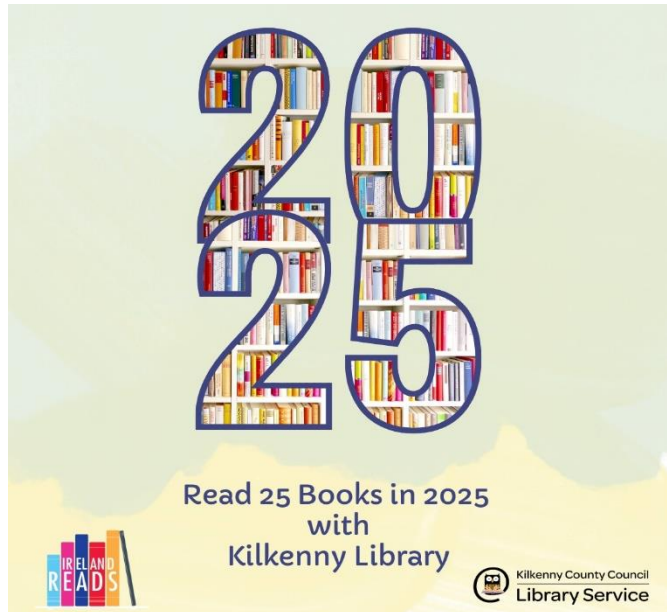




Comhairle Chontae Chill Chainnigh
Kilkenny County Council

CHIEF EXECUTIVE REPORT

FEBRUARY 2025 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.

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PLANNING

DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT

Planning Summary	Total January to January 2024	Total January to January 2025
Planning Applications Received	54	52
Planning Applications Granted	64	70
Planning Applications Refused	5	3
Complaints Received	16	5
Warning Letters Issued	12	6
Enforcements Notices Issued	3	3
Cases Closed	14	43
Cases Sent for Legal Prosecution	0	0

FORWARD PLANNING

Variation 3 to the City & County Development Plan 2021

This Variation seeks to rezone a small portion of green space in Loughboy to residential for the purpose of a small number of Age Friendly and Disability Accessible houses. The proposed variation along with associated environmental documents were on public display for a 6 week period until Friday, 17th January, 2025. A total of 15 submissions were received. A Chief Executive's Report will be brought forward for consideration by the Members at the February Plenary Council Meeting.

Variation No. 4 to the City & County Development Plan 2021

This Variation seeks to incorporate the Loughmacask Masterplan into the City and County Development Plan. It also seeks to amend text of Section 10.1.7 of the City and County Development Plan, Volume 1 to allow for wastewater treatment plans in certain circumstances. This Variation will be on public display for a four week period from Friday, 7th February to Friday, 7th March, 2025. After this period, a Chief Executive's Report will be prepared and brought forward for consideration by the Members at the March Plenary Council Meeting.

MASTERPLANS

Ballyragget/Paulstown/Kilmacow

All three Masterplans are now approved by the relevant Municipal Districts. Work has commenced to give formal recognition to the Masterplans in the City & County Development Plan through a variation, identifying appropriate objectives from all above Plans, the Urlingford Masterplan to be implemented and the role of the Masterplans in the Development Management process. This to be brought forward in Q1 of 2025.

LOCAL AREA PLANS

Ferrybank / Belview Local Area Plan

The Draft Plan preparation continues. Significant issues relating to the role of Ferrybank as the second largest Urban Area in the County, its role as part of the wider Metropolitan area and its role in contributing to the development of Waterford as envisaged under the National Planning Framework, are being addressed as part of the Plan preparation. It is anticipated that a Draft Plan will be available in Q1 of 2025.

Castlecomer Plan Review Process

The Plan preparation process continues, with ongoing collaboration between the Community and Planning Sections. The Director's Report on the pre-draft consultation stage was published on the Consult website. This outlined the engagement to-date on the Plan. The Town Centre Health Check was produced by the Town Regeneration Office in January. The Draft Settlement Plan will be accompanied by various assessments, including an Infrastructural Assessment and Environmental Assessments. Public display of the Plan will take place in Q1 2025.

Taking in Charge

Works are progressing on the following Estates:

- Hillview, Bennettsbridge
- Westcourt, Callan
- Leaca Ard/Fiodh Mor
- Weir View Gardens, Kilkenny

Active Land Management

The new Residential Zoned Land Tax (RZLT) comes into effect from February. Two sets of maps have now been published for public display, the Final Maps for 2025 and the Annual Draft Maps for 2026. Submissions are invited until 1st April. For the Annual Draft Maps, submissions can be made on the inclusion or exclusion of sites from scope for the tax. Rezoning requests can be made by landowners for impacted sites on the Final Maps 2025. The Council prepare the maps, and Revenue will administer the tax. The settlements currently liable are Kilkenny City, Rosbercon, Callan and Thomastown.

There are 18 Vacant Sites on the Vacant Sites Register, and the number of cancelled entries due to site activation or improvement is 29. The Vacant Site levy (VSL) will be replaced by the RZLT later this year and any outstanding VSL's will remain due 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 2025: Extra funding of €54,451 has been acquired by the Conservation Office for this scheme, therefore another four projects, which were on the Reserve List, have been offered funding. This brings the total funding for Kilkenny Built Heritage Investment Scheme to €253,062.

Historic Structures Fund and the Historic Thatch Building 2025: The deadline for this scheme has closed, and applications are now being reviewed.

Architectural Conservation Area Trails 2024: This project is nearing completion and will be launched once final sign off has been undertaken with the National Built Heritage Services and Kilkenny's Architectural Conservation Officer.

Built Heritage Stocktake 2024: A consultant was appointed to work with Kilkenny County Council's conservation officer and the National Built Heritage Service to deliver a stocktake for the following settlements: Callan, Gowran, Inistioge, Johnstown, Thomastown. The stocktake will focus on the structures listed on the RPS and NIAH.

For the month of January, the Conservation Officer has completed reports on the following:

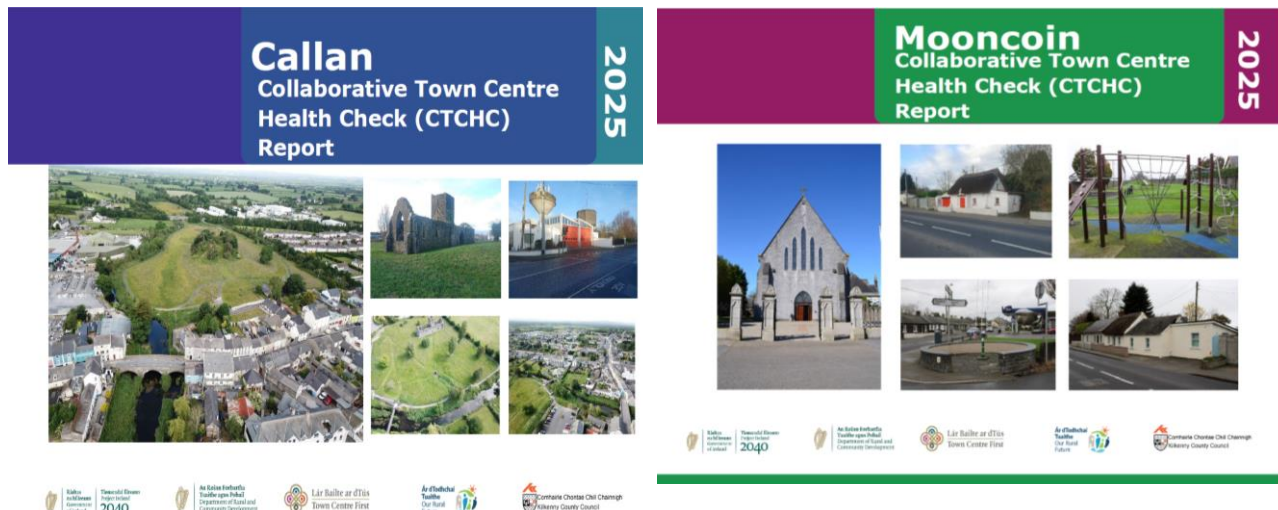
▪ Planning Referrals.....	5
▪ Further Information Requests	3
▪ Clarification of Further Information Requests.....	0
▪ Section 57 Declarations.....	0
▪ Post Planning	0
▪ Part VIII	0

Building Control

Valid Commencement Notices Received	Disability Access Applications Received
January 2025.....	14
January 2024.....	35
January 2023.....	14
January 2022.....	39
January 2025.....	7
January 2024.....	4
January 2023.....	3
January 2022.....	5

TOWN REGENERATION OFFICE

Town Centre First – A Health Check Report was completed for Mooncoin and Callan in January. These reports were developed in co-operation with the Local Town Teams.



Vacant Property Refurbishment Grant

The following are the full statistics up to end of January, 2025:

Number of applications submitted to-date	256
Number of approvals/approvals in principle to-date	167
Grant drawdown to-date	24
Number of queries during the month of January	54

THRIVE

The Southern Regional Assembly announced the second call for funding under THRIVE Strand 2 in January. This is a capital fund of between €2m and €7m. We are in the process of preparing an application for the refurbishment of Carnegie and surrounding public realm area in John's Quay.

Butts Area Regeneration Framework

The Consultants were in Kilkenny from the 7th to 9th, and 23rd January and met with Internal and External Task Force and members of the Butts Town Team. A Workshop with Town Team members also took place. The next public event is on the 17th February in the Neighbourhood Hall.

ENVIRONMENT

CLIMATE ACTION

New Newsletter

The Climate Action Office issued the first monthly Kilkenny Going Green newsletter in January. The newsletter will keep staff, Elected Representatives and the public up-to-date on the latest climate action news and stories from Kilkenny County Council along with information on climate supports and grants for communities and businesses.



If you want to be a part of the Kilkenny Going Green Network, click the link to join our mailing list: <https://mailchi.mp/kilkennycoco/kilkenny-going-green-network>

Advice for Communities on how to make Projects more Climate Friendly

The Climate Action Office has produced a simple guide for communities to help make local community projects more climate and environment friendly. See pages 12-13 of the new Kilkenny County Council Grants Booklet.

Local Climate Action

The Community Climate Action Officer is continuing to visit and support the Community Groups with awarded funding under the Community Climate Action Programme. Here's a snap shot of five communities as they prepare to start work on their projects.

Kilkenny Walking and Cycling Campaign

Kilkenny Walking and Cycling campaign are using funding from the Community Climate Action Grant to purchase bikes and helmets in order to teach both adults and children how to cycle safely and to inform people about using more sustainable transport methods.



Mullinavat

Mullinavat Community Group are making the Community Hall more energy efficient by installing solar panels and upgrading the lighting to LED. They are also installing electric vehicle charging points and a water refill station at the centre and a water refill station, bike rack and pollinator planting at the GAA grounds.



Ballyfoyle

Ballyfoyle Development Group are starting an all-of-community approach to Climate Action. They are undertaking a huge range of projects including making the Community Hall more energy efficient and comfortable by insulating the ceiling, walls and floor and upgrading the lighting and heating system. They are also installing a bike repair station and bike stand to encourage active travel, a water refill station and rain water harvesting butt to reduce water waste, a wayfinder map, upgrading community allotments, shed for tools, bins for segregating waste and planting for pollinators.



Paulstown

Paulstown Development Association are replacing existing lighting to more energy efficient lighting at their Community Centre which also incorporates Paulstown Boxing Club.



Tullaroan

Tullaroan Development Association are becoming more energy efficient by installing solar panels on the GAA Clubhouse, upgrading flood lights, installing a water butt to harvest rain water and planting pollinator friendly plants.



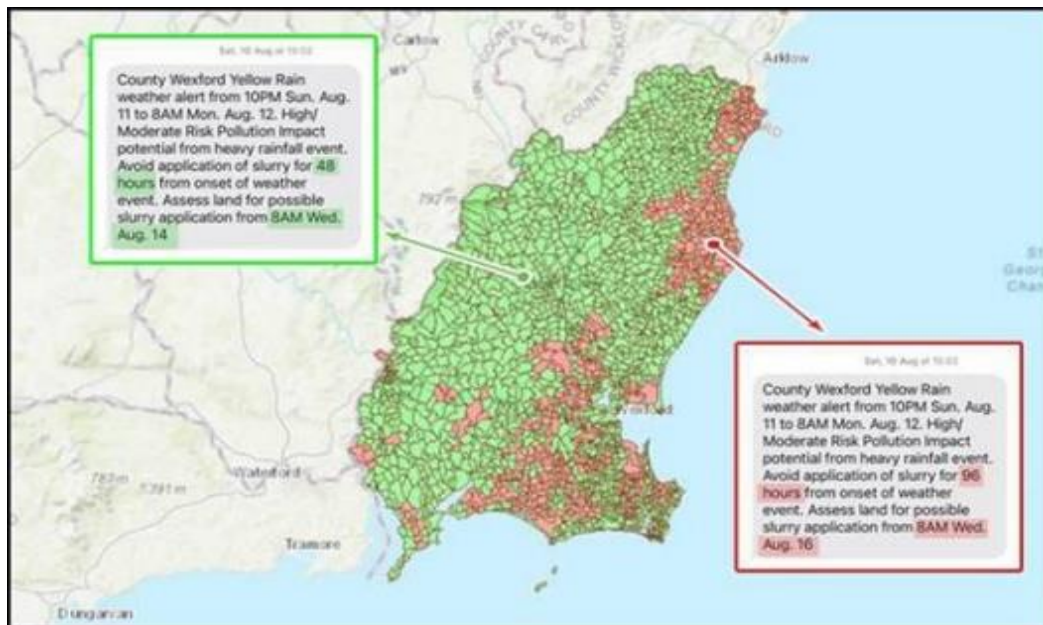
ENVIRONMENTAL AWARENESS

Agriculture Map Alerter

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

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

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



The Agriculture Alert can be accessed via the following link-
<https://alerts.kilkennycoco.ie/>

Green Schools Programme

The Environmental Awareness Officer [EAO] continues to support 92 schools as part of the An Taisce Green Schools Programme to renew or attain a flag. Green Schools is an International Environmental Education Programme, offering a well-defined, controllable way for schools to take environmental issues into the curriculum and apply them to the day-to-day running of the school.

Green schools is a holistic, long-term programme and has a two-year cycle in relation to preparation, assessment and attainment of a particular flag.

The EAO is continuing to assist schools around the County to renew their membership as part of the Green Schools Programme under their respective themes:

- Litter and Waste,
- Energy,
- Water
- Travel,
- Biodiversity
- Global Citizenship.

The EAO will be undertaking assessments of Green Schools over the next 3 months. Deadline for the applications for School Flags is 28th March, 2024.



The Picker Pals Programme has been designed to deliver deep and sustained behavioural change for the primary participants while also affecting peers, family and the broader community. We believe no other Environmental Stewardship Programme can provide the same depth of benefits.

Behavioural change is supported by six key pillars:

1. Multimodal Learning
2. Real World, Action-based Learning
3. Boosting Engagement through Responsibility
4. Fun - The Ultimate Motivator!
5. Embedding Behaviour through Personalised Storytelling
6. Community and the Positive Feedback Loop.

In the 2024-25 school year, 32 classrooms from 27 schools are taking part.

WASTE

Bring Banks Usage

The Council provides and manages 47 Bring Centers across the City and County. A total of 2045 tonnes of recyclables were collected from our Bring Centers to date in 2024. This represents a 1% increase from the same period in 2023. Loughboy Shopping Centre (20 tonnes collected), Aldi - Kilkenny City (16 tonnes collected), Lidl - Johnswell and New Park Shopping Center, Kilkenny City (12 tonnes collected) are the busiest locations in the City. Lidl - Thomastown (11 tonnes collected), Aldi - Ferrybank (10 tonnes collected), and Graiguenamanagh and Supervalu - Thomastown (9 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 (CAS)

In January 144 tonnes of Municipal Solid Waste, 72 tonnes of Municipal Dry Waste and 20 tonnes of Green Garden Waste were taken off site for further processing or disposal. Dunmore helped in the facilitation of the Christmas tree disposal acting as a drop off point for the public and as a holding site for approximately 6 tonnes of trees that were brought from some of the small rural drop off sites.



The various other recycling streams deposited at the Dunmore facility during the month of November and their respective tonnages can be seen in Table 1 below.

Table 1.

Recycling Stream	Quantity (Tonnes)
Cardboard	7.2
Plastic	4.4
Paper	8.6
Green Waste	20
Food Waste.....	2.5
Mattresses.....	5.6
Metal	8.7
Timber.....	8.0
Textiles.....	1.6
Tetra-pac.....	0.3
Waste Oil	1.6
WEEE	16.7

As part of the Landfill Aftercare the landfill gas flare continues to run 24 hours per day seven days per week extracting and burning approximately 35m³ of landfill gas per hour. 52 tonnes of Leachate waste was tankered off site to a Waste Water Treatment Facility.

AIR NOISE WATER

Water Quality – Farm Inspections

Farm inspections for 2024 are now completed reaching our inspection target for 2024. Reporting will commence in January and February with submission of findings to the EPA in February. The target number of inspections for 2025 is 308.

Septic Tank Inspections

Kilkenny County Council have been liaising with LAWPRO in relation to septic tank inspections. LAWPRO have shared a register of households which have been referred by them for a grant. We will assess these as householders get in contact. RMCEI reporting will include the good news that all inspection for 2024 have been achieved with regards to septic tanks.

Section 4 Discharge Licenses

Following sampling carried out in December, results will now be analyzed and establishments contacted regarding the same.

Misconnections

All misconnections will be reported in the RMCEI return in February 2025.

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 the month of January 2025 is 85 compared to 102 complaints received in January 2024. The nature of these complaints included littering, illegal dumping, burning of waste and abandoned cars. The majority continue to be related to 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.

Noise

The final Noise Action Plan was completed prior to the Christmas Break and will be published on our website shortly. The Plan and reporting were submitted to the EPA in December. Once the final Plan is made the report will be updated with the EPA for their submission to the EU on 18th January, 2025.

Air

Kilkenny County Council have completed over 100 inspections in relation to solid fuels. Two Inspection Reports will be presented to our legal team to determine if prosecution action can be taken.

Over 30 inspections have taken place in relation to stage 1B Petroleum Vapours with follow-up letters to be sent to petrol stations prior to the Christmas Break.

Inspections have commenced in decorative paints and solvents and again follow-up letters will be sent out to operators prior to the Christmas Break.

Kilkenny now has three air monitors back up and running. Air monitors are in Thomastown, Castlecomer and on the Callan Road. The Castlecomer monitor had been offline for some time and so it has been replaced by a new monitor. Two new monitors have been purchased. One will be placed in The Butts and the other in the City Centre.

PARKS & SPECIAL PROJECTS

The Museum of Medieval Kilkenny

On the 10th January, 2025, Kilkenny County Council, in partnership with Fáilte Ireland, signed a major contract with local company Duggan Lynch Ltd., for the development of Kilkenny's newest tourism attraction. Following an investment of €4.5 million from Fáilte Ireland the realisation of this exciting project will enhance the cultural and historical offering of the City, attracting more visitors, both national and international, boosting the local economy. The "Museum of Medieval Kilkenny" will see a total investment of €8 million and provides for the unification of The Tholsel and the Medieval Mile Museum (*formerly St. Mary's Church*). The overall objective of this project is to develop an offering that will become one of Ireland's top visitor attractions.

The focus of this current contract will centre on The Tholsel building and includes internal and external enhancement works along with the introduction of a lift for improved accessibility. These works will safeguard the building into the future and when complete it will also continue to act as the seat of Local Government in the City.



Contract signing Duggan Lynch Ltd

South East Greenway

Works on the section of Greenway from Ferrybank to Curraghmore, which commenced in November 2023 are now substantially complete. The Stage 3 Safety Audit Report was completed in January and the recommendations arising from this report were assessed and actioned. Other minor finishing out works are ongoing with the expectation of opening this second section of the Greenway towards the end of Quarter1 2025. Currently, 14km's of the 24km Greenway are now substantially completed of which circa. 12km's will be opened to public with the opening of the second section referenced above.



Detail design works for the remaining sections of the Greenway (circa.10km) from Ballyvereen to Curraghmore continue along with all other ancillary works associated with this scheme.



Various images of recently completed works along Greenway

RELATED SCHEMES

South – North Access Road, Ferrybank: A planning application under Part 8 of the Planning and Development Regulations, for this proposed road, which includes for the proposed South East Greenway Trailhead carpark at Ferrybank, was approved by Council at the December meeting. Works have now progress to detail design.

South East Greenway to Glenmore Connectivity Link: A competitive tender was advertised in January for the services of a multi-disciplinary Engineer led Design Team to advance this project through detail design, land acquisition, tender award and construction stage. The deadline for the submission of tenders is mid-February. This project will also see the delivery of the Pink Rock Cycle Loop and this project is being funded under the Rural Regeneration Development Fund.

Greenway Southern Connectivity Link to Slieverue: Planning consent for this project was approved under the Part 8 Planning process by Council at the January Meeting. Efforts will now turn to identifying potential funding streams to advance this project through detail design, land acquisition and construction stage.

Woodstock to South East Greenway Link (Nore Valley Greenway)

This Greenway Project is currently in Phase 1 (*Concept and Feasibility Stage*) and recent updates are provided hereunder:

- The project website (<https://www.woodstocktosegreenway.ie>) went live in early January and will be updated with relevant information prior to the first public consultation event in February.
- Public Consultation No. 1 is planned for early February. Notices will be advertised in local newspapers, a letter drop (*via An Post*) will also be undertaken within the project study area along with posters erected at public building etc.
- This initial consultation will provide for two open public consultation events, which are scheduled for Tuesday 25th February, 2025 in Rosbercon Community Centre and Thursday 27th February, 2025, in Cois Abhann, Inistioge.

Storm Éowyn

In advance of the Status Red Wind Warning across the entire Country, which came into effect in the early hours of Friday 24th January, 2025, in the interest of public safety a number of local authority amenities were closed to the public. These amenities included the Kilkenny Countryside Park, Silaire Woods and Woodstock Gardens and Arboretum.

Unfortunately, a number of trees were damaged and or lost as a consequence of the storm in both Silaire Wood and Woodstock Gardens, this was significant particularly in Woodstock given the number of important trees already lost during Storm Darragh in December last.



The Parks Department, once restrictions had lifted, undertook a full assessment of the damage and the amenities were reopened to the public once it was considered safe to do so. Clean up works were completed in Silaire Woods late last month and a comprehensive clean-up will take place in Woodstock Gardens in March, when ground conditions are more favourable for the removal of large trees.

Tree Surgery Works and Hedge Cutting

Due to recent storms our Tree Surgery Programme was delayed, however, intervention works were completed recently in Paulstown, Callan, and Fiddown. Additionally, hedgerow maintenance was also completed along the opened section of the South East Greenway along with a significant reduction to the beech hedge at Newpark Soccer Pitch. Pruning of overgrown trees around the viewing platform on Windgap Hill in the City was also completed opening up, once again, fantastic views of Kilkenny Castle.

Clover Centre Ferrybank



A contract for provision of a Multi-Disciplinary Consultancy Service Team was awarded recently for the preparation of a Masterplan for the Clover Centre Site at Christendom, Ferrybank. The contract was awarded to, local firm, Digby Brady

Landscaping Architects, who will assist the Council with the preparation of a Masterplan which will be developed through a collaborative approach with the local community through extensive public consultation to identify local community needs, priorities and desires. The overall objective of this initiative is to develop a high-quality parkland that creates a space that offers quality of life improvements in terms of physical and mental health wellbeing and returning this area once again to a hub for social interaction. of a high quality, community centred and multifunctional local park on this site.

LEO/ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Kilkenny Local Business – Kick Start 2025 Event



A large number of business attended the Kick Start 2025 event which was held at the Newpark Hotel on 10th January, 2025 with a keynote address with Eoin McGee. Eoin shared financial tips and strategies for business owners for local small business to kick start their financial strategies for the year ahead.

Showcase 2025



Two businesses from Kilkenny had the opportunity to meet buyers from all over the world this week as part of the Local Enterprise Showcase at Showcase 2025 at the RDS in Dublin. There were over 100 Local Enterprise Office supported businesses from across the country present at the event with Wildflower Designs & Valley of Roses attending from Kilkenny.

Wildflower Designs are a Kilkenny-based craft business set up by Heather Byrne designing wet feltings and needle feltings made with Irish wool and inspired by Irish landscapes, animals, nature and history. Valley of Roses was set up by Andriana Tsankova, a local perfumer that mixes and blends signature made perfumes.



The Retail Accelerator Programme



The Local Enterprise Offices (LEOs) in Carlow and Kilkenny have launched the "The Retail Accelerator", a new, dynamic programme designed to help local retail businesses improve their efficiency and profitability. This programme, available to retail businesses in Carlow and Kilkenny offers expert-led workshops and tailored one-on-one business support to help retailers thrive in today's competitive environment.

Small Business Vacant Premises Scheme 2025

The Economic Development Team rolled out the revised Small Business Vacant Premises for 2025 in January. This scheme – which has been offered by KCC for a number of years was reviewed and updated and allows for a rates rebate in certain circumstances for businesses starting a business in a vacant commercial premises.

[Small Business Vacant Premises Incentive Scheme 2025 - Kilkenny County Council](#)

Broadband/ Digital Update

County Kilkenny is the second ranked County in Ireland progressing strongly in the National Broadband Plan (NBP) roll out at 98% of its intervention area (*County Westmeath is ranked first with 99%*). County Kilkenny has 18,656 premises in its intervention area. Currently National Broadband Ireland (NBI) have passed 18,268 or 98% of those premises. Of those premises passed, 6,791 or 37% has taken up a NBP connection. NBP proposed an investment of €72m for County Kilkenny. The current investment made to date is €70.5m. The remaining NBP roll-out will be completed in the coming months with the completion of fibre infrastructure works across the County. NBI provide information about the work they are doing via their web site, <http://www.nbi.ie>

Kilkenny County 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.

Application deadline for Festival Grants is 5th February, 2025. The applications received have been assessed and a recommendation for award of grants sent for approval by elected members at their February meeting.

Faile Ireland Festival Grant Scheme



Faile Ireland confirmed that their Faile Irelands festival grant will return for 2025. Kilkenny County Council have been awarded €8,000 from Faile Ireland's Regional Festivals fund and will be used to enhance its' grant awards to festival organisers locally.



Kilkenny Tourism continued its work in preparing Kilkenny's marketing and PR plans for 2025. "Spring into Action" is our live campaign for the season will aim to keep Kilkenny to the forefront of the domestic visitor's mind for booking breaks throughout the shoulder season, for mid-term and for St. Patrick's Day.

Holiday World Show



Kilkenny Tourism promoted Destination Kilkenny at this years Holiday World Show at the RDS in Dublin from 24th to 26th of January. Feedback from volunteers attending the show shows great interest in Kilkenny as a short break in 2025 from the domestic market. Attendees from Northern Ireland, Dublin, Kildare and

our neighbouring counties were very positive towards spending time in Kilkenny this year. This tradeshow is the first of a series planned for 2025 to attract the domestic guest from all target audiences throughout the year.

Local Government Tourism Officers Network



Kilkenny hosted the first LGMA Tourism Officers Network meeting of 2025 in County Hall on 22nd January. The network was established by CCMA with the aim of gaining insight into the structure and role of tourism departments locally, to understand the focus and priority work at County level and to liaise with the network on a regular basis on wider tourism issues affecting the sector.

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.

The following information gives the up to date progress for 2025 under the various support services.

AFFORDABLE HOMES

2024 Progress Report: 3 Schemes launched in 2024

NYNE PARK, CALLAN ROAD, KILKENNY		22 UNITS
	Applications Initiated on Portal	217
	Valid Application Received	75
	Offers Accepted	22
	Offers Refused	10
	Withdrawn / Cancelled	37
	Applications In Progress	6
ALL UNITS SOLD / RESERVED		

CLUAIN GLASAN, GRANGES ROAD, KILKENNY		10 UNITS
	Applications Initiated on Portal	294
	Valid Application Received	69
	Offers Accepted	10
	Offers Refused	11
	Withdrawn / Cancelled	37
	Applications In Progress at time of close of portal	11
ALL UNITS SOLD / RESERVED		

ABBEY MEADOWS, FERRYBANK		14 UNITS
	Applications Initiated on Portal	148
	Valid Application Received	39
	Offers Accepted	11
	Offers Refused	1
	Withdrawn / Cancelled	18
	Applications in Progress	9
APPLICATION PORTAL REMAINS OPEN FOR APPLICATIONS FOR LAST FEW HOMES		

2025: SCHEMES BEING PROGRESSED

Kilkenny County Council continue to work in partnership with developers in delivering Affordable Homes across County Kilkenny.

- Church View, Kilmacow (13 units) Estimated Q3 2025
- Abbeyhill, Thomastown (14 units) Estimated Q3 2025
- Abbey Meadows, Ferrybank Phase 2 Estimated Q4 2025

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.

Under the Affordable Purchase Scheme successful applicants will be able to avail of a reduction on the full market price, of between up to 20% & 25%, depending on the price of the property and the applicant's own financial circumstances. Full information is available at <https://kilkennycoco.ie/affordable-homes> For any queries in relation to any of the above please contact the Affordable Housing Team at: affordablehousing@kilkennycoco.ie or 056-7794280.

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 JANUARY 2025	
Homeless Presentations	43
Homeless Assessment Outcomes	
Prevention & Interventions	26
Emergency Service	8
Not eligible / Did not avail of service	9
HAP Place Finder Service	
Number of Homeless HAP tenancies @ 1 st day of month	156
Number of Homeless HAP tenancies created during month	1
Number of Homeless HAP tenancies in place @ last day of month	157
Number of Homeless HAP tenancy breakdowns	1
Other Social Housing Tenancies supported /created during month	11
Households in Temporary Emergency Supported Accommodation at 31st January	38
Households in Temporary Emergency B&B accommodation	6
Households in Temporary Emergency B&B Accommodation that are families	3
Households (singles/couples) in Transition Emergency Accommodation (Own Front Door)	45
Households (Families) in Transition Emergency Accommodation (OFD)	17

SOCIAL HOUSING ASSESSMENT

SOCIAL HOUSING SUPPORT APPLICATION SUMMARY JANUARY 2025	
Number awaiting Social Housing Support at January 31 st (<i>Gross Need</i>)	1,395
Number awaiting Social Housing Support at January 31 st (<i>Net Need</i>)	647
No. of Social Housing Applications received in January	61
No. of applications incomplete / awaiting further information/clarification	35
No. of applications validated and ready for assessment during the month	27
No. of applications assessed during January	32
No. of applications awaiting assessment as at 31 st January	37

HAP Summary to 31 st January 2025	
Total active HAP Tenancies	463
New HAP Tenancies set up	2
HAP allocated Social Housing	7
Closed HAP Tenancies	0
HAP Rent Reviews	26
HAP Other Tenancy Amendments	14

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 December and to date this year:

- LA/RAS/Leasing allocations in January (*offers made*): 6
- LA/RAS/Leasing allocations to January (*offers made*): 6
- Tenant Liaison Officer cases in January:..... 55

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.

MAINTENANCE HOUSING STOCK

Maintenance Calls for January:..... 803
 Maintenance Calls year to date:..... 803

The Housing Operations team have commencing a pilot scheme for roll out of a new app for stock surveys to existing housing stock as agreed with the Department.

PRIVATE HOUSE GRANTS

The 2025 housing grants allocation has been received from the Department of Housing, in the amount of **€1,920,000.00** comprised of €1,632,000.00 (85%) grant and €288,000.00 (15%) Kilkenny County Council contribution.

GRANTS APPROVED & COMMITTED TO 31 ST DECEMBER 2024		
Scheme	Number	Amount
HGD - Housing Adaptation Grant	92	€904,818
MAG - Mobility Aid Grant	5	€13,669
HOP - Housing Aid for Older Persons	94	€519,099
TOTAL	191	€1,437,586

GRANTS PAID TO 31 ST DECEMBER 2024		
Scheme	Number	Amount
HGD – Housing Adaptation Grant	2	€16,340
MAG – Mobility Aid Grant	0	€0
HOP – Housing Aid for Older Persons	2	€8,794
TOTAL	4	€25,314

HOUSING LOANS

The Tenant (*Incremental*) Purchase Scheme 2016, which allows Local Authority tenants to buy their homes is being revised as of from 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 to 31 st January, 2025					
Loan Type	Received	Approved	Amount Approved	Number Paid	Amount Paid
Local Authority Home Loan	2	10	€0	1	€120,000
Caravan Loan	0	0	€0.00	0	€0
Total	2	10	€0	1	€120,000

VOIDS

At the end of January 2025 there were **37 vacant units** of Local Authority accommodation awaiting refurbishment or remediation works. 4 vacant units have been upgraded in January 2025 ready for allocation. A total of 88 units was completed under the Void's Maintenance Programme in 2024.

HOUSING CAPITAL DELIVERY

Suirside Construction Ltd. have started work on 6 units on the site of the former weather station on the Dunningstown Road. The Housing Development is to be known as Teach Aimsire and is scheduled to completed in Q1 2026.



COMMUNITY

Community Projects

The Table below outlines in summary ongoing Projects and Schemes in the Community Department.

Town and Village Scheme			
Community Group	Project Description	Grant	Status
Glenmore CLG Project Development Measure 2022	Develop plans for a building purchased under Building Acquisition Measure. The building will be used as a community shop/café and meeting facility	€49,950	A number of surveys are underway. Planning permission granted
Callan 2023	Restoration and clean-up of the King's River to enable the community to use it for activities fishing, swimming & canoeing and kayaking	€247,500	Schedule of works currently being prepared
Dunnamaggin Local Community Group 2023	The Transformation of a community green space into and events amenity for all the community knows as Madge's Garden	€247,500	Meeting due to take place with Community Group to outline and agree the process
Urlingford Town Team 2023	Refurbishment of Community Hall. Phase 2	€500,000	Tender process ongoing
Callan Project Development Measure 2024	Develop plans to establish an outdoor classroom community space in Abbey Field and examine the re-development of a derelict cottage in Moate Field and complete biodiversity studies on both sites	€49,950	Brief due to be finalised for tender process
Paulstown Community Group Project Development Measure	Complete feasibility and design studies for the creation of a centre point in the village, consisting of an open public green space with seating and leisure facilities. This will redevelop the village centre and provide accessibility between the main street and residential areas	€49,950	Brief currently being prepared

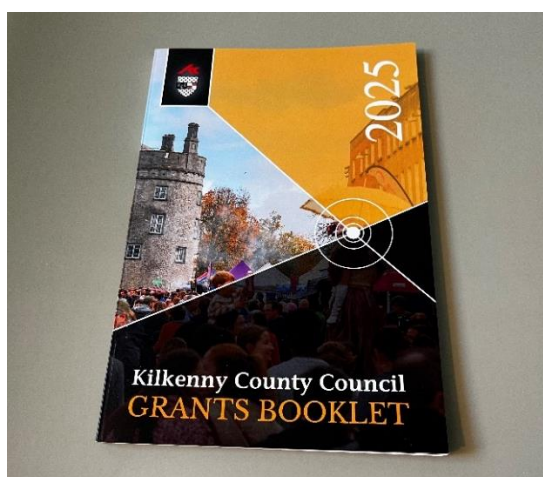
Rural Regeneration Development Fund			
Community Group	Project Description	Grant	Status
Piltown	Phase 1 of the project comprises of main street urban renewal enhancement, parking bays, EV charging points, and bicycle bays x2	€2,180,931	Consultants appointed
Glenmore	Develop the South East Greenway Connectivity Link and Pink Rock Cycle Loop & Amenity Trail	€2,356,423	Detailed Design in progress
Thomastown	Thomastown Library and upgrade to Community Centre	€4,013,115	Works progressing as scheduled

Community & Cultural Facilities Capital Scheme			
Community Group/ Year Approved	Project Description	Grant	Status
Johnstown Sports Field 2022	Contribution to development of walk way around complex	€40,000	Quality Surveyor engaged to prepare for procurement process
1st Kilkenny Scout Group 2022	Upgrade of lighting to LED lighting, improve installation in attic, upgrade boiler and installation of solar panels	€15,000	Not yet commenced
Mooncoin Celtic AFC 2023	LED Floodlighting for extra training area	€20,000	Not yet commenced
John Lockes GAA Club 2023	Walkway improvements, CCTV, Sensory activity outdoor wall panels/litter bins/walkway benches & security gate	€11,000	Completed.
Cois Nore 2024	Develop and Refurbishment of Community Space	€40,000	Contractor appointed works due to commence
Piltown AFC 2024	Walkway, Lighting and Security Fencing	€36,000	Not yet commenced
Callan United AFC 2024	Upgrade of Dressing Rooms and Storage facilities	€35,000	Works due to commence mid-February 2025
Inistioge Community Council 2024	Bi folding doors to increase space for large functions	€14,000	Works due to commence February 2025
Danesfort GAA Club 2024	Extension of floodlit walkway	€15,000	Work in progress
Mullinavat Community Group 2024	Installation of CCTV and fob entry system	€9,000	Works due to be completed February 2025
Ballyhale Shamrocks 2024	Upgrade of toilets / disability access	€9,000	Not yet commenced
Gowran Community Complex 2024	Contribution towards the refurbishment of a community hub	€27,000	Tender process still on going
Johnstown Community Hall 2024	Refurbishment of balcony area	€15,000	In progress 70% complete
Conahy Shamrocks GAA 2024	Upgrade to lighting around walk way	€25,000	In progress

CLÁR			
Community Group	Project Description	Grant	Status
Tullogher Rosbercon GAA Club	Provision of tarmacadam car park, passing bay and emergency access road to new playing field	€50,000	Work in Progress. 50% drawdown
Kilmoganny GAA	Upgrade car park and walkway	€30,150	Works completed final inspection due
St Martins GAA	Lighting, nets, railing and gates	€44,766	In progress
Kilkenny County Council Supported by Coolagh Community Group	Upgrade works outside community hall	€45,000	In progress
Kilkenny County Council Muckalee Public Lighting (Phase 2)	Upgrade of public lighting	€24,750	Tender process ongoing
Galmoy Community Hall	Provision of a MUGA	€30,015	Not yet commenced
Windgap Tidy Towns	Provide tarmac surface at Windgap Lake car park.	€20,788	Works completed, awaiting final inspection
Skeoughvosteen Community Centre & GAA	Provision of outdoor public and wheelchair accessible public toilets	€50,000	Procurement in progress

Kilkenny County Council Grants Booklet

The Kilkenny County Council Grants Booklet 2025 which is in its 8th Edition was published in January. This booklet gives key information in relation to all grants available from Kilkenny County Council and is a one stop shop of information. Copies of the booklet is available at Kilkenny County Council offices and libraries or view online by visiting the Kilkenny County Council website: https://www.kilkennycoco.ie/eng/your_council/online-services/apply-for-it/



Kilkenny County Council Grants Booklet 2025

Age Friendly

Kilkenny County Council is currently preparing the next Kilkenny Age Friendly Strategy 2025 - 2028. The draft Action Plan has been reviewed with the lead agencies to agree the Action Plan identified. The next stages will include the presenting and adopting the Strategy at the Age Friendly Alliance and at a Plenary Council meeting.

INTEGRATION

Local Authority Integration Team

The Local Authority Integration Team (LAIT) continues to provide on-going integration support to people categorised in any of the following groups living in the City and County of Kilkenny:

- International Protection (IP) Applicants
- Programme Refugees
- Beneficiaries of Temporary Protection (BOTP) (Ukrainians)
- Refugee, Subsidiary Protection or Permission to Remain status

Currently there are 169 International Protection Applicants (IPAs) (95% *male*, 5% *female*) and 628 Ukrainians in Department of Children Equality Disability Youth and Integration commercial properties and Offer A Home and Pledged property in County Kilkenny. 60% of IPAs and 69% of Ukrainians are employed.

In January, the LAIT provided support in welcoming 37 new Ukrainians to Kilkenny. The LAIT continued their work providing information, advice and advocacy for 49 IPAs with 113 queries on various topics including accommodation, legal aid/status, employment, health, etc. The Team also worked with 58 Ukrainians with 125 interventions which included queries on health, accommodation, and assistance with changing their address, etc.

The LAIT continues to collaborate with partner agencies and are planning events for the year ahead. In February, an Employment Rights talk has been arranged to be held at the Mayfair Library. The Team have also commenced weekly drop-in clinics in collaboration with Kilkenny Leader Partnership, held at the Fr. McGrath Centre Neighborhood Hall every Tuesday morning.

Offer of a Home and Pledged Properties at 31st January, 2024

January , 2025	Number of Pledged Properties	Number of Residents
Offer of a Home Scheme	55	189
Pledged Properties (<i>shared and not shared</i>)	7	30
TOTAL at 31.01.2025	62	219

The 'Offer a Home' Programme is being managed by Local Authorities on behalf of Government. A Government tax-free recognition payment(ARP) of €800 per month is available to property owners offering accommodation to Ukrainians with Temporary Protection status. Further details are available on the 'Offer a Home' programme on www.offerahome.ie or contact the Kilkenny County Council Ukrainian Response Team. Currently 55 properties have been pledged under the Offer of a Home Scheme in Kilkenny, providing accommodation for 189 Ukrainian residents.

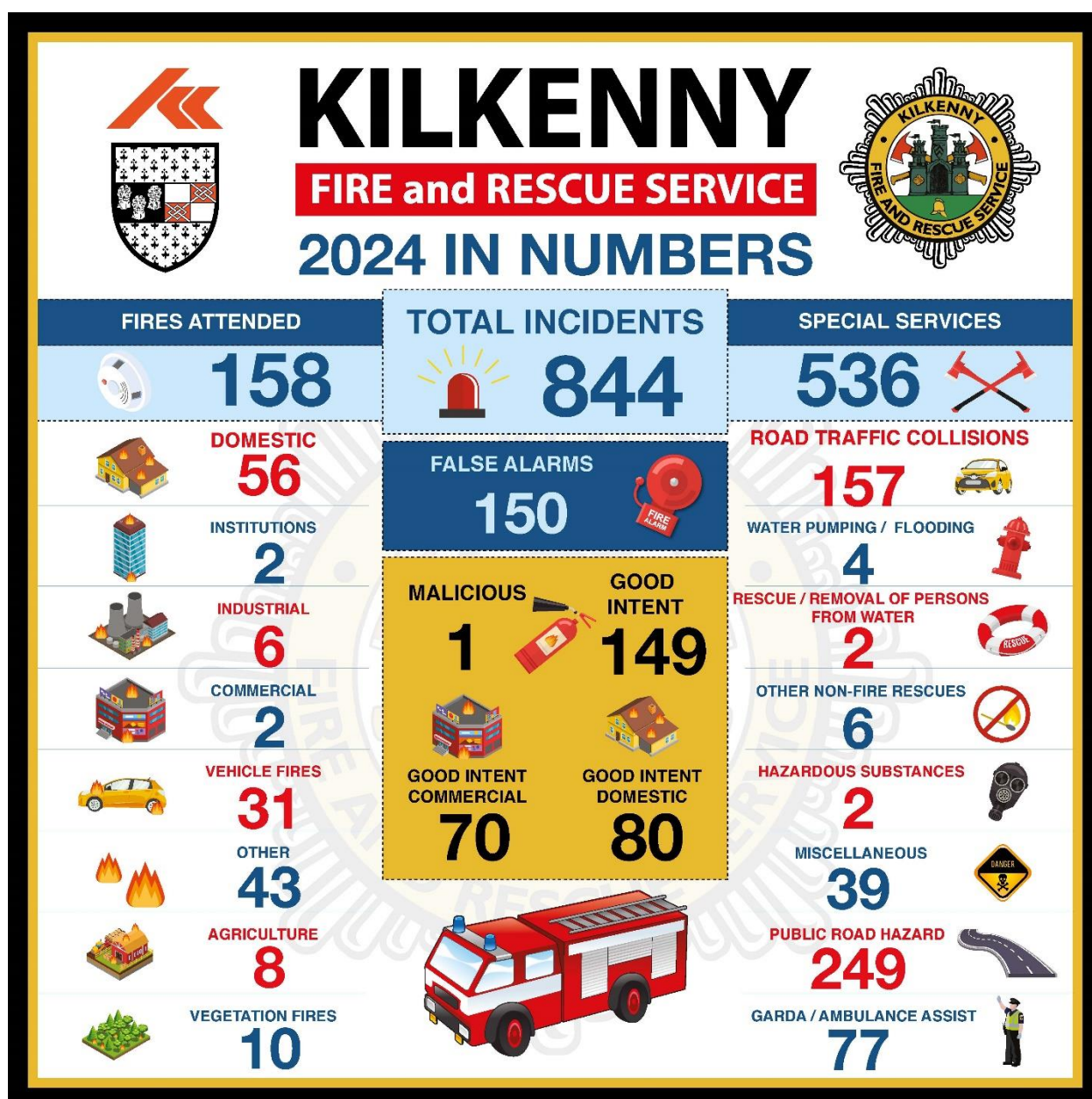
A separate programme is in place by the Irish Red Cross seeking pledges of spare rooms or accommodation that would be shared with the owner or others. An owner that wishes to pledge a spare room in their house can contact the Irish Red Cross in relation to their pledge of accommodation and securing a Ukrainian resident for their spare room. Contact Red Cross at (0)1-6424600 or info@redcross.ie. Owners can claim a tax free payment of €800 per month through the Government's Accommodation Recognition Payment Scheme. This payment is available to anybody who provides accommodation to Ukrainian people with Temporary Protection status.

FIRE SERVICES

Fire Brigade Operations

The existence of a professional Fire & 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. These incidents included a number of road traffic collisions, house fires, ambulance assists, public road hazards, car fires, chimney fires and automatic fire alarm activations.

All Fire Brigades were put on standby in their Fire Stations during the red weather warning on the 24th January, 2025 during Storm Eowyn. They attended fallen Trees in conjunction with the Area Offices, Automatic Fire Alarms, structural damage to properties and making numerous scenes safe. Senior Fire Officers were also part of the Severe Weather Assessment Team (SWAT) prior to the Storm and were part of Kilkenny County Council's Crisis Management Team (CMT) and the Local Coordination Group (LCG) in the response. See below infographics on all incidents that the Fire Service attended during 2024.



Recruitment of Retained Firefighters

Our second recruitment campaign is well underway to recruit Fire Fighters in Castlecomer, Freshford, Urlingford, Thomastown and Graiguenamanagh. Interviews have been carried out. All new recruits will undergo extensive initial training to equip them with the skills to be a Retained Firefighter. As well as responding to emergency calls and undertaking community fire safety initiatives, Retained Firefighters attend weekly training nights to maintain competency levels and undertake routine checks on their equipment.

Retained Firefighters are on call to respond to a range of emergencies. Many Retained Firefighters have other full or part-time jobs but when the call comes they are ready to drop whatever they are doing and become part of a team, ready to face any emergency. Although part-time, Retained Firefighters are fully trained and capable of saving life and property.

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.



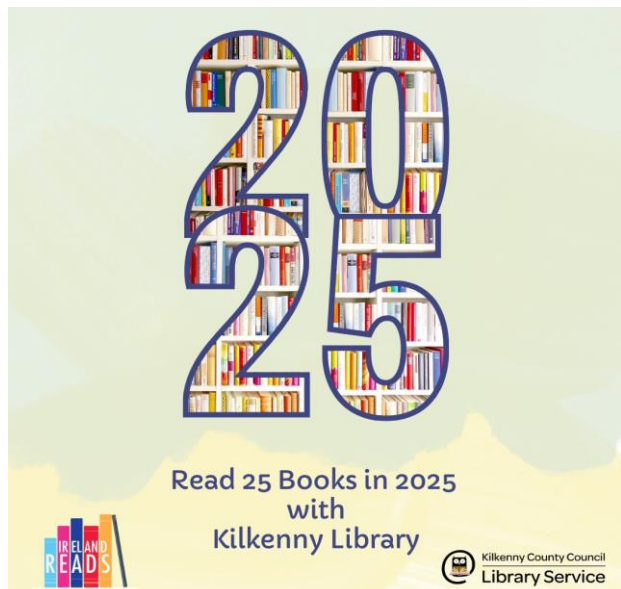
A number of Fire Fighters and instructors attended a Compartment Fire Behaviour Training Course in Hackettstown Fire Training Centre. The aim of this 5 day course is to provide the learners (*trainee Firefighters*), who have completed the 10 day Using Breathing Apparatus (*Initial Wearer*) course, with the skills, knowledge and competency necessary to wear Breathing Apparatus in compartment fires. This course provides practical training on the knowledge and skills that are required to enable recruit Firefighters to safely work as BA wearers at operational incidents, within the incident command structure and BA procedural norms.

LIBRARY



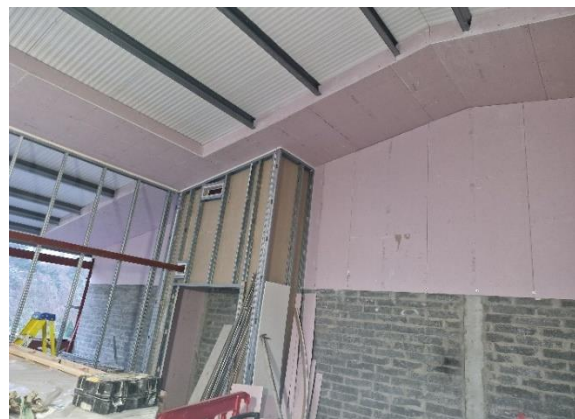
25 in 25 Reading Challenge

Following on from the success of our winter reading challenge for adults, Kilkenny County Council Library Service have launched a new challenge to encourage adult and young adults to read 25 books in 2025. The challenge is open to library members aged 16 and over and will run until 31st December, 2025. Participants can track their progress on a reading challenge booklet (*available from their local library branch*) and books can be read as physical books, ebooks or eaudiobooks.



Thomastown Library Update

External drainage and ducting have commenced at the front of the building. Superstructure blockwork to the front entrance has recommenced and its nearing completion. Doors and windows on the ground floor are installed and all other windows for the first floor are on site awaiting install.



Memories of South Kilkenny Digitisation Project

Throughout the month of January, Ferrybank Library staff invited members of the public to contribute to their Community Digitisation Project titled “Memories of South Kilkenny”. Ferrybank, as well as all of South Kilkenny, is everchanging and this project aims to digitise old photos of the area for all to enjoy and to preserve the history of the area. Members of the public were encouraged to have a rummage through their old photo albums and bring them into Ferrybank Library to be scanned and uploaded onto our [digital archive](#) over the coming months.

Library Activities

This month we held lots of activities and events across our libraries.

These events included:

- A new non-fiction book club in the Mayfair Library
- A Ciorcal Comhrá Gaeilge in Loughboy Library
- Chess workshops for children in Ferrybank Library
- A new Scrabble Club in Graig Library
- Talk on community and personal safety by Sergeant Donal Lalor in Castlecomer Library
- A St. Brigid’s Cross Making Workshop in Thomastown Library
- A Children’s Storytime in Urlingford Library
- Board games and lego free play sessions in Callan Library



Online Services Usage Jan 2025



3,799

eAudiobooks borrowed



194

online learning sessions



1,613

eBooks borrowed



117

language learning sessions



10,995

eNewsletters and magazines borrowed



37

eComics borrowed



108

movies streamed



Library staff prepared, recorded, edited and published **156** posts and videos on our social media platforms in January.

Our engagements for the month were **3,139** and our videos and reels had **2,894** views.

Our virtual newsletter was sent to **7,967** email accounts.

Alignment with the Sustainable Development Goals



Here are two ways in which Kilkenny County Council Library Service helped to further the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals in January:

- SDG 3: Good Health & Wellbeing
- SDG 4: Quality Education



They Mayfair Library held a Cancer Prevention and Symptom Awareness session hosted by Ann Bray and Ann-Marie Lawlor from the Health Promotion Department, HSE South East.



Kilkenny County Council Library Service provided access to Touch-type Read and Spell (TTRS) licenses to support children with dyslexia, dysgraphia, and ADHD

ARTS

Artists Professional Development Programmes

The Performing Arts Programme, in partnership with the Irish Theatre Institute commenced in January and included Script Development Workshops with Caitriona Daly, One-on-One Mentorship Sessions with Cian O'Brien and In-Conversation Sessions with Sectoral Leaders.

The Visual Arts Programme in partnership with Big Look Arts aims to help meet the needs of visual artists in Kilkenny by providing funded participation in a structured learning programme which will focus on contemporary visual art practice. The Programme has been advertised and the deadline for applications is 10th February, 2025 and all interested artists attended the information session on 28th January, 2025.

Breaking the Patterns Programme offers a three-month Artist Residency and Work Placement Programme for emerging visual artists in Lisbon, Portugal. This Programme is a partnership between Carlow, Kilkenny, Waterford, and Wexford Local Authority Arts Services and Capacity Ireland and as part of Invitation to Collaboration and Creative Europe. A very successful professional development day was held for the successful 2024 artists from all four counties in Visual, Carlow on 27th January 2025.

The Poetry Broadsheet 2025 will see the Arts Office celebrate the 25th Anniversary issue of the Kilkenny Poetry Broadsheet. The aim of the Kilkenny Poetry Broadsheet is to give local writers a platform for their work. The call out for poets has been issued with a deadline of 28th March 2025. All information and Application Forms for the programmes listed above can be found on the Kilkenny Arts Office website – www.kilkennyartsoffice.ie

Youth Arts

Rhyme Rag will commence in February with two poets Alice Bennet and Enda Coyle Green delivering workshops in secondary schools to an estimated 120 young people. This year poems will be submitted to the Rhyme Rag Editor Poet Jessica Traynor which will be published on the Rhyme Rag website and Instagram page.

Art of Change is launching in February with a series of art Workshops aimed at young people aged 13-18 years old, focusing on our environmental impact. In collaboration with Ossory Youth, after-school workshops will be held every Tuesday for six weeks. Additionally, workshops will be delivered in four secondary schools across the County from March until to the end of the year.

Arts Act Grant and Artists Residency Bursaries

The deadline for applications for the Arts Act Grant and the Artists Residency Bursary was the 27th January 2025. The Arts Office received a record number of applications for both grants, there were 49 Arts Act Grant Applications and 23 Artists Residency Bursaries were received in total. The Arts Act Grants have been assessed and a total of 34 have been selected for awards.

Creative Ireland

The Creative Ireland Programme in Kilkenny launched the open call for the Creative Ireland and Cruinniú na nÓg Grant Scheme 2025.

Cruinniú na nÓg Festival will take place on the 7th June, 2025. Closing date for applications for the Cruinniú na nÓg Festival is the 14th February, 2025 and for Creative Ireland is the 21st February, 2025.

All information and Application Forms are available on the Kilkenny County Council website: www.kilkennycoco.ie/eng/services/community_culture/



Cruinniú na nÓg 2024



The final stage of the Cruinniú consultation was completed which resulted in over 150 young people participating across the County.

This process was highly beneficial and results of the findings have been circulated to relevant groups to inform their 2025 events.

Consultation with Ossory Youth for Cruinniú na nÓg 2025

The Living Artfully Programme continued in January 2025 with a compliment of 9 artists working with groups across Carlow and Kilkenny including Dementia support Services, Cancer Support Services, Mental Health Services, People with Disabilities, Traveller Community & Involvement Centre in Kilkenny.

Each artist completed Trauma informed training and met for a full day of planning for the year ahead.



HERITAGE

Kilkenny County Heritage Strategy, 2026-2030

Kilkenny County Council is embarking on an exciting journey to develop a new County Heritage Strategy. Heritage is a vital part of our identity and community, and it is essential to ensure its protection for future generations. This strategy will help preserve, protect, and promote the rich heritage of our County within a local, regional and national context. A discussion paper has been prepared to start the process of consultation and is available to view on the Kilkenny County Council online consultation portal – www.consult.kilkenny.ie. Submissions are available until 5.00 p.m. Friday 28th March, 2025.

Traditional Farm Buildings Grant Scheme Open

The 2025 Traditional Farm Buildings Grant Scheme is now open for applications. The Heritage Council, in partnership with the Department of Agriculture, Food, and the Marine, manages this scheme whose principal objective is to ensure that traditional farm buildings and other related structures that contribute to the character of the landscape and are of significant heritage value are conserved in active agricultural use.



Other related structures include walls, cobbled yard surfaces, walled orchards, dung steads, millraces, gate pillars and gates. The closing date for receipt of applications is 5pm, Monday 10th March, 2025. More information can be found Heritage Council website - <https://www.heritagecouncil.ie/projects>

The Economic Impact of the HERITAGE SECTOR in Ireland Report

The Heritage Council recently published a report on The Economic Impact of the Heritage Sector in Ireland. The report which was written by KMPG provides estimates of the economic impact of the Heritage Sector in terms of economic output and employment. The study's purpose is that by quantifying heritage's impact on the economy, can lead to informed decision making concerning the supports provided to the heritage sector. The report can be found on the Heritage Council website - www.heritagecouncil.ie

BIODIVERSITY

Biodiversity Education Outreach

Throughout January, over 20 educational facilities ranging from pre-schools, after school groups and primary schools were offered the Dulra Box designed by "Biodiversity in Schools" funded from the Local Biodiversity Action Fund. These kits will assist classrooms to spring into biodiversity action this term.

The schools also availed of other resources available from the Biodiversity Office to assist them to help pollinators on their school grounds. Thanks to Luke from Kilkenny College Transition Year work placement student who assisted in assembling the biodiversity supplies. Biodiversity education outreach meets the objective to "Foster Engagement and Promotion of Biodiversity Best Practice" which is included as an action in Kilkenny's Draft Biodiversity Action Plan.



Transition Year work placement student assembling Biodiversity Packs

CIVIL DEFENCE

January was a busy month for Kilkenny Civil Defence with the heavy snow at the start of the month followed by Storm Éowyn. The volunteers of Kilkenny Civil Defence showed tremendous commitment over the course of several days of snow as they conducted over 24 individual taskings and a total of 13 volunteers completed 222 volunteer hours such as transporting palliative care nurses, dialysis patients and GP's. The volunteers also assisted in clearing snow and ice from driveways. The volunteers assisted with Storm Éowyn by setting up an emergency rest shelter in case of emergency and delivered beds to St. Luke's Hospital to assist staff welfare during the storm.

The volunteers have responded to several missing person searches in January, including an extensive search of the City that went into the early hours of the morning in difficult conditions. The volunteers were commended by local Gardai for their incredible responses each time.

The volunteer instructors met early in the month to assist with the development of a training plan for the volunteers to ensure upskilling across all areas and the maintenance of their incredible standard of training.

With 113 taskings completed in 2024 and 30 taskings completed during the month of January, it is shaping up to be another busy year for Kilkenny Civil Defence.



Civil Defence assisting the public during the snow

The expenditure by service division to the end of January is set out in Table 1. Total Expenditure for the period was €6.86m compared with the annual budget of €120m.

Table 1	Actual YTD January 2025	Budget Full Year 2025
	€'000's	€'000's
Housing & Building	1,979	30,784
Road Transport & Safety	800	31,383
Water Services	479	7,180
Development Management	496	15,417
Environmental Services	1,013	18,991
Recreation & Amenity	316	9,425
Agriculture, Education, Health, Welfare	28	354
Miscellaneous Services	420	6,938
Central Management Charges for Allocation	1,331	
OVERALL TOTAL	6,862	120,472

Rates Invoices 2025

At our Annual Budget Meeting 2025 a Commercial Rates increase of 4% was approved. This is only the second time Commercial Rates have been increased since 2008. The prompt payment discount was increased to 8.3% (*capped at €300 per rate account*) from 5.8%. The increase in the Prompt Payment Incentive for commercial rate payers would mean that the net increase would be less than 2% for the majority of rate payers if they avail of the prompt payment discount. Rates Invoices totalling €24.4 million will issue in February to over 2850 customers.

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 Appeal	149
Appeal Withdrawn	33
Increase in Revaluation on Appeal.....	1
No change to Revaluation on Appeal	9
Appeals outstanding.....	2

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

Finance Update

The bank overdraft facility was not utilised during the month of January 2025.

The draft financial statements for 2024 will be finalised in the coming weeks and will be presented to Council at the March meeting.