/>

Building Control

Valid Commencement Notices Received:

June 2024	192
June 2023	150
June 2022	197
June 2021	233

Disability Access Applications Received:

June 2024	29
June 2023	27
June 2022	24
June 2021	14

TOWN REGENERATION OFFICE

Town Centre First

Graiguenamanagh – The Council has had 2 meetings in The Hub, Graiguenamanagh with a view to forming a Town Team.

Castlecomer – a public meeting was held in Castlecomer on the 13th June with a view to establishing a Town Team. Further meetings will be held.

Vacant Property Refurbishment Grant

The following are the statistics up to end of June, 2024:

Number of Applications Submitted to-date.....	157
Number of Approvals/	
Approvals in Principle to-date.....	117
Grant Drawdown to date.....	7
Number of Queries during the month.....	37

Derelict Sites

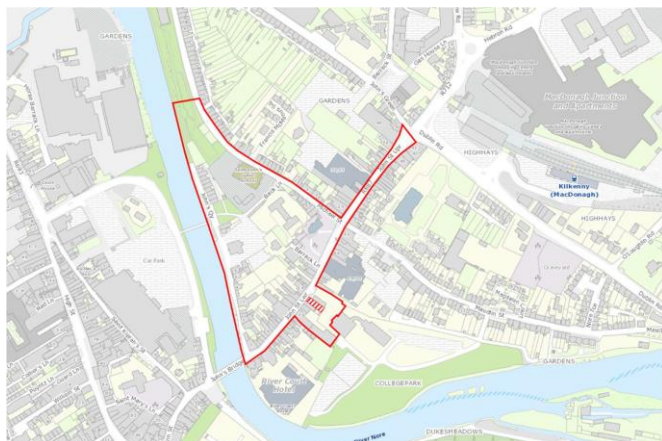
The Town Regeneration Office has commenced CPO's at 2 locations as follows:

- Fr. Hayden Road, Kilkenny
- Canal Road, Johnstown

One additional property in Kilkenny City has been added to the Derelict Sites Register.

THRIVE

The Council were successful in receiving funding of €200,000 to create an Urban Design Strategy for the John's Quay/John Street area [as outlined on map below].



LEO/ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Local Enterprise Office - Summary of 2024 Awards to Businesses

- €252,768 in direct financial assistance was approved for 9 manufacture /export service businesses located throughout the County. This includes €223,106 in Business Expansion Grant assistance and €29,662 awarded in a feasibility study grant
- 1 GradStart grant has been awarded valued at €30,000
- 4 Technical Assistance for Micro Exporter grant awarded to support businesses in exploring new export market opportunities.
- 16 Businesses have commenced LEAN one to one consultancy programmes to investigate possible resource efficiencies and process improvements their businesses.
- 9 Businesses availing of the Digital Start programme to prepare and implement a plan for the adoption of digital tools and techniques across the enterprise
- 20 Businesses have been approved a Trading Online Voucher totalling €42,351 to support the enhancement of their online trading capacity.
- 9 Green for Micro Grant awarded. This scheme supports businesses to becoming greener and environmentally friendly.
- 5 applicants have been supported to make loan applications to the Micro Finance Ireland loan fund.
- 667 people participated on focused small business training, including 34 people

participating on the Starting Your Business programme

- 248 businesses have availed of specialised business specific mentoring on a variety of topics including finance, marketing, social media marketing and HR.

LEO in the Community



Local Enterprise Office Kilkenny held a series of business advisory clinics in various locations throughout the County during the month of June.

Digital Strategy

Kilkenny County Council is developing a three-year Digital Strategy for the County covering the period 2024 – 2026. The first phase of the public consultation comprises a short online survey available on <https://consult.kilkenny.ie/en/surveys> which is open until Friday, 19th July. This survey is an opportunity for all citizens to provide input on the challenges and opportunities in terms of local digital infrastructure needs, digital skills requirements and engagement with Kilkenny County Council both online and in person. The feedback will assist with the development of the Digital Strategy. The second phase invites citizens and businesses to attend a number of in-person public consultation sessions taking place on 17th and 18th July in the Kilkenny Mayfair Library 'Maker Space'. Council staff are also engaging in one-to-one consultation meeting with Digital Strategy Consultants Ltd.

Our Kids Code

The first 'OurKidsCode' programme will commence over July and August in the Kilkenny Mayfair Library. This is a fun and engaging way for parents and kids to explore STEM and coding together! OurKidsCode offers six 2-hour Taster Workshops which includes making a dance mat using Scratch coding, Makey Makey and paper plates! The activities are aimed at ages 7-12.

AI Skills Course

The second 'Generative AI Skills for Job Initiative' took place in Exit 4 Urlingford Remote Working

This is in the context of growth in available bed stock, particularly in Dublin. The food & drink sector continues to struggle with 18% of businesses are up on 2023 revenue, but 55% are down. Lack of demand is thought to be due to a combination of factors, which include lack of consumer disposable income, high prices being charged in a number of sectors, lack of tourist accommodation and prolonged poor weather.

(Source: Failte Ireland Tourism Barometer 2024)

June has been a busy month for the tourism team in terms of events and the promotion of Kilkenny both at local and national events.

Bloom 2024

Bord Bia Bloom took place over five days on the June Bank Holiday weekend, running from 9am to 6pm daily. 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 attended Bloom 2024 to showcase Kilkenny as a great domestic tourism destination. A competition was ran to win a trip to Kilkenny and this attracted a large number of entries.



Kilkenny Tourism Summer Networking

Kilkenny Tourism, supported by the Council and the Local Enterprise Office, held a networking event on the evening of 27th June where all tourism & hospitality businesses in Kilkenny were welcomed. 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. It also offered guests on the evening the chance to enjoy Kilkenny's fabulous new tourism offering, The Smithwick's Experience. Finger food and refreshments were served and positive feedback was received by many who attended.

Festival Supports



Funded by Kilkenny County Council's festivals grant scheme, June saw the return of the happiest festival in Ireland.

This year the festival celebrated its 30th Anniversary and provided a huge programme bursting with events around the City. As well as comedy favourites, festival goers got an exclusive first look at the stars of the future, hand-picked by the Cat Laughs team.

Marketing and PR

All marketing and social media campaigns promoting Kilkenny to visitors near and far continues. "Love Kilkenny Longer" continues to showcase everything to see and do in Kilkenny City and County over the summer months, encouraging guests to stay longer and experience more throughout the County. An Autumn food campaign is currently being developed.



COMMUNITY & CULTURE

Community & Cultural Facilities Scheme

Mooncoin Celtic Soccer Club recently completed development works at the facility. The club were granted €10,000 under the Community & Cultural Facilities Capital Scheme 2022 along with the club own funds to provide spectator fencing and a concrete plinth along around the circumference of the main pitch in the soccer grounds.



Before photo of the pitch



After photos of the pitch

Rural Regeneration Development Fund Fifth Call

The South East Greenway Connectivity Link and Pink Rock Cycle Loop & Amenity Trail application for funding was successful and confirmation of funding was announced in May of an allocation of €1.86m from the Department of Rural and Community Development for this project.

Town and Village

The New Multi-Use Games Area (MUGA) and play park in Gowran are entering the final stages of the project before completion. This project was part funded by the DRCD and was granted €250,000 under the Town and Village Renewal Scheme and a further €45,000 through the Council's Community and Cultural Facilities Capital Scheme (CCFCS). This is a much welcomed and anticipated project for the area.



New Multi-Use Games Area and play park in Gowran

Two new Town Teams were created in Goresbridge and Castlecomer through open public meetings. Both teams will now work with the Community Section staff to develop action plans for the development of their respective communities.

Age Friendly

Kilkenny County Council through the Age Friendly Programme hosted 200 people from across Ireland for the National Older People's Councils Convention. The Convention was 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 was 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. The Convention featured discussions from panel speakers including; Áine Flynn, Director of the Decision Support Service, 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 Older People's Councils Convention



L-R: Alison McGrath, Staff Officer, Community & Culture, Minister of State for Mental Health and Older People Mary Butler and Anne Marie Shortall, Senior Executive Officer, Community & Culture



L-R: Anne Marie Shortall, Senior Executive Officer, Community & Culture; Alison McGrath, Staff Officer, Community & Culture; Mary Mulholland Director of Services; Catherine McGuigan Chief Executive Age Friendly Ireland and Minister Mary Butler



L-R: Lar Power Chief Executive, Anne Marie Shortall, Senior Executive Officer, Community & Culture, Nicky Brennan Kilkenny Age Friendly Ambassador, Cathaoirleach Michael Doyle, Mary O'Hanlon Chairperson Kilkenny Older People's Council, Lorna King, A/Clinical Specialist Dietitian for the Older Person and Edward Hayden MC

National Bike Week

National Bike Week 2024 saw close to 2000 participants of all ages and abilities taking part in 31 events in Kilkenny organised by 24 organisations, clubs and groups. Events ranged from family cycles, to toddler events, to mountain biking and a cycle to Dunmore Biodiversity Park for a Bat Reveal! 18 schools took part and approximately 1,300 children participated in other Bike Week events, with many more participating in whole school initiatives. Events ranged from bike maintenance, BMX workshops, cycle to school days to mountain biking.

Bike Fest returned as a weekend event in Kilkenny providing exciting cycling events for hundreds of school children and adults! There were leisure cycles of 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. The grounds of County Hall hosted Bike Fest with Mountain Biking, Grass Racing and Learn to Cycle events for all ages.

Participations cycled to Dunmore Biodiversity Park for a very special moth trap reveal. The Slow Roll through the City is a hugely popular event. 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.



Various Events at National Bike Week 2024

Pride of Place

Kilkenny County Council nominated three exceptional community groups for the prestigious IPB Pride of Place Awards 2024. These nominations celebrate the outstanding contributions made by local communities 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 Group (*Community Wellbeing Category*), Inistioge (*Category Village Population*), and Johnstown Community Group (*Creative Category*). A panel of judges will be in Kilkenny on Thursday 29th and Friday 30th August 2024 to assess their initiatives and community impact. The winners of the IPB Pride of Place Awards will be revealed during a gala awards ceremony scheduled to take place in Monaghan in November 2024.

Sun Smart Campaign

Kilkenny County Council are supporting the National Cancer Control Programme's "Sun Smart" campaign. This vital initiative aims to educate the public on protecting their skin from harmful ultraviolet (UV) rays while enjoying the beautiful Irish weather. The Sun Smart campaign will roll out in three key locations in Kilkenny: Newpark Marsh Eco Park, Kilkenny Countryside Park in Dunmore and along the Waterway in Graiguenamanagh. Each location will feature a Sun Board providing essential tips, information, and sun cream to help everyone stay safe under the sun. For more information and tips on staying SunSmart this summer, visit the SunSmart hub at www.hse.ie/sunsmart and follow #SunSmart on social media.



L-R Katherine Peacock, Administrative Officer, Community & Culture, Darragh Mahon, Water Safety Officer; Anne Marie Shortall, Senior Executive Officer, Community & Culture, Cllr. Joe Malone, Mayor; Anne-Marie Lawlor, Cancer Prevention Health Promotion, HSE; Thomas Moore, Parks, and Janette Boran, Healthy Kilkenny Coordinator.

Civil Defence

In recent months Civil Defence have been involved in various activities including community events, providing first aid, providing safety boats, teaching local groups first aid to name a few. The volunteers complete weekly training for all necessary qualifications such as: Manual Handling, Community First responder and Emergency First responder training. The Civil Defence conducted several nights training in the community training in the Bennettsbridge Men's Shed, as well as doing some first aid and water safety with the Girl Guides and Brownies.

The Civil Defence transported members of O.N.E (*Organisation of National Ex-Service Personnel*) to Leinster House as a guest of Mr Cathal Berry TD.

New DJI Matrice 30T Drone

Civil Defence Officer compiled the necessary paperwork to register Kilkenny County Council as a complex organisation with the Irish Aviation Authority for the use of the drones in Fire and Rescue and Civil Defence.

The Civil Defence unit will be taking ownership of a new DJI Matrice 30T Drone this year fully funded by the Department of Defence to assist with Missing Person Searches. This new drone will have thermal imaging which is highly important and a first for Kilkenny Civil Defence.



New Civil Defence DJI Matrice 30T Drone

BIODIVERSITY

Tree Care Webinar

Young trees on public ground need maintenance and they are often forgotten about once the thrill of an opening or the excitement of tree week planting is a distant memory. Young trees are being damaged by tight tree ties and redundant tree stakes and simple actions can correct the issues which are leading to bark damage that can be a pathway for disease. Aoife Munn, a horticulturist was invited to speak online in early May to detail the common issues and present practical solutions to look after young trees in Kilkenny. With over 20 volunteers in attendance,

many from Tidy Town Groups across the County, it created an army of volunteers to tackle tree maintenance to safeguard trees in their locality. This was a project collaboration between the Environment Section and Heritage Office organized by the Biodiversity Officer.

Biodiversity Discussion Paper Consultation

Before the County's Biodiversity Action Plan is developed, a Discussion Paper was circulated and put out for public consultation to allow the Communities to have their say at an early stage of the plan's development. There were 17 submissions received from the public and a community engagement session was facilitated. The findings of this consultation will be incorporated into the Plan.

The consultation will also consider biodiversity themed submissions which were made for the Climate Action Plan. In addition, views were sought from older people to determine if they identify a change in biodiversity since their youth and a younger age demographic was also consulted to determine how they see the future of biodiversity in Kilkenny.



Biodiversity Discussion Paper Consultation Mayfair Library

The Biodiversity Officer has been proactive in promoting the opportunities which are available to feed into the Biodiversity Discussion Paper and to raise awareness of the programme of events for Biodiversity Week. In May, the Biodiversity Officer featured twice on KCLR "Ours to Protect" a programme devoted to climate change and climate action. Biodiversity was highlighted as the impacts of climate change has direct impacts on biodiversity. It was also an opportunity to highlight the public consultation of the Biodiversity Discussion Paper in May and the events for National Biodiversity Week. A presentation was made at the PPN Plenary to explain the process of the development of the County's Biodiversity Action Plan.

The Biodiversity Office collaborated with the co-ordinators of Bike Week as it occurred at the start of Biodiversity Week. A cycle to the Dunmore Countryside Park was timed to coincide with the opening of a moth trap, which allowed participants to explore the variety of moth species on site, on the day 17 different species was identified by moth expert Albert Nolan. Later that day, a Biodiversity Stand was operating as part of Bike Fest in County Hall and included family bug hunts.



Exploring variety of moths at Dunmore Countryside Park

Biodiversity Week

A full range of events were planned for this years Biodiversity Week (18th-26th of May) Kilkenny City was decorated with "Leave the Long Grass Grow" street banners, celebrating art pieces from a Creative Ireland funded arts project. Gardening for Biodiversity talks took place in libraries, a day long workshop was held on Biodiversity and Climate Actions which was organised in collaboration with the Kilkenny PPN office, 4 bat walks were organised, covering each Municipal District Area and a composting workshop was well attended in Freshford which looked at the town's community composting systems.

The Biodiversity Officer visited a range of events organised by others who were also celebrating biodiversity locally including the Butler Gallery, An Chead Tine Arts Exhibit and Kilkenny's Bird Watch Irelands Branch Dusk Chorus held in association with the OPW in the Castle Park.

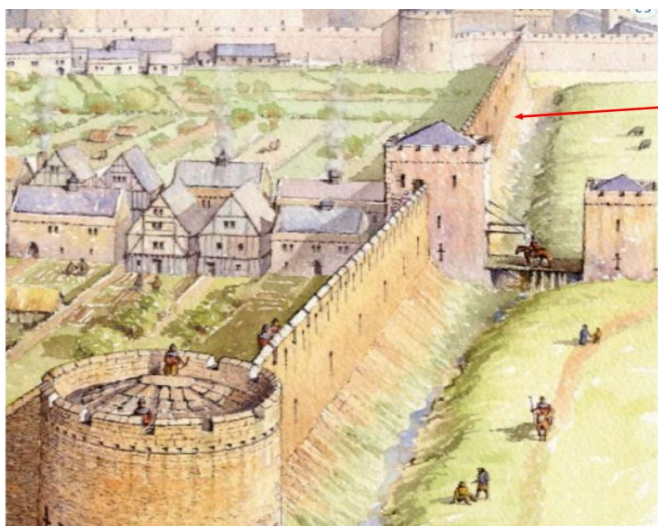


Kilkenny's Bird Watch Irelands Branch Dusk Chorus at Kilkenny Castle

HERITAGE

Irish Walled Towns Network

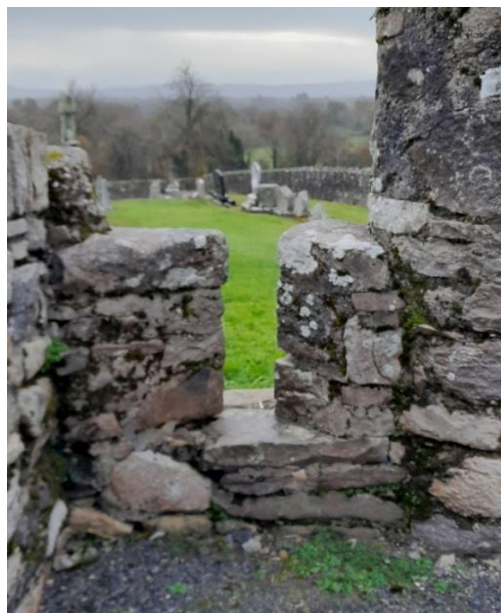
Kilkenny County Council have been awarded funding of €14,000 for City Walls interpretation under the Heritage Council's Irish Walled Towns Network Grant. This will fund an exciting interpretation project in Butler House Gardens which is located along the line of the historic city walls and has a rare upstanding section of the wall. This is part of a larger interpretation project following on from the Archaeological Park at Talbot's Tower; information boards on James Street and trails signs at five locations along the line of the City Wall. Future plans will include developing a trail of the City Wall circuit in the coming years.



Extract from Kilkennys City Walls – Talbots Tower, (Kilkenny County Council Heritage Office). This image shows an artists impression of the Town Wall with the section located in Butler House garden in the background (red arrow). Note the Batter and arrow loops

County Heritage Plan Projects Underway

Phase two of the Kilkenny Holy Wells Survey and Phase two of the Kilkenny Mass Paths Audit have gotten underway. Last year 116 holy wells were surveyed around the County and this year through community engagement workshop across the County and an awareness campaign in local media, it is hoped that this will lead to identifying the remaining 44 missing wells that feature in archaeological records but have yet to be found in the landscape. Phase two of the mass paths survey will record mass paths in 10 locations around County Kilkenny and in the process train community volunteers across the County to record and survey mass paths in their own areas, preserving what remains of mass paths in memory.



Stile at Kilkieran Cemetery – this feature is often indicative of a mass path

National Heritage Week, 17-25 August 2024 – Connections, Routes and Networks

Plans are under way for National Heritage Week 2024. This year's theme invites us to explore the ways we are connected to each other through physical or cultural connections. Last year over 50 events took place across County Kilkenny as thousands turned out to celebrate our local heritage. The Heritage Office will be providing advice and promotion for all events and the portal where groups can register their events has just opened at www.heritageweek.ie. We look forward to engaging with a wide variety of projects in this year's programme.

ARTS

Culture Night

The deadline for applications for Culture Night funding was the 14th May. A total of 19 applications were received from a variety of established venues and individuals looking to host an event for Culture Night, taking place on the 20th September from 4pm until late.

Kilkenny City is designated as a night time economy pilot city for 2024. Under the Kilkenny City Night Time Economy Action Plan 2024-2025, additional funding has been provided this year to ensure Culture Night can facilitate more inclusive and innovative late-night arts events that are suitable for all ages. A total of 15 events have been funded with a total fund of €19,000.

Professional Development Opportunities for Artists

Career Development Talks for Musicians ran into May with Nick Roth of Diatribe Records giving a talk of getting a record label and recording your work. Brian Bradley of MCD and lecturer and musician Matthew Nolan gave talks of touring festivals and marketing your music. The talks were held in Cleere's Bar during May, 2024.

Kate Wilson ran Artist Development Workshops for practitioners working with children and young people on the 30th May, 2024. Kate spoke about her practice which combines dance and visual art and shared her approach to working within a classroom setting with children and her experience with the Teacher-Artist Partnership (TAP) programme.

Bursaries

The Age & Opportunity Tyrone Guthrie Centre Residency Award partnership aims to support professional artists of 50+ to develop their practice by creating time and space to think and reflect on their work and to bolster their peer network. The Arts Office received 13 applications for Age & Opportunity Tyrone Guthrie Bursary.

The Art of Change - Youth Arts

The Youth Group have now completed all of The Art of Change workshops and provide detailed feedback on the art programme along with suggestions on what sorts of activities they would like to take part in the future. They are eager to take part in more art workshops, with a strong interest in environmental and climate issues. The Arts Office uses this feedback and suggestions to begin the plan for an Art of Change programme for the Autumn.



Artwork created as part of the Art of Change workshops

Climate Action Community Arts - Waste Not Want Not

As part of Kilkenny Arts Office Community Arts and Climate Action 2024 programme 'Waste Not Want Not', the Arts Office successfully ran Upcycling Sewing classes at Harry's Bar in Langtons, John Street for six weeks throughout May & June with three different time slots of morning, afternoon and evening. The sewing classes had positive feedback from participants who learned how to create a tote bag and make basic alternations as well as transforming and repurposing textiles and fabrics saving clothing from landfill and giving new life.



Tote Bags created at the Waste Not Want Not 'Upcycling Sewing Classes'

The second phase of 'Waste Not Want Not' Collaborative Project in St. Canice's Neighbourhood Hall, is reaching its culmination. Participants upcycled waste denim from the St. Vincent's De Paul Charity Shop. The focus was on Sashiko stitching on denim squares to create a large collective quilt which will be donated to our project partner, Kilkenny St. Vincent's De Paul Charity Shop.



Participations of 'Waste Not Want Not' Collaborative Project

Creative Kilkenny

Creative Kilkenny unveiled the Cruinniú na nÓg 2024 festival on the 15th June, 2024. Young people were invited to participate in 36 free creative activities spread across the County. Cruinniú na nÓg is a celebration of youthful creativity, offering a platform for children and young people to engage in the arts within their own communities. This year the programme was directed by the consultation workshops conducted with young people during 2023. This year Cruinniú na nÓg burst onto the scene, bringing together young comedians, basket makers, coders, animators, musicians, circus performers, drama enthusiasts and artists.

Highlights include an exhibition of plant photography at the Butler Gallery, a series of clay workshops at The Happy Pottery, Circus, crafts and craic at Glenmore Parish Hall, Song Collective Gig at the Drum Youth Centre in the MacDonagh Centre, and much more!

Older teens were included as Kilkenny has been designated a night time economy pilot area with additional funding provided to support a comprehensive line-up of events for those who wanted to participate in the evening and night time. These night-time events were hosted in the Castlecomer Discovery Park and Ossory Youth Centre, Desart Hall, Kilkenny.

Additionally, a number of other programmes have commenced under the Creative Ireland funding stream which include:

- The National Drawing Day at Butler Gallery
- Africa Mother and Youth pottery workshops
- The Polish School – documenting and visiting local heritage sites in Kilkenny
- United for Peace choral group performances throughout Kilkenny
- Crowning Cultures with the Ukrainian Centre
- A mural at the Droichead Family resource centre
- Botanical 3D quilting with the South Midlands Patchwork Society
- Creative Kilkenny was successfully awarded additional funding for the Live Music in events. Gerald Peregrine and his team from the Mobile Music Machine will bring quality performances to 4 local Retirement homes.

Under the Creative Health and Wellbeing strand of Funding we have secured additional funding

for a 2-year programme. The overall project aims to support healthy, social connections and sustainability through community-based music and art projects. Creativity can play a powerful role in connecting people with each other and with the stories that have shaped their past, present and for their future communities. It can help communities to express their identities, bring ideas to life, as well providing a strong sense of place or belonging. Utilising various modalities, hands-on experiences and approaches the project proposes to encourage participation for all ages, sharing the enjoyment and practice of music/song/art/movement or practices.

HOUSING

The Directorate of Housing incorporates a wide range of services for applicants and tenants to facilitate and support the provision of independent and supported accommodation.

AFFORDABLE HOMES

Abbey Meadows, Ferrybank, Co. Kilkenny - 14 Affordable Homes



Kilkenny County Council, working in partnership with Whitebox Property Group and the Department of Housing, Local Government & Heritage is delighted to launch 14 Affordable Homes in Abbey Meadows, Ferrybank under the Local Authority Affordable Purchase Scheme.

The Affordable Homes comprise a mix of A-rated 3 and 4 bedroom homes, is located at Abbey Meadows. The site adjoins the Ross Abbey Neighbourhood centre, where a planned future road will connect this site with the Aldi Roundabout on the New Ross Road making the Abbey Park area even more accessible and connected. The site also abuts the recently opened South East Greenway which connects Waterford with New Ross, provides 24km of spectacular off-road walking and cycling and upon completion will be accessible from the North Quays.

Homes will become available from Q4 of this year. Successful applicants will be able to avail of up to €75,000 reduction on the full market price, depending on the price of the property and the applicant's own financial circumstances.

House Type	Number of Houses	Number of Beds	Floor Area Sqm	Market Value	Min. Affordable Purchase Price	Max. Affordable Purchase Price	Gross Income Threshold *	Max % Discount
Detached	1	4	123	€359,000	€284,000	€341,050	€76,736	21%
Semi-Detached	4	4	123	€349,000	€274,000	€331,550	€74,599	21%
End Terrace	6	3	103	€325,000	€250,000	€308,750	€69,469	23%
Mid Terrace	3	3	100	€315,000	€240,000	€299,250	€67,331	24%
	14							

**Indicative Figures – income assessed by Kilkenny County Council*

Applications can only be made online via the dedicated application portal accessible via the council website as follows: <https://affordablehousing.kilkennycoco.ie/abbeymeadows>

The Application Portal opened for Abbey Meadows on Wednesday July 3rd at 12 noon and close on Wednesday July 31st at 12 Noon.

Affordable Homes At Nyne Park, Kilkenny City

Kilkenny County Council, in partnership with CAIRN and the Department of Housing, Local Government & Heritage, is delighted to announce that a limited number of three-bedroom Affordable Homes are being made available for purchase at Nyne Park for successful applicants at a price lower than its market value, under the Local Authority Affordable Purchase Scheme, in accordance with the Affordable Housing Act 2021 and associated Affordable Housing Regulations.

House Type	Number of Beds	Floor Area Sqm	Market Value	Minimum Affordable Purchase Price	Maximum Affordable Purchase Price	Gross Income Threshold*	Max % discount
Mid Terrace	3	117.25	€345,000	€255,000	€327,750	€73,744	25%
End Terrace	3	117	€360,000	€270,000	€342,000	€76,950	25%

**Indicative Figures – income assessed by Kilkenny County Council*

Applications can only be made online via the dedicated application portal accessible via the council website as follows: There is an Individual online application portal for each scheme as follows: <https://kilkennycoco.ie/nyne-park>

The Application Portal is currently open for applications.

The Affordable Homes are generally targeted at first-time buyers (*exceptions apply*) who need assistance bridging the gap between their own available funds (*including the Help to Buy scheme*), the mortgage that they can obtain and the cost of the new home. Under the Affordable Purchase Scheme eligible buyers will be able to purchase their own new home by availing of this shared equity scheme. Kilkenny County Council will retain an equity share and successful applicants have the option of buying out this share over time. Equity shares are calculated on an individual basis and are linked to an applicant's income, their savings and their mortgage capacity.

It is important that potential applicants familiarise themselves with the eligibility criteria and compile the requisite documents to complete their applications subject to them meeting the qualifying criteria. Full information is available at <https://kilkennycoco.ie/affordable-homes>

It is strongly recommended that applicants have Mortgage Approval in Principle prior to applying for this scheme, as applicants will be required to demonstrate their capacity to purchase. Only valid applications (*i.e. applications with all required documentation submitted*) will go forward for assessment. Applications which are incomplete or those not accompanied by the required documentation will be deemed invalid.

Any queries in relation to any of the above to affordablehousing@kilkennycoco.ie and a member of the team will revert back.

HOMELESS SERVICES

Homeless Prevention Measures

The Government have put in place a number of measures to prevent homelessness arising from the reactivation of notices of termination of tenancies in June 2023.

We are currently providing advice and directing Tenants to the appropriate services required to prevent homelessness. Where a household is in receipt of a valid notice to quit and requires assistance in establishing what options are available to them to avoid potential homelessness they are advised to contact the Housing Office at its dedicated email address NTQEnquiries@kilkennycoco.ie. Further details are available on www.kilkennycoco.ie.

Any tenants who may have received a notice of termination or a landlord who has issued a notice of termination to their tenants or who may wish to in the coming months should direct any queries to the dedicated email provided and all queries will be responded to in a timely manner.

HOMELESS SERVICES SUMMARY JUNE 2024	
Homeless Presentations	39
Homeless Assessment Outcomes	
Prevention & Interventions	22
Emergency Service	12
Not eligible / Did not avail of service	5
HAP Place Finder Service	
No of Homeless HAP tenancies at 1 st day of month	141
No of Homeless HAP tenancies created during month	6
No of Homeless HAP tenancies in place at last day of month	147
Number of Homeless HAP tenancy breakdowns	0
Other Social Housing Tenancies supported /created during month	
Households in Temporary Emergency Supported Accommodation at June 30 th	40
Households in Temporary Emergency B&B accommodation	6
Households in Temporary Emergency B&B Accommodation that are families	4
Households (<i>singles/couples</i>) in Transition Emergency Accommodation (<i>Own Front Door</i>)	37
Households (<i>Families</i>) in Transition Emergency Accommodation (OFD)	10

SOCIAL HOUSING ASSESSMENT

SOCIAL HOUSING SUPPORT APPLICATION SUMMARY JULY 2024	
Number awaiting Social Housing Support at June 30 th (<i>Gross Need</i>)	1,556
Number awaiting Social Housing Support at June 30 th (<i>Net Need</i>)	740
Number of Social Housing Applications received in June	69
Number of applications incomplete / awaiting further information/clarification	23
Number of applications validated and ready for assessment during the month	16
Number of applications assessed during June	28
Number of applications awaiting assessment as at June 30 th	59

HAP SUMMARY YEAR TO DATE 2024	
Total active HAP tenancies	494
New HAP tenancies set up	33
HAP allocated Social Housing	89
Closed HAP tenancies	140
HAP Rent Review amendments	129
HAP Other tenancy amendments	310

TENANCY MANAGEMENT

The Tenancy Management Team deal with allocations, maintenance and anti-social behaviour complaints in relation to our tenants. Below is a summary of activity in June and to date this year:

LA/RAS/Leasing allocations in June (<i>offers made</i>):.....	4
LA/RAS/Leasing allocations to June (<i>offers made</i>):.....	49
Tenant Liaison Officer cases in June:.....	65
Maintenance Calls for June:	462
Maintenance Calls year to date	3,322

Where anti-social behaviour is ongoing, tenancy notifications and warning notices continue to be served and monitored. Where tenants engage in anti-social behaviour relating to offences under the Misuse of Drugs Act or violence and intimidation resulting in criminal charges, the local authority will take enforcement action to terminate the tenancy and alternative social housing supports will not be provided.

PRIVATE HOUSE GRANTS

The 2024 housing grants allocation has been received from the Department of Housing in the amount of €2,161,278 comprised of €1,729,023 (80%) grant and €432,256 (20%) KCC contribution.

This allocation exceeds the amount included in the budget for 2024 and reflects the Departments confidence in the Grants Section to meet and exceed its targets for 2024. The funding approval also confirms that the Local Authority cannot exceed the maximum grant amounts under legislation and that these maximum amounts have not been revised.

GRANTS PAID OUT TO 28TH JUNE, 2024		
Scheme	Number	Amount
HGD - Housing Adaptation Grant	47	€488,440
MAG - Mobility Aid Grant	3	€13,200
HOP - Housing Aid for Older Persons	85	€387,374
Total	135	€889,014

GRANTS APPROVED & COMMITTED TO 28 TH JUNE, 2024		
Scheme	Number	Amount
HGD - Housing Adaptation Grant	128	€1,424,479
MAG - Mobility Aid Grant	9	€27,662
HOP - Housing Aid for Older Persons	199	€972,305
Total	336	€2,424,446

HOUSING LOANS

The Tenant (*Incremental*) Purchase Scheme 2016, which allows Local Authority tenants to buy their homes has being revised from the 29th January, 2024.

Changes to the scheme are as follows:

- Minimum income requirements: The minimum income required for an applicant to be eligible to apply under the scheme has been revised from €12,500 to €11,000 per annum. (*At least 50% of which must come from a reckonable primary source of income*).
- Primary Sources of Income: In addition to employment and the State Pension (Contributory and Non-Contributory) being considered as primary sources of income, the Widow's, Widower's, Surviving Civil Partner's (Contributory and Non-Contributory Pension), Blind Pension, Invalidity Pension and Disability Allowance are now also considered primary sources of income.
- Time receiving social housing supports: The period of time tenants will be required to be in receipt of social housing support to be considered eligible under the scheme remains at 10 consecutive years. However, in the case of joint tenancies only one tenant is now required to have been in receipt of social housing supports for 10 years.
- Income included/not included as a secondary income for assessment.

Changes have been made to income that can be considered and not considered as secondary income when assessing for discount.

HOUSING LOAN ACTIVITY 1 ST JANUARY - 30 TH JUNE, 2024					
Loan Type	Received	Approved	Amount Approved	Number Paid	Amount Paid
Local Authority Home Loan	17	6	€812,900	9	€1,265,526
Caravan Loan	0	0	€0.00	0	€0
Total	17	6	€812,900	9	€1,265,526

VOIDS

At the end of June 2024 there were 54 vacant units of Local Authority's accommodation awaiting refurbishment or remediation works.

Works are ongoing on this voids maintenance programme and its envisaged that a minimum of 75 units will be completed under this programme during 2024.

Housing Capital Delivery



Adaptation of an existing bungalow at Cloghregg, Thomastown to a Disability Unit

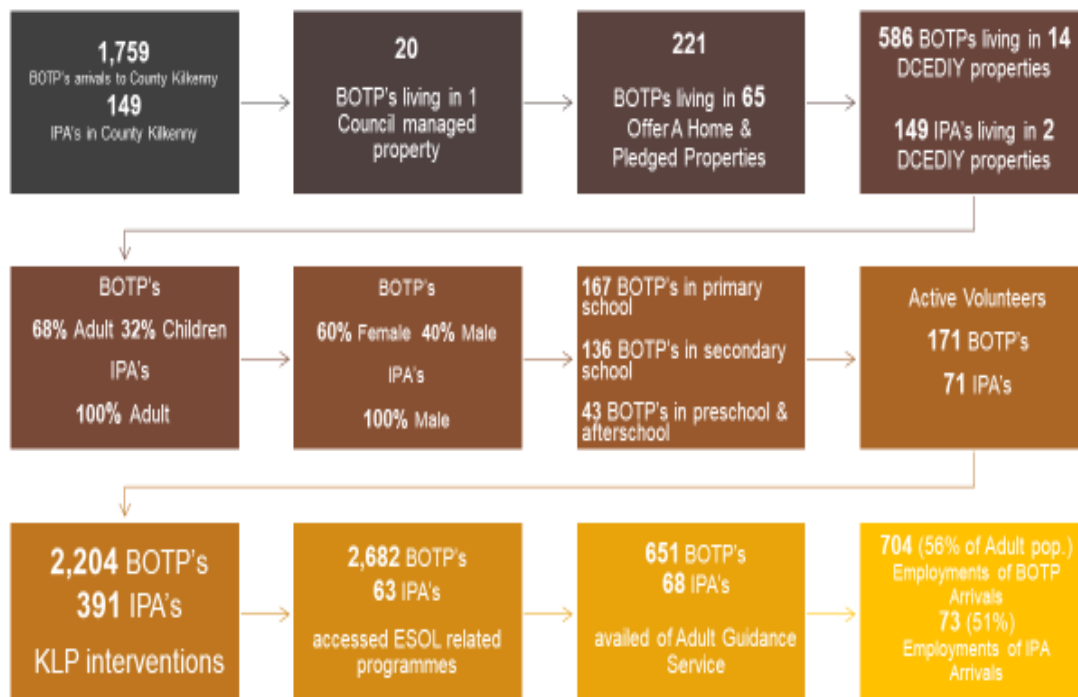


Construction of 2 Wheelchair Accessible Houses at the Old Community Center in Loughboy, Kilkenny The Houses are being constructed using Insulated Concrete Form (ICF)



Construction ongoing at Crokers Hill, Kennyswell Road. Due for completion this year.

Community Integration Monitor to 09.07.24



St. John of God Convent Temporary Rest Centre

The Temporary Rest Centre at St. John of God Convent closed in June 2024. The premises is in the planning process for redevelopment. Since its opening in 2022, the Convent has provided a valuable facility for over 600 Ukrainians as temporary accommodation.

Many of the residents moved into other commercial facilities, pledged accommodation, offer a home accommodation or found their own accommodation.

Kilkenny County Council wish to extend a sincere thanks to the Sisters of St. John of God and their team for allowing the Convent to be used over the past 2 years. It has enabled Ukrainians to arrive into Kilkenny, with support staff from Kilkenny County Council managing the property and supporting their needs.

Furthermore, we wish to extend our thanks to our Support Staff who provided invaluable support to the Ukrainian Community during their time in the Convent. All remaining residents have been facilitated with accommodation in alternative commercial accommodation in Kilkenny thus allowing residents to remain in jobs and children to remain in school.

FIRE SERVICES

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.

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 Council's own revenue budget.

Fire Safety Certificate Applications

- 47 applications for fire safety certificates were received to date.
- Ukrainian Response Unit - Fire Safety Certificate compliance.
- The Fire Authority technical staff have been involved in Kilkenny County Council's Ukrainian Response Unit.
- A large number of risk premises throughout Kilkenny City and County have been subject to review and Fire Safety Certification applications to ensure minimum standards.

Fire Services Acts 1981 and 2003

- Fire Prevention staff made targeted inspections of premises both to provide advice and to enforce legislation during 2023.
- 11 Licence Applications were processed under Section 24 of the Fire Services Acts 1981 and 2003.
- 7 licence applications under the Dangerous Substances legislation were assessed to date
- 49 Fire safety inspections of premises have taken place in 2024.

Fire Brigade Operations

The existence of a professional fire and rescue service is fundamental to public and personal safety. The Fire Service plays a crucial role in making our communities safer, whether it be preventing and protecting people from fire and other risks or responding swiftly and effectively to the incidents and emergencies that occur 24 hrs per day/7 days per week/365 days per year. The Brigades have attended 483 callouts to date in 2024. These incidents included a number of road traffic collisions, house fires, ambulance assists, chimney fires and automatic fire alarm activations.

Recruitment of Retained Firefighters

As a result of our recent recruitment campaign, the first group of 7 recruit fighters from Castlecomer, Freshford, Callan and Graiguenamanagh are attending a Fire Fighting skills course at present. This course aims to equip learners with the underpinning knowledge, skills, understanding and attitudes to enable them efficiently, effectively, safely and competently perform the role of firefighter, as an individual, and as part of a team, in responding to a diverse range of operational incidents.



Fire Appliances

Kilkenny County Council's Fire and Rescue Service maintain fire appliances in all seven (7) Fire Stations throughout the County.

There are a variety of different types of appliances in operation i.e. Standard Class B Pumping Fire Appliance (normal fire appliance), Emergency Tenders, Combined Aerial and Pumping Appliances, Water Tankers, Incident Command vehicle and 4-Wheel Drive Vehicles with off road capabilities.

Kilkenny County Council Fire and Rescue Service have a Command and Control vehicle, 2 seater electrical fire vehicle and a Class B fire engine being built at present. We will continue with a replacement programme and refurbishment programme as capital funding is made available.

Community Fire Safety Programme

Kilkenny Fire and Rescue Service continue to deliver the National Directorate Fire and Emergency Management Primary Schools Programme. It is targeted at all 3rd Class Primary School children. The fire authority has delivered this programme from inception in 2006 and every year subsequently (*except during the recent pandemic*). Over 20,000 pupils have participated in the Primary Schools Programme to date.

The Fire Authority has provided training and refresher training for a number of firefighters in each brigade to assist them to deliver this Programme to all school children in third classes in Kilkenny City and County where the school management accept our invitation to visit their schools.

Kilkenny Fire Service Firefighters took part at the Age Friendly Ireland - National Older People's Councils (OPC) Convention in the Kilkenny Ormonde Hotel.

To Educate, to Engage, to Advise conference delegates on all things fire safety with a focus on fire safety in the home and checking your smoke alarms.



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 in turn can instruct and direct delivery of 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.

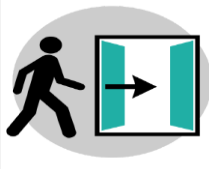
A Pump Operators training course was held in Graiguenamanagh Fire Station, Kilkenny between the 13th and 17th May 2024. The aim of this 5-day course is to equip the learner with the relevant knowledge, skill and competence to effectively and safely operate both portable and main pumps. This course provides 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.



LIBRARY



36,185 Items borrowed



29,702 Visitors



2,350 New Members

Cruinniú na nÓg 2024

Cruinniú na nÓg 2024 took place on June 15th and was jam-packed full of fun and creativity with activities such as samba drumming, eco-printing, graffiti art, circus skills, consultations with a children's book doctor and coding workshops taking place throughout our library branches.



Thomastown Library Update

Piling to all areas completed.

Foundations and lift pit excavations have commenced. Sand blasting and priming to all steel columns completed.



Mayfair Library Update

The Mayfair Library has been a highly-used resource since its opening on April 25th with 3,571 memberships, 27,840 items issued, and 43,588 visits.



Summer Stars 2024

The annual Summer Stars Reading Adventure was launched in Kilkenny Libraries on the 7th June with an exciting programme of storytimes, classes and events. Summer Stars is a national initiative under the Right to Read Literacy Programme and is designed to encourage children of all ages to enjoy reading for fun throughout the summer. This helps maintain reading and literacy levels throughout the break from school and reduces the 'summer slide' decline in reading habits. To date, over 1,400 children have signed up to take part in the reading challenge.

Mná Feasa Social History Project

Kilkenny County Council Library Service and Heritage Office were delighted to announce a new project called 'Mná Feasa/Wise Women' - a social history project and podcast series comprising of stories, experiences and local lore from the women of Kilkenny.

Older women in Kilkenny and female transition year students will be encouraged to share their memories and experiences of life as women growing up in the County. From exciting moments in history to simple day-to-day activities, childhood memories, old wives' tales, stories of school days and academic expectations, marriage, working life, family and everything in between these memories will be recorded and preserved for future generations.

This collaboration is kindly funded by Commemorative Initiatives under the Department of Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport and Media.

Library Activities

Events	In Branch	Online
198	197	0
Offsite	Live	Numbers
2	176	2948

This month we held lots of activities and events across our libraries. These events included a repair café in the Mayfair Library, intergenerational samba drumming in Loughboy Library, a fall prevention class in Castlecomer Library, a Dungeons and Dragons club in Thomastown Library, a coding workshop in Urlingford Library, basket-making classes in Graiguenamanagh Library, a ciorcal comhrá Gaeilge in Ferrybank Library and a number of community book clubs which were supported by library staff.

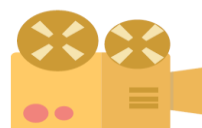


Throughout the month of June, our library branches hosted **198** events with a total of **2,948** attendees both in our branches and on visits to local creches, schools and community groups.

Online Services Usage

3,154 eAudiobooks borrowed
1,381 eBooks borrowed
34 eComics Borrowed

131 Language Learning Sessions
5,225 eMagazines borrowed
68 Movies Streamed



Digital Engagement

Library staff prepared, recorded, edited and published **248** posts and videos on our social media platforms in June. Our engagements for the month were **9,118** and our videos and reels had **3,707** views. Our virtual newsletter was sent to 7,167 email accounts.

Alignment with Sustainable Development Goals
Here are 2 ways in which Kilkenny County Council Library Service helped to further the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals in June:

SDG 9: Industry innovation and infrastructure
Coding workshops were held in Urlingford Library as part of Cruinniú na nÓg. The makerspace in the Mayfair Library was also used to host a variety of workshops and provide access to technologies including 3D printers.

SDG 3: Good health and wellbeing
A number of workshops and information sessions on topics including fall prevention and physiotherapy education were held as part of the Healthy Ireland at your Library initiative. A film on nutrition for men's health was also screened in Loughboy Library.

FINANCE

The expenditure by service division to the end of June is set out in table 1. Total Expenditure for the period was €53m compared with the annual budget of €111m.

Table 1	Actual YTD April 2024	Budget Full Year 2024
	€'000's	€'000's
Housing & Building	12,209	26,258
Road Transport & Safety	10,579	29,958
Water Services	3,583	7,699
Development Management	7,808	14,720
Environmental Services	7,553	16,899
Recreation & Amenity	3,459	8,759
Agriculture, Education, Health, Welfare	275	690
Miscellaneous Services	4,888	6,331
CMC for distribution	2,411	
OVERALL TOTAL	52,765	111,134

Rates Revaluation

Further to Revaluation 2017, 197 customers with a total rate demand value of €4.5m appealed their new valuation to the Valuation Tribunal. To-date 191 appeals have been completed.

The following is a breakdown of the appeal outcomes to date:

- Decrease in Revaluation on Appeal149 cases
- Appeal Withdrawn.....33 cases
- Increase in Revaluation on Appeal 1 case
- No change to Revaluation on Appeal.....9 cases
- Appeals outstanding6 cases

The total annual Income lost to date stands at €853k.

Increased Cost of Business (ICOB) Grant Scheme

As part of Budget 2024, the Government signed off on a package of €257m for the Increased Cost of Business (ICOB) Grant as a vital measure for small and medium Enterprises. This rollout will be managed through the Local Authorities and funded by the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment (DETE). Eligible businesses will receive a once-off grant which will be based on the value of their Commercial Rates bill in 2023.

The milestones and timelines are as follows:

- Social Media Communications in relation to ICOB occurred in late February into early March.
- A letter detailing how to apply for the grant was sent to ratepayers in the week starting 12th March.
- Social media communications were ongoing up to the closing date.
- The closing date for applications was extended to 29th May 2024
 - Total number of submissions1,692
 - Total Grants Paid out.....1,632 [€2,627,006]
 - Currently being assessed60

On 15 May, the Government made a further announcement advising that any businesses operating in the Hospitality and the Retail sectors are now eligible for a second grant payment of the same amount as the initial grant and these grants will be paid out at the end of July.

Finance Update

The bank overdraft facility was not utilised during the six-month period to the end of June 2024. The Audit by the Local Government Auditor for FY 2023 is ongoing.

Budget 2025

As part of the 2025 budget process the Elected Members will be required to make a decision on the base rate adjustment on Local Property Tax before early October. This item will be listed on the agenda for the September Council meeting. The ask from the Elected Members will be to maintain the same base rate adjustment that has been in place for the years 2020 to 2024 inclusive for the next three years. A separate report on the matter will be circulated to the Elected Members in advance of the September Council meeting. The consultation period on setting the local adjustment factor for the Local Property Tax for 2025 will commence in late July and will run for a number of weeks.