



Comhairle Chontae Chill Chainnigh
Kilkenny County Council

CHIEF EXECUTIVE REPORT

JUNE 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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NOTICES OF MOTION

Notices of Motion	Date Letter Sent	Acknowledgement/Response Received
NOM 01 (25)		Agreed at meeting that Feasibility Study to be carried out.
NOM 02 (25)	27.03.2025	Acknowledgement received on 02.04.2025
NOM 03 (25)	25.03.2025	
NOM 04 (25)	25.03.2025 06.06.2025	Acknowledgement received on 09.06.2025
NOM 05 (25)	25.03.2025	Acknowledgement received on 04.04.2025
NOM 06 (25)	27.05.2025	Agreed Report will be prepared and brought back to Council for consideration within 6 to 8 months.
NOM 07 (25)	27.05.2025	Item to be placed on Agenda for Inaugural Meeting
NOM 08 (25)	27.03.2025	Acknowledgement received on 04.06.2025
NOM 09 (25)	27.03.2025	Acknowledgement received on 28.05.2025
NOM 10 (25)	27.03.2025	Acknowledgement received on 28.05.2025
NOM 11 (25)	27.03.2025	Acknowledgement received on 28.05.2025

Full Report will be circulated to Elected Members

Civic events in May 2025



The appointment of a new dog warden in the Carlow Kilkenny Dog Shelter, Paulstown, Kilkenny



Cathaoirleach's Reception for Captain George O'Hara



Captain George O'Hara receiving his certificate at the Cathaoirleach's Reception

Launch of Six after 6 where six Kilkenny tourist attractions will stay open past 6 as part of a summer campaign



PLANNING

DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT

Planning Summary	Total January to May 2024	Total January to May 2025
Planning Applications Received	324	366
Planning Applications Granted	279	293
Planning Applications Refused	24	29
Complaints Received	69	64
Warning Letters Issued	38	46
Enforcements Notices Issued	19	22
Cases Closed	37	77
Cases Sent for Legal Prosecution	0	3

Note: Section 5 Applications will be included in the next CE Report.

FORWARD PLANNING

City & County Development Plan 2021-2027

Proposed Variation 5 commenced public display on the 30th May and submissions can now be made until the 27th June.

This Variation is to:

- incorporate a Settlement Plan for Castlecomer into the KCCDP, as part of a new Volume 3, Settlement Plans
- make associated changes to Volume 1 to reflect this, and
- align the KCCDP with the Specific Planning Policy Requirements (SPPRs) of the Sustainable Residential Development and Compact Settlements Guidelines for Planning Authorities (2024) as relevant.

As part of the process, a drop-in Public Information Session will be held in the Castlecomer Library on Tuesday, 10th June from 3.30 p.m. to 5.00 p.m. and 6.00 p.m. to 8.00 p.m. (*Drop in anytime during those sessions*).

LOCAL AREA PLANS

Ferrybank / Belview Settlement Plan

The Draft Plan preparation continues. Significant matters relating to the role of Ferrybank as:

- the second largest Urban Area in the County and its role as part of the wider Metropolitan Area.
- it's contributing to the development of Waterford as envisaged under the National Planning Framework.

are currently being considered as part of the final Draft Plan preparation. It is anticipated that a Draft Plan will be published for consultation by July 2025.

Taking in Charge

Works are progressing on the following Estates:

- Fiodh Mor & Leaca Ard, Abbeylands
- Rathullard
- Hillview, Bennettsbridge

Active Land Management

The Residential Zoned Land Tax (RZLT) has come into effect. The Council prepare the RZLT maps, and Revenue administer the tax. The settlements currently liable are Kilkenny City, Rosbercon, Callan and Thomastown. Relevant landowners must have filed a return with Revenue by 30th May, and any queries in relation to payment of the tax should be

directed to Revenue. Two sets of maps were on public display until April, the Final Maps for 2025 and the Annual Draft Maps for 2026.

Five rezoning requests were made by landowners for impacted sites on the Final Maps 2025. These landowners have now been issued with acknowledgement letters that they can use to seek an exemption from the requirement to pay the 2025 tax liability from Revenue. Ten submissions were made on the inclusion or exclusion of sites from scope for the tax, on the Annual Draft Maps. The rezoning requests are being considered, and decisions will be communicated to the landowner by 30th June. Determinations must be made on the ten submissions on scope, and the landowner notified not later than 1st July. The landowners will have an opportunity to appeal the determinations on scope to An Bord Pleanála.

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, but 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: Discussions concerning methodologies for successful projects with applicants is ongoing.

Inistioge Architectural Heritage: Invitation to tender documents have been sent to suitably qualified professionals for the purpose of repair of architectural elements in the historic core of Inistioge. These works will undertake initial assessment and compilation of repair methodologies for historic cobbles, the Tighe Memorial and the steps of Inistioge Castle. This is the first step in repairing integral elements of Inistioge's character.

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

▪ Planning Referrals	3
▪ Further Information Requests	6
▪ Clarification of Further Information Requests	0
▪ Section 57 Declarations	2
▪ Post planning	1
▪ Part VIII.....	0

Building Control

Valid Commencement Notices Received	Disability Access Applications Received
May 2025..... 128	May 2025..... 20
May 2024..... 162	May 2024..... 23
May 2023..... 115	May 2023..... 20
May 2022..... 168	May 2022..... 41

Development Contribution Scheme

Kilkenny County Council has commenced the process to examine the current Development Contribution Scheme which has been in place since 2016 (*entitled Development Contribution Scheme 2016 – 2017*). The purpose of a scheme is to:

- Set out the basis for determining the contributions to be paid in respect of public infrastructure and facilities,
- Makes provision for payment of different contributions in respect of different classes or descriptions of development;

- Allows for reduced or exemptions from contributions;
- Indicate the contribution to be paid in respect of different classes of public infrastructure and facilities based actual or estimated cost of providing public infrastructure and facilities

Classes of Public Infrastructure

Development Contribution Schemes provide funding for varying classes of public infrastructure or facilities. The main classes being:

TRANSPORTATION - provision of roads, refurbishment, upgrading, enlargement or replacement of roads, car parks, provision of bus corridors and other infrastructure to facilitate public transport, cycle and pedestrian facilities, traffic calming measures and smarter travel projects not covered by grants

COMMUNITY FACILITIES - to include the provision or refurbishment community facilities or contributions to same.

RECREATION & AMENITY - to include the provision or contribution to provision of recreational facilities, open spaces, amenities, playgrounds, etc.

The primary objective of the Contribution Scheme is to encourage economic activity while partly funding the provision of essential public infrastructure, without which development could not proceed.

The Council's Capital Programme 2025 – 2030 will determine the amount of funding required to be raised by the Council under any revised scheme. The process will require estimating the number / class of development over the period 2025 to 2030 e.g. housing, commercial, agriculture and other in order to devise the basis of the scheme. It will not be possible to meet our ambitious Capital Programme without varying our scheme. The making of a scheme is the reserved function of the Members.

TOWN REGENERATION OFFICE

A Consultant has been selected to assist in the public engagement process to develop a Town Centre First Plan for Graiguenamanagh. It is expected that engagement and consultations will commence over the next few weeks. It is envisaged that the Plan would be complete by end of October, this year.

Vacant Property Refurbishment Grant

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

Number of Applications submitted to-date	301
Number of Approvals/ Approvals in Principle to-date.....	215
Grant Drawdown to-date	50
Number of Queries during the month of May	89

Derelict Sites

CPO for a property in Parliament Street, Kilkenny was completed in May. The TRO Office instigated CPO's for properties at Kilmacow and Callan. Three properties were added to the Derelict Sites Register and one property was removed.

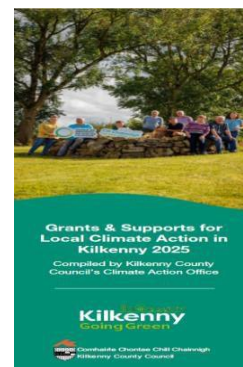
Butts Area Regeneration Framework

A consultation around proposals for a one way traffic system and other traffic concerns took place with the City Engineer and a meeting was held with the Chair of the Town Team and the Housing Section to discuss the condition of existing Council housing stock in the Estate. The next Public Consultation event is scheduled for Wednesday, 25th June from 2.30 p.m. to 7.30 p.m.

ENVIRONMENT

New Climate Action Grants Leaflet

The Climate Action Office has developed a new guide to support local climate action. It lists 31 sources of funding available to communities and households for projects such as making homes warmer, creating new community facilities such as cycleways and community gardens; energy upgrades to community buildings; protecting monuments from climate change and creating rain gardens to capture excessive rainfall. This is available on the Climate Action page of Council website.



Supporting Delivery of Climate Action Plan

The Climate Action Office continues to meet with each of the 25 service areas in the Council who have committed actions in the Kilkenny County Council Climate Action Plan, in order to review delivery of the actions and provide support to service areas as required. To-date, we have met with 10 Service Areas (*LEO, Arts Office, Creative Ireland, Civil Defence, Fire & Rescue Services, Biodiversity, Architectural Conservation, Heritage, Public Lighting and Internal Audit*). The remaining meetings will take place between now and September.

CO2 Emissions

Kilkenny County Councils' CO2 emissions reduced by 7% in 2024 compared to 2023, based on data submitted by the Council to the SEAI's M&R system this month. This includes emissions from energy users like buildings, public lighting and Council fleet. The M&R system is a web-based software system through which public bodies such as Kilkenny County Council report energy, emissions and related data (*Energy Projects, Building Stock Register, Vehicle Register & Procurement and Business Travel*) to SEAI each year to enable SEAI to track progress towards energy and climate policy targets.

Retrofitting Council Buildings



Work is continuing on the SEAI Pathfinder Programme, which with the support of the Regional Energy Unit, will allow Kilkenny County Council to access 50% for capital costs of retrofitting Council buildings.

The first three buildings which it is proposed to work on are County Hall, The Watergate Theatre and the Watershed Leisure Centre. The programme is at consultant tendering stage at the moment and it is anticipated that works will be completed in 2026.

Fleet Decarbonisation Strategy

The Climate Action Regional Officer and Energy Officer are working with the Roads Section (*Machinery Yard*) to develop the Council's first Fleet Decarbonisation Strategy for Kilkenny County Council Fleet. The emissions from fossil fuels used in the fleet are one of the most significant challenges for the local authority sector. The strategy, which is driven by new EU legislation and is an action of the KCC Climate Action Plan and is a very detailed look at how we can tackle this in the Council. It will address the following:

- an audit of the vehicle stock
- eco-driver training for fleet staff
- replacing fossil fuels with renewables/biofuels
- replacing diesel vehicles with EV's
- fuel procurement and payment systems
- route selection.



Climate Action Training

Since March of this year training has been provided to staff and members of the Climate Action Steering Committee, by the CARO under the Local Authority Climate Action Training Programme across seven themes including Climate Risk Assessment, Nature-based Solutions, Biodiversity, Weather Forecasting; Green Public Procurement; Biomethane and Energy Performance. Further training will continue throughout 2025-2027.

Local Government Score “Good” on annual Climate Change Advisory Council Scorecard

The Local Government Sector has scored a “good” rating on the annual Climate Change Advisory Council Scorecard. This assesses the public sector on climate adaptation and resilience. Local Government tied in joint 2nd place out of 11, along with the OPW and DHLGH. The report includes recommendations for continued improvements.

ENVIRONMENTAL AWARENESS

New Dog Warden for Kilkenny

A new Dog Warden has been appointed to serve both Carlow and Kilkenny, a move aimed at promoting responsible dog ownership and ensuring the safety and well-being of our communities. Louise Brennan will be undertaking a series of patrols around the City and County, promoting responsible dog ownership and compliance with the Dog Control Act 1986.

In addition to this exciting development, we are thrilled to highlight the recent refurbishment works completed at the Dog Shelter located in Paulstown. These improvements not only enhance the facility but also create a more comfortable and welcoming environment for both dogs and their future families. The works completed include the construction of two large pens and three external dog shelters, a new outdoor visitor pen with seating, installation of extra fencing to divide pens, a new footpath and walking path, as well as new bedding and retrofitting



Green Dog Walkers Campaign



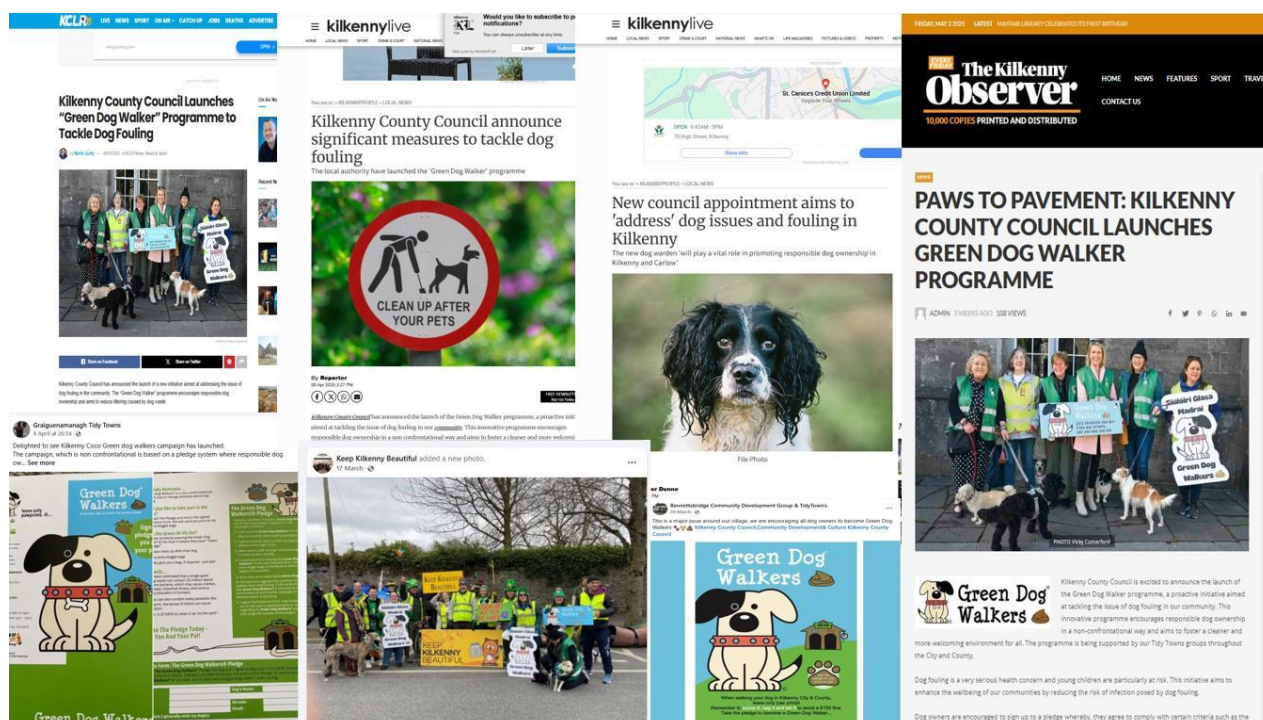
The Green Dog Walker programme was launched on the 31st March, 2025 here in Kilkenny. It aims to be a positive, friendly way to change attitudes about dog fouling in the City and County and encourage responsible dog ownership.

Dog fouling is a very serious health concern and young children are particularly at risk. This initiative aims to enhance the wellbeing of our communities by reducing the risk of infection posed by dog fouling.

Dog owners are encouraged to sign up to a pledge whereby, they agree to comply with certain criteria such as the wearing of a green armband when walking their dog, cleaning up after their dog, be happy to approach dog walkers who needs a bag and be a friendly reminder to other dog walkers to clean up after their dogs.

If members of the public are interested in becoming a green dog walker, pledge forms will be available in pet stores, vets, kennels libraries and Council Offices throughout Kilkenny or alternatively, pledge online at www.kilkennycoco.ie. Each dog walker who makes a pledge will receive a free High Vis and a dog bone bag dispenser for their dog lead.

If any Resident Associations or Community Groups would like to promote the campaign in their own local area, contact the Environmental Awareness Officer with Kilkenny Local Authorities on 056-7794487.



Anti-Litter and Anti-Graffiti Grant 2025

Kilkenny County Council is offering Community Groups an opportunity to promote anti-litter and anti-graffiti awareness in their local community.

The grant is 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.

Further details are on the application form below. Hard copies of the Application Form are available from the Environment Section, County Hall, John Street, Kilkenny City.

Closing date for applications was Friday 23rd May, 2025. 16 applications have been received and will be evaluated by an Independent Panel this week.

Anti-Dumping Initiative

The Department of the Environment, Climate and Communications is again making funding of €3mn available, through the Waste Enforcement Regional Lead Authorities (WERLAs) to support the 2025 Anti-Dumping Initiative (ADI). A portion of the overall fund (€150k) will be ring-fenced to drive circular economy, prevention and education and awareness projects on a national and regional level via the Regional Waste Management Planning Offices.

Kilkenny County Council has been allocated €93,000. This will cover projects based on their impact in prevention, abatement, education and enforcement.

The following will be funded under ADI 2025:

- Bulky Furniture Week with Dunmore Civic Amenity Team;
- In Flow Textile Workshops with a focus on the Circular Economy in collaboration with Kilkenny Arts Office and Kilkenny County Council Climate Action Team;
- Savour Kilkenny Food Festival Implementation of Circular Economy Actions.
- Audio Device, VMS Signs and Bin Sensors for Bring Banks and Bottle Banks around the County.

WASTE

Bring Banks Usage



The Council provides and manages 47 Bring Centres across the City and County. A total of 727 tonnes of recyclables were collected from our Bring Centres to date in 2025. Loughboy Shopping Centre (19 tonnes collected) Aldi - Kilkenny City (17 tonnes collected) and Lidl - Johnswell Road (15 tonnes collected) were the busiest locations in the City in April. Lidl in Thomastown (11 tonnes collected) and Supervalu in Thomastown (9 tonnes

collected) were the busiest outside of the City in April. 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)

May 2025 saw 150 tonnes of Municipal Solid Waste and 99 tonnes of Municipal Dry Waste. The various recycling streams deposited at the Dunmore facility during the month of May and their respective tonnages can be seen in Table 1 below.

Table 1.

Recycling Stream	Quantity (Tonnes)
Cardboard.....	6.46
Plastic	4.34
Paper.....	6.4
Glass Bottles & Cans	1.9
Food Waste.....	2.38
Mattresses	2.64
Metal.....	12.16
Timber	12.26
Tetra-pac	0.18
WEEE.....	13.3



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.

Anti-Dumping Initiative

In May, Kilkenny County Council made an application in respect of projects for consideration under the Anti-Dumping Initiative (ADI). Kilkenny County Council were pleased to receive approval for just over €90,000 for 4 projects which will take place over the remainder of 2025. Bulky furniture collection at Dunmore CAS; food segregation at Savour Festival; road side clean-up of R711; Selection of anti-dumping equipment – signs, bin sensors etc.

AIR NOISE WATER

Water Quality – Farm Inspections

Council staff continue to carry out farm inspections with 130 initial inspections and 40 follow ups completed to-date. Farm Inspectors are carrying out the onsite inspections and identifying sub basins that have high Nitrates and Phosphates present and focusing the inspection program in areas that are at risk from this pollution. The target for 2025 is 308 inspections.

Septic Tank Inspections

Septic tank inspections have now commenced with 23 completed to-date. The target for 2025 is 59 inspections to complete. The EPA recently published 2024 annual report on Domestic Waste Water Treatment System Inspections. The report highlights that at the end of 2024, there were 221 failures between 2013-2024 and that 67% of that number had been fully closed out and remediated. This is a significant improvement on the EPAs 2023 Annual report results, which highlighted that of the 187 failures in Kilkenny between 2013-2023, 57% had been fully closed out and remediated.

Environmental 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 May 2025 is 64 compared to 85 complaints received in May 2024. The number of complaints received for January – May 2025 is 406 compared to 444 complaints for the same five-month period in 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

Several staff in the Environment Office have completed Noise Monitoring Course in the previous month. This Training will enable staff to deal with noise complaints going forward and will allow Environment Section to be able to act more efficiently on noise complaints from the public.

Air

Two new air monitors have been installed – Butts area and City Centre. Staff will be monitoring the information received from these air monitors. The majority of Air inspections will take place later in the year.

PARKS & SPECIAL PROJECTS

The Museum of Medieval Kilkenny

Works on the Tholsel building continue to progress through-out the building and a summary of same is provided hereunder:

- **Basement:** Brick vault repairs 90% complete, Limewash shelter coat applied to walls and ceilings, limestone flags numbered, lifted and stored for re-use and the swapping out of timber lintels with galvanised steel lintels is complete.

Archaeological excavations continue at the back (*East*) of the Tholsel adjoining St. Mary's Lane, in a part of the building that was constructed in the 1820's as an extension to the Tholsel. The excavation has identified earlier phases of archaeological activity under the Tholsel extension on St. Mary's Lane. The excavated area will accommodate the future lift shaft and stairwell providing access to the basement.

- **Ground Floor:** Limestone flags in the outer arcade (*Loggia*) have been raked out and repointed with lime mortar, the delaminated cement render removed from the southern end of the arcade and new lime mortar render applied, the removal of the inner arcade (*Loggia*) soffit is now also complete. The removal of the mid-twentieth century reinforced concrete stairwell to the Mayor's Parlour and Council Chamber has also been completed.
- **First Floor:** The soft strip is now substantially completed including the removal of the staircase to accommodate the lift shaft and new staircase along with the removal of the mid-twentieth century stairwell to the Mayor's Parlour and Council Chamber.
- **Second Floor:** The soft strip is also completed at this level and the introduced mezzanine ceiling over the Mayor's Parlour and old office space is now removed, returning same to the original double ceiling height and restoring the double window feature back within the Mayor's Parlour.
- **Third Floor:** Soft strip now completed and the introduced floor (*mezzanine*) removed.
- **Fourth Floor:** Soft strip completed.
- **External Elevation:** Scaffolding has been erected around the High Street elevations of the building to facilitate masonry repairs/repointing, window restoration and significant roof repairs.



Enhancement to the Tholsel Building form part of the wider “Museum of Medieval Kilkenny” Project which will see the unification of the Tholsel and the Medieval Mile Museum as one single visitor experience. The overall objective of this Project is to develop an offering that will become one of Ireland’s top visitor attractions, while also securing the future of the Tholsel to continue in its role to act as the seat of Local Government in the City.

The Medieval Mile Museum, within St. Mary’s Church, remains opens to visitors and the contractor will continue to work in manner that minimises disruption to the operation of same.

GENERAL UPDATES ON SOME OTHER PROJECTS

Waterbarracks Basketball Court

Works on the popular Waterbarracks Basketball Court are now substantially complete, these works were funded under the Sports Capital Programme with match funding from the Council’s own funds. The delivery of this project sees an investment of c. €79,000 and includes the upgrade of the court surface, the installation of two new basketball posts, the installation of lighting and fencing along with the provision of Kilkenny’s first public Boules court.



Before



After

Kells Pedestrian Bridge and Boardwalk

Project development funding was secured under the Outdoor Recreation Infrastructure Scheme (ORIS) to engage the services of a Multi-Disciplinary Engineer led Design Team to advance the above project through preliminary design, environmental assessments and planning. And following a tender process, local firm Kilgallan & Partners were recently appointed to assist with this project, with the end goal, to create an off-road link between Mullin’s Mill and Hutchinson’s Mill which utilises the island between the King’s River and the Mill-Race located between both mills.

Subject to the outcome of the above and obtaining the necessary consents the intention would be to put this project forward under a future ORIS Measure 2 or 3 application to advance to construction stage.

Town First – Paulstown Town Park

Town First funding was secured to engage the services of a Multi-Disciplinary Landscape Architect led Design Team to develop a Masterplan for a new park in Paulstown. Digby Brady have recently been appointed to progress this proposal. The proposed plan will create a central point in the town connecting the town's amenities and residential areas, which is a recommendation within the recent draft Masterplan for Paulstown.

Rural Regeneration Development Fund – Glenmore Link to South East Greenway

Following a competitive tender process, Kilgallen & Partners were identified as the most economically advantageous tenderer to assist with the detail design, tender and construction stages of the above project. As the detailed design progresses, discussions with the relevant stakeholders will recommence regarding the acquisition of lands required to deliver the project.

This scheme is being funded under the Rural Regeneration Development Fund and will see the construction of a 2.1km purpose-built, off-road, safe, comfortable cycling and walking environment which will connect the South East Greenway with Glenmore village.

PARKS GENERAL

Kilkenny County Council Unveils Biodiversity-Focused Roundabout Enhancements in South Kilkenny.



Kilkenny County Council is proud to announce the recent enhancement of four prominent roundabouts in the Ferrybank and Newrath area of South Kilkenny, which was delivered through a dynamic public-private partnership with leading local businesses. This initiative highlights the impact of community collaboration in creating attractive, biodiversity-rich open spaces.

Through the Council's Roundabout Sponsorship Scheme, four local businesses—Dawn Meats, the Port of Waterford, Medite Smartply and Mulligans Pharmacy & Café—each sponsored a roundabout. The landscaping proposals were designed by in-house and a subsequent tender for the installation and maintenance of same was awarded to Fairybush Landscaping Ltd.

A formal launch took place on the 30th May, attended by sponsor representatives, the Cathaoirleach of Kilkenny County Council, Cllr. Michael McCarthy, and the Piltown Municipal District Chairperson, Cllr. Ger Frisby along with officials from the Councils Capital Delivery Office and Parks Department.



Woodstock Gardens & Arboretum

The gardens at Woodstock are looking fantastic at the moment, thanks in part to the continued planting of perennials in the Walled Garden over the past year. The herbaceous borders are now awash with colour, and the Kitchen Garden is thriving with vigorous summer growth.

Summer is a particularly busy time for the team, with deadheading, weeding, and edging all playing a key role in maintaining the high standards of the gardens. These efforts ensure that Woodstock continues to provide a beautiful and welcoming space for visitors and locals alike.

Over the winter and spring months, major works were carried out in the Walled Garden, including path and border enhancements, new age-friendly seating, and general improvements. These additions have come together wonderfully and are already receiving very positive feedback from visitors.

Looking ahead, the team will begin restoration works to the fountain area and grotto. This includes pruning back overgrown bamboo and rhododendrons to reveal and enhance these historic features.



We continue to build on our goal of make Woodstock Gardens more accessible for all, with upgrades within our playground through funding secured under the Outdoor Recreation Instructure Scheme. This most recent intervention sees the installation of a wheelchair accessible roundabout and spinners which complements the existing accessible play components such as the wheelchair accessible seesaw and play-tower, all of which provides for a more inclusive enjoyable space for children of varying abilities.

Additionally, we have expanded our food and beverage offering with the Tea Room now serving warm sandwiches along with variety of sweet treats, which we consider is a perfect way to round off a day out in the gardens this summer.

LEO/ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Summary of 2025 Awards to Businesses

- €68,560 in direct financial assistance has been approved for 3 manufacture /export service businesses in located in throughout the County.
- €38,560 in Business Expansion Grant assistance
- €30,000 awarded in Business Priming Grant Assistance
- 6 Businesses have commenced LEAN one to one consultancy programmes to investigate possible resource efficiencies and process improvements their businesses with an additional 4 businesses participating in the build better business Lean programme.
- 20 businesses have availed of the Digital for Business programme to prepare and implement a plan for the adoption of digital tools and techniques across the enterprise.
- 13 businesses have availed of the Energy Efficiency Grant totalling €96,926 to support investment in technologies and equipment of enterprises.
- 24 business have availed of the green for business consultancy support scheme. This scheme supports businesses to become greener and environmentally friendly.
- 2 applicants have been supported to make loan applications to the Micro Finance Ireland loan fund.
- 429 people participated on focused small business training, including 65 people participating on the Starting Your Business programme
- 179 businesses have availed of specialised business specific mentoring on a variety of topics including finance, marketing, social media marketing and HR.

National Award for Kilkenny Student at Enterprise Finals



A Student from Kilkenny have taken 1st prize in Intermediate Category at this year's Student Enterprise Programme National Finals. Supported by Local Enterprise Office Kilkenny, Michael O'Keeffe from St. Kieran's College won Overall Winner in the Intermediate Category. Michael, who worked under the guidance of his teacher, Jennie Brennan developed a student enterprise called: "Suet & Song" which markets nutrient-rich suet cakes that provide sustenance for a variety of birds during the colder months.

The event was hosted by broadcasters Rick O'Shea and Louise Cantillon and they were joined during the ceremony by Peter Burke, T.D. Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Employment as he announced the winners across the three main categories on the day.



Productivity-25

Productivity-25 hosted by the South East based Local Enterprise Offices in conjunction with South East LEAN Network and SETU Lean Industry 4.0 was held on Tuesday 13th May in the Ormonde Hotel, Kilkenny. It provided participants with the opportunity to attend a transformative half-day Masterclass dedicated to LEAN Thinking and receive LEAN Certification (i.e. White Belt). Guest speakers included Dr Pat Lynch, Tom Finn and Mike Daly from SETU Lean Industry 4.0 along with Gillian Bailey, Hartley People Training and

client company case studies Barry McDaniel, CLG Retail Solutions and Eamonn Kelsey, Gowran Manufacturing Services Ltd.

National Enterprise Awards Finalist



Hi Tec Medicare represented the Local Enterprise Office Kilkenny at the prestigious National Enterprise Awards on Thursday 22nd May at the Mansion House in Dublin.

Hi Tec Medicare, based in Clogh, Castlecomer is a growing business that designs, manufactures and delivers innovative, tailor-made orthopaedic chairs and accessories to the healthcare market and private clients. SPRYT absed in Co Monaghan was announced the overall winner

Industry Breakfast



A breakfast briefing organised by Kilkenny County Council in partnership with IDA Ireland took place in Cartoon Saloon's Barrack Street office on 7th May. More than 40 members of the business community, along with local developers and estate agents attended the briefing to discuss the current outlook, challenges, and opportunities in the current environment. Speakers on the day included Chief Executive Lar Power, who provided an

update on housing and infrastructure developments in the City, and IDA Ireland South East Regional Development Manager Brian McGee who outlined strengths and ambitions for inward investment in the region. An interactive and informative panel discussion also took place with representatives from participating industries.

Kilkenny Traveler Interagency Group – Business Clinic

More than 30 people attended an event in St. Canice's Neighborhood Hall on Wednesday 7th May offering an opportunity to meet with representatives from the Local Enterprise Office, KCETB, the INTREO Office, Kilkenny Traveler Community Movement and others. All agencies in attendance participate in the Kilkenny Traveller Interagency Group with the overarching aim of improving access to services in the Traveller community in Kilkenny. This event was organised to promote awareness of self-employment, further education and apprenticeship opportunities for the Traveller community in Kilkenny and foster positive engagement with agencies in attendance.



Sponsorship of Young Irish Film Makers in Cannes

Kilkenny had a presence at the prestigious Cannes Film Festival in May as locally based Young Irish Film Makers were nominated for an award in the Social and Economic Impact category.

The trip to Cannes proved a worthwhile opportunity to promote Kilkenny as a film industry destination



NIGHT TIME ECONOMY

Six After 6



Six after 6 has been officially launched for the summer. Six tourist attractions are keeping their doors open later as part of a night-time economy pilot initiative during June, July and August in collaboration with Failte Ireland and Visit Kilkenny. The *Six After 6* summer series will see each of the attractions hosting a number of evening events to encourage residents and tourists to experience a wide variety of creative workshops and cultural performances.

The six visitor attractions taking part are:

- Smithwick's Experience
- Castle Yard Craft Experience
- Rothe House
- St Canice's Cathedral
- Medieval Mile Museum
- Butler Gallery

The first Six After 6 event takes place on June 5 and a series of events will continue until August 26. Event details and booking links can be found on www.visitkilkenny.ie/six-after-6/

Café Lates

The second evening of Café Lates, which was launched to encourage local cafes in the City to extend their opening hours by offering innovative and cultural events after 6pm, took place on Thursday 29th May. The following cafes participated:

- Tapas & Music @ Tower & Castle
- Wille Egan and Friends @ The Book and Coffee Shop
- Oracle Villa @ Wild Flower Café (Butler Gallery)
- Chocolate Making at The Chocolate Garden Café
- Tunes & Tales @ The Cookie Co-Op
- Pottery Painting @ Wild Tails

Kilkenny Tourism and visitkilkenny.ie

Kilkenny Tourism continues its work in delivering Kilkennys marketing and PR Plan for 2025. The Summer 2025 campaign, "Love Kilkenny Longer" continues to encourage visitors to come to Kilkenny this year, to stay and explore for longer and to avail of great packages booking. Mays marketing efforts showcased over 22 attractions and activities engaged in the campaign and promoted arts, crafts, history and the outdoors here in Kilkenny.



“Outdoor Kilkenny” continues to encourage guests to get out and immerse themselves in activity around the County.

May activity also included the development two influencer social media content.



RORY'S TRAVEL CLUB

Rory King visited Kilkenny 18th & 19th April, was hosted by 6 members (1 accommodation, 2 food & 3 attractions/activities). Awaiting social content for review, will push through members newsletter as well.

JAMES KAVANAGH & WILLIAM MURRAY

Content day on 2nd May, hosted by 7 members (1 accommodation & 6 attractions/activities). Awaiting social content for review which will be posted to both of their Instagram accounts.

The summer campaign will also include bolds on visiting Kilkenny without the car and visiting Kilkenny with your canine companion.

OFX Irish Legends Tour 2025



Kilkenny County Council in partnership with Kilkenny Tourism colleagues were delighted to promote all things Kilkenny at this years OFX Legends Tour at Mount Juliet in May.

Tourism Ireland Spanish Fam Trip

The tourism team met with Destination Management companies and tour operators from Spain this month at a fam trip organised by Tourism Ireland. This provided the sector locally with a great opportunity to showcase our attractions and Kilkenny overall as a great place to include in itineraries for their Irish travel options.



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 May 2025 under the various support services.

HOUSING CAPITAL

Construction has begun on two housing projects. The projects include a mix of social and affordable housing units, with some adapted for persons requiring wheelchair accessibility.

6 Units at Dunningstown Road, Kilkenny

- 6 social apartments with some unit's wheelchair accessible



42 Units at Abbey Hill, Thomastown, Kilkenny

- 42 mixed tenure, social and affordable houses with some apartment's wheelchair accessible



HOMELESS SERVICES

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 MAY 2025	
Homeless Presentations	50
Homeless Assessment Outcomes	
Prevention & Interventions	32
Emergency Service	11
Not eligible / Did not avail of service	7
HAP Place Finder Service	
No of Homeless HAP tenancies @ 1 st day of month	151
No of Homeless HAP tenancies created during month	1
No of Homeless HAP tenancies in place at the last day of month	152
Number of Homeless HAP tenancy breakdowns	0
Other Social Housing Tenancies supported/created during month	7

Provision of Emergency Accommodation	
Households in Temporary Emergency Supported Accommodation at 31 st May 31 st	34
Households in Temporary Emergency B&B accommodation	8
Households in Temporary Emergency B&B Accommodation that are families	7
Households (<i>singles/couples</i>) in Transition Emergency Accommodation (<i>Own Front Door</i>)	40
Households (<i>Families</i>) in Transition Emergency Accommodation (<i>Own Front Door</i>)	13

SOCIAL HOUSING PROVISION

SOCIAL HOUSING SUPPORT APPLICATION SUMMARY MAY 2025	
Number awaiting Social Housing Support at 31 st May (<i>Gross Need</i>)	1,359
Number awaiting Social Housing Support at 31 st May (<i>Net Need</i>)	671
No. of Social Housing Applications received in May	85
No. of applications incomplete / awaiting further information/clarification	48
No. of applications validated and ready for assessment during the month	35
No. of applications assessed during May	34
No. of applications awaiting assessment as at 31 st May	31

HOUSING ASSISTANCE PAYMENT (HAP) SUMMARY MAY 2025	
Total active HAP Tenancies	425
New HAP Tenancies set up	18
HAP allocated Social Housing	35
Closed HAP Tenancies	38
HAP Rent Reviews	101
HAP Other Tenancy Amendments	519

HOUSING ALLOCATIONS MAY 2025	
LA/RAS/Leasing offers of allocations made in May	45
LA/RAS/Leasing offers of allocations made to date 2025	141

TENANCY MANAGEMENT

Complaints

The Tenancy Management Section of Kilkenny County Council deals with anti-social behaviour complaints in relation to our tenants as outlined in the Anti-Social Behaviour Strategy. The number of cases received in May was 50.

MAINTENANCE HOUSING STOCK

The Housing Operations Team have commenced a Pilot Scheme for roll out of a new app for stock surveys to existing housing stock as agreed with the Department. The completion of stock surveys will allow Kilkenny County Council to improve the delivery of our planned Maintenance Programme.

MAINTENANCE CALLS MAY 2025	
Maintenance calls in May	547
Maintenance calls year to date	3,172

PRIVATE HOUSE GRANTS

The 2025 housing grants allocation has been received from the Department of Housing, Local Government & Heritage in the amount of **€2,575,197** comprised of €2,188,917 (85%) grant and €386,280 (15%) KCC contribution.

GRANTS APPROVED & COMMITTED MAY 2025		
Scheme	Number	Amount
HGD – Housing Adaptation Grant	99	€1,072,907
MAG – Mobility Aid Grant	7	€23,978
HOP – Housing Aid for Older Persons	153	€869,883
TOTAL	259	€1,966,782

GRANTS PAID OUT - MAY 2025		
Scheme	Number	Amount
HGD – Housing Adaptation Grant	23	€243,009
MAG – Mobility Aid Grant	1	€2,863
HOP – Housing Aid for Older Persons	59	€334,949
TOTAL	83	€580,821

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 2025					
Loan Type	Received	Approved	Amount Approved	Number Paid	Amount Paid
Local Authority Home Loan	15	2	€216,000	2	€218,278
Caravan Loan	0	0	€0.00	0	€0
Total	15	2	€216,000	2	€218,278

VOIDS

At the end of May 2025 there were **37 vacant units** of local authority accommodation awaiting refurbishment or remediation works. 6 vacant units have been upgraded in May 2025 ready for allocation.

COMMUNITY

Community Projects

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

Town & Village Scheme			
<i>Community Group</i>	<i>Project Description</i>	<i>Grant</i>	<i>Status</i>
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	Near completion
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	In progress, gone to tender
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	In progress, preparing tender documents
Urlingford Town Team 2023	Refurbishment of Community Hall. Phase 2	€500,000	Due to commence
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	Tenders to be evaluated and awarded
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	First community consultation arranged
Rural Regeneration Development Fund			
<i>Community Group</i>	<i>Project Description</i>	<i>Grant</i>	<i>Status</i>
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 for detailed design. Surveys ongoing.
Glenmore	Develop the South East Greenway Connectivity Link and Pink Rock Cycle Loop & Amenity Trail	€2,356,423	Kilgallen and Partners Consulting Engineers were appointed for preparation of detail design and tender documentation
Thomastown	Thomastown Library and upgrade to Community Centre	€4,013,115	Works progressing as scheduled

Community & Cultural Facilities Capital Scheme			
<i>Community Group/ Year Approved</i>	<i>Project Description</i>	<i>Grant</i>	<i>Status</i>
Johnstown Sports Field 2022	Contribution to development of walk way around complex	€40,000	Contractor appointed. Awaiting start date.
First Kilkenny Scout Group 2022	Upgrade of lighting to LED lighting, improve installation in attic, upgrade boiler and installation of solar panels	€15,000	Work due to commence
Ballyhale Shamrocks GAA 2022	Walking track & flood lighting	€40,000	Project completed
Mooncoin Celtic AFC 2023	LED Floodlighting for extra training area	€20,000	Not yet commenced
Bigwood Playground 2023	New playground	€35,000	Works 75% complete
Cois Nore 2024	Develop and Refurbishment of Community Space	€40,000	Work commenced
Piltown AFC 2024	Walkway, Lighting and Security Fencing	€36,000	Works completed
Callan United AFC 2024	Upgrade of Dressing Rooms and Storage facilities	€35,000	Works completed
Mullinavat Community Group 2024	Installation of CCTV and fob entry system	€9,000	Works completed
Ballyhale Shamrocks 2024	Upgrade of toilets / disability access	€9,000	Works not yet commenced
Gowran Community Complex 2024	Contribution towards the refurbishment of a Community Hub	€27,000	Tender process on-going

CLÁR			
<i>Community Group</i>	<i>Project Description</i>	<i>Grant</i>	<i>Status</i>
Tullaghan Rosbercon GAA Club	Provision of tarmacadam car park, passing bay and emergency access road to new playing field	€50,000	90% of works completed
KCC Supported by Coolagh Community Group	Upgrade works outside community hall	€45,000	Works completed
Galmoy Community Hall	Provision of a MUGA	€30,015	Not yet commenced
Skeoghavosteen Community Centre & GAA	Provision of outdoor public and wheelchair accessible public toilets	€50,000	Procurement in progress
Ballyouskill Community Hall	Upgrades to carpark, roof repairs and replacement of door.	€36,641	Not yet commenced
Windgap Handball Alley	External insulation of two outside walls	€29,419	Not yet commenced
Windgap GAA	Works to include tarmacadam to driveway and parking area	€38,307	Procurement being finalised

CRF			
<i>Community Group</i>	<i>Project Description</i>	<i>Grant</i>	<i>Status</i>
Bennettsbridge Community Centre	Tarmacadam and lining of carpark opposite Community Hall	€51,000	Works competed
Knocktopher Community	Pedestrian crossings, ramp, repairs to stone walls on approach roads to village, picnic benches on approach roads	€52,062	Works competed
Christian Youth Centre	Development of existing building to provide community space, meeting rooms	€100,475	Pre-tender stage
Fr. McGrath Centre	Installation of Solar Panels, Painting of building	€390,607	Pre-tender stage
Muckalee Community Cafe	Coffee Machine, Tarmac, Tables and Chairs, access fob	€50,000	60% claimed
Castlecomer Community Hall	Repairs to roof, wooden flooring and painting	€50,000	Contractor to be appointed

Age Friendly - National Network of Older People's Convention

Kilkenny County Council Age Friendly Programme staff and members of the Older People's Executive Council attended the National Convention which took place on the 8th / 9th of May in the Maldron Hotel, in Tallaght. The Convention featured keynote addresses from national and local leaders, including Minister of State for Older People and Housing, Kieran O'Donnell TD, alongside policy updates, expert panels, and interactive workshops. Highlights included a national update from Age Friendly Ireland, a panel discussion featuring leaders in health, insurance, and the arts, and a series of field-based activities such as a local housing site visit, centred on high-quality living environment for older residents, a walkability audit at Tallaght Stadium and active ageing classes.

Kilkenny Age Friendly Strategy

The draft Kilkenny Age Friendly Strategy 2025-2028 was endorsed by the Age Friendly Alliance and was presented for adoption by the Elected Members at the May County Council Meeting. The Age Friendly Programme Manager Anne Marie Shortall outlined the actions identified in the plan. The Strategy will be officially launched in the coming months.

Healthy Age Friendly Homes

The Healthy Age Friendly Homes Programme in Kilkenny continues to support older people, over 65 years of age, to live in their home for as long as possible. The programme accepts referrals from a variety of sources including from the older person themselves, Local Authority Staff, Family and friends, Public Health Nurses, GP's and Occupational Therapists, Elected Representatives and Community Organisations. Consent from the older person (verbal) must be obtained before the referral is submitted. Once the referral is received, the Local Coordinator gets in-touch with the older person to arrange a free home visit.

Referrals to the programme can be through the Age Friendly website: www.agefriendlyireland.ie, by phone 046-9248899 or by email healthyagefriendlyhomes@meathcoco.ie

Since the commencement of the Healthy Age Friendly Homes Programme in Kilkenny in January 2024, the level of interest in the programme has been greater than anticipated. Consequently, a large number of referrals to the programme in Kilkenny have been received, and the wait times to be seen by the Local Coordinator are longer than originally forecast.

Since the appointment of our Local Coordinator for Kilkenny, Linda Kirwan, has been conducting home assessments to the programme participants. As part of her role, Linda offers a wide range of supports to our participants, including but not limited to, helping with housing adaptation grants, organising Care and Repair services, linking-in with community services, signposting the older person to health services, arranging fall detector personal alarms etc.

Total Referrals Received (to-date)	284
Total Initial Assessments (2025)	73
Total Additional Visits (2025)	27
Total Visits Overall (2025)	100
Total No. Participants Awaiting a Visit	53
Total Supports Offered for: <i>Medical/Health; Housing; Assistive Tech; Community; Finance and Energy/Climate</i>	312

Healthy Age Friendly Homes Programme Delivery

Kilkenny Local Community Safety Partnership

Kilkenny Local Community Safety Partnership (LCSP) has initiated the process of forming a partnership with Kilkenny County Council Elected Members being nominated at the April 2025 meeting.

The LCSP welcome the following Councillors to the team:

- Cllr. Jenny Catt Slattery
- Cllr. Andrew McGuinness
- Cllr. Joe Sheridan
- Cllr. Fidelis Doherty
- Cllr. David Fitzgerald
- Cllr. Seán Ó hArgáin
- Cllr. Maria Dollard
- Cllr. Pat Fitzpatrick

Maria O'Shea, Community Safety Co-Ordinator delivered a presentation at the Plenary Meeting of the PPN to invite expressions of interest from members representing communities who wish to join the LCSP. This initiative aims to foster a diverse and engaged group dedicated to our community's development.

Healthy Ireland – Eastern Environs Health Needs Analysis

Kilkenny Local Community Development Committee (LCDC) opened a Health and Wellbeing Small Grants Scheme through the Healthy Ireland Fund for community groups and agencies/organisations (non-statutory) serving the communities in the Eastern Environs in Kilkenny City on the Friday 30th May 2025. This grant scheme has been advertised in response to a health needs analysis that was recently undertaken in the Eastern Environs of Kilkenny City.

The Health Needs Analysis report and the grant scheme guidelines and application form is currently advertised on the Kilkenny County Council website: <https://kilkennycoco.ie/HealthyKilkennySG> . The closing date for completed application forms is Friday 27th June 2025.



Kilkenny Local Community Development Committee (LCDC)

INTEGRATION

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

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

Currently there are 484 Ukrainians in 12 properties under contracts with the Department of Children, Disability and Equality (DCDE), 208 Ukrainians living in Offer A Home properties and Irish Red Cross pledged properties, of which they avail of the Accommodation Recognition Payment. There are 188 International Protection Applicants (IPA's) in 4 properties under contract with the DCDE. 69% of Ukrainians and 64% of IPAs are registered as employed.

In May, the LAIT continued their work providing information, advice and advocacy to:

- 86 Ukrainians with 194 interventions including queries relating to their status and the immigration process, employment and medical cards
- 68 IPA's with 148 interventions including queries around the immigration process, work permits and medical cards

In total for 2025, the LAIT have supported 431 individuals with 1,535 interventions.

Events:

The LAIT regularly collaborates with partner agencies and is planning more events for the year ahead:

- On 20th May, the LAIT held an information session at the Mayfair Library for local migrants on the topic of 'Navigating the Rental Market in Ireland'. This was in collaboration with the Housing section of the Irish Refugee Council
- The LAIT continues to facilitate a weekly photography workshop for migrants which will culminate in a photography exhibition at Butler Gallery, entitled 'I am Me, not just a Refugee'. The exhibition will open on Tuesday 17th June to mark the start of Refugee Week and will run until Sunday 22nd June
- In collaboration with the local African Community, the LAIT organised an Africa Day celebration which took place on The Parade on Sunday 25th May. This was a fantastic event open to all which featured many different song and dance performances, drumming workshops and amazing African food
- Other upcoming events include: "Home is Here" – an afternoon of food, music and discussion with Afghan refugee Manizha Khan at Butler Gallery 1pm, Friday 20th June and a free screening of the movie 'Io Capitano' at the Watergate Theatre on Saturday 21st June 7.30 p.m.
- The LAIT also continues to facilitate weekly drop-in clinics in collaboration with Kilkenny Leader Partnership, held at the Fr. McGrath Centre Neighbourhood Hall every Tuesday morning



Offer of a Home and IRC Pledged Properties at 31st May 2025:

May 2025	Number of Pledged Properties	Number of Residents
Offer a Home Scheme	55	188
Pledged Properties (<i>shared and not shared</i>)	5	20
Total	61	208

The 'Offer a Home' Scheme is managed by Local Authorities on behalf of the Government. A Government tax-free Accommodation Recognition Payment (ARP) of €800 per month is available to property owners offering accommodation to Ukrainians with Temporary Protection status up to end of March 2025 currently. Minister Foley recently announced her intention to seek Oireachtas approval to extend the ARP scheme for a further year to the end of March next year. Subsequent to this, a draft order will be advanced proposing a reduction in the monthly ARP payment from €800 to €600, from June 2025. This reduction seeks to mitigate any unintended impact on the private rental sector. It also reflects recent policy changes which aim to ensure that such temporary and timebound supports for people who are Beneficiaries of Temporary Protection are proportionate and equitable. As the payment is payable monthly in arrears, the first payment at the reduced rate will be received by hosts on 8 July 2025. Further details are available on www.offerahome.ie or you can contact the Kilkenny County Council Ukrainian Response Team.

A separate Programme is in place run by the Irish Red Cross which is seeking pledges of spare rooms or accommodation that would be shared with the owner or others. If an owner wishes to pledge a spare room in their house, they can contact the Irish Red Cross at (01) 6424600 or email info@redcross.ie.

FIRE SERVICES

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 hours per day/7 days per week/365 days per year. 425 callouts were received to date. These incidents included a number of road traffic collisions, house fires, ambulance assists, outdoor rubbish, chimney fires and automatic fire alarm activations.

Fire Safety Certificate Applications

Kilkenny Fire and Rescue Service Fire Senior Fire Officers advise on current Building Regulations in relation to the fire safety standards required for proposed developments. In addition, Kilkenny Fire and Rescue Service Fire Prevention Officers hold Fire Safety Certificate/Fire Prevention Clinics under Section 18(5) of the Fire Services Acts 1981 and 2003. These are predominantly held on a weekly basis and/or upon request in Fire Station HQ.

- 46 applications for Fire Safety Certificates were received to-date.
 - o A Fire Safety Certificate is a certificate issued by the Building Control Authority which states that the works or building to which the application relates will, if constructed in accordance with the plans and specifications submitted, comply with the requirements of Part B of the Second Schedule to the Building Regulations 1997.
- A 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 the first few months of 2025.
- 6 Licence Applications were processed under Section 24 of the Fire Services Acts 1981 and 2003.
- 1 licence applications under the Dangerous Substances legislation was assessed to date
- 45 Fire safety inspections of premises have taken place to-date.

Recruitment of Retained Firefighters

Our current complement of Fire fighting staff in our 7 Fire Brigades are as follows:

▪ Kilkenny City (14) ▪ Castlecomer (12) ▪ Freshford (11) ▪ Urlingford (8)	▪ Thomastown (10) ▪ Callan (12) ▪ Graiguenamanagh (10)
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The WRC recommendation is to have a minimum of 12 firefighters in all Fire Stations. Four more recruits will be starting their initial 3 week Firefighting Skills course in July. These recruit fire fighters are for the brigades in Freshford, Urlingford, Thomastown and Graiguenamanagh. 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 men and women who 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.

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 Firefighters 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.

7 Recruit Firefighters together with firefighters from Kildare, Laois and Wicklow undertook a two week QQI Breathing apparatus training in Newbridge and Hackettstown Fire Stations. The aim of this 10 day course is to provide the learners (*trainee Firefighters*), with the skills, knowledge and competency necessary to wear Breathing Apparatus. 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. This course is intended to develop the learners in the discharge of their roles as firefighters and to assist their Fire Authority in its function as a fire and rescue service.



Students and Instructors on the recent BA course

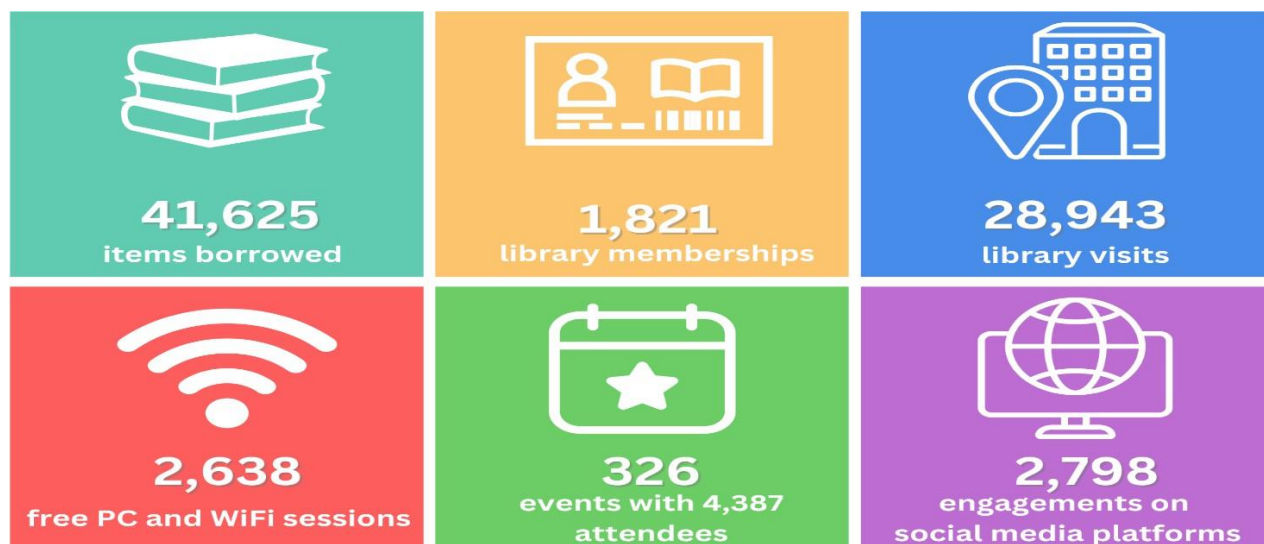
Health and Safety

Kilkenny Fire and Rescue Service is committed to safeguarding, as far as is reasonably practicable the Safety, Health and Welfare of all employees, contractors and visitors. Kilkenny Fire and Rescue Service are committed to attaining full compliance with the Local Authority Safety Management System (LA SMS). An Inspector from the Health and Safety Authority carried out a recent unannounced inspection of Kilkenny City Fire Station. A number of items were identified and these will be addressed in the coming weeks.

Community Fire Safety

The fire service continues its 19th year of the primary schools fire safety programme. Picture shows firefighters in Castlecomer Fire Brigade with Third Class Pupils.

LIBRARY



Bealtaine

Kilkenny County Council Library Service was excited to once again participate in the national Bealtaine festival in 2025. Run by Age and Opportunity, Bealtaine is an annual celebration of the arts and creativity as we grow older. During the month of May we offered a diverse programme of events throughout our network of library branches including watercolour painting, paper flower-making, candle-making, creative writing and storytelling, mindfulness, plant trellis weaving, summer gardening workshops and colour and style demos. In total, we ran 8 Bealtaine events with 90 people in attendance.



McAlmont Archive Launch

McAlmont Family Archive was launched in the Mayfair Library and are now available on Kilkenny County Council Library Service's Digital Archive

Dating from circa 1909 to the late 1930's, this collection which consists of family albums, sketchbooks, diaries and scrapbooks of Lady Rose McAlmont and family of Mount Juliet, Thomastown, Co. Kilkenny.

The items were given to Kilkenny Council Library Service by her great grandson Harry McAlmont to be digitised and made available for everyone to enjoy.

Rose McCalmont was ahead of her time, small in stature but large in character. She took a keen interest in a lot of different subjects and the world around her and travelled extensively. Her enthusiasm for horses and horseracing was infectious and placed Mount Juliet the family estate firmly at the centre of the social calendar. She loved a flutter on the horses. Her scrapbooks give a unique insight into life in Kilkenny and Ireland and indeed the world at that time.

The archive consists of diary entries, letters, newspaper clippings, photographs of the family, the estate workers, equestrian, hunting, fishing, skiing, family weddings, horse racing and breeding and much more.



Little Library Bags

My Little Library Book Bags for all children starting school this year. To help children to navigate starting school, libraries have put together a bag with books and resources just for them that can be collected at any library. The 'My Little Library Book Bag' initiative is a collaboration between libraries, the Department of Rural and Community Development, and the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth as part of the First 5 Strategy.

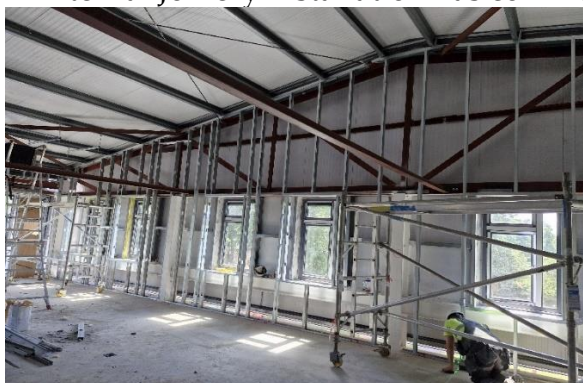
As part of the initiative, a 'My Little Library Book Bag' is available free for every child starting school in 2025 to help them to prepare for this big step. Children and their parents or guardians can collect the bags at any library throughout the Country from 9th May, 2025.

We hope that once they visit the library to pick up their book bag, our new library members and their families will come back regularly to keep their bag filled up with borrowed books and to take part in story-times, classes and all the other events we have to offer at the library.



Thomastown Library Update

- Concrete finishes to the rear landings/steps and capping areas.
- Wall cladding is nearing completion.
- M&E first and second fixing on the Ground floor is completed.
- Ground floor wiring is nearing completion.
- Internal Joinery installation has commenced.

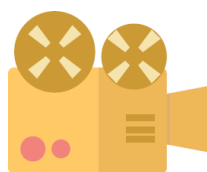
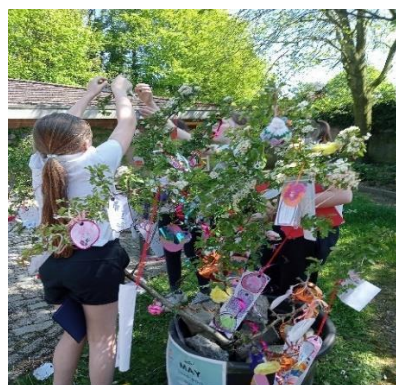


Library Activities

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

These events included:

- A talk on Exercise and Ageing in the Mayfair Library
- A 6-week digital photography course in Loughboy Library with funding from the ETB
- A “Gardening for Pollinators” talk in Ferrybank Library
- The launch of a community May bush in Graig Library
- A beginner’s embroidery workshop in Castlecomer Library
- A workshop on “Weaving a Plant Trellis for Climbing Plants” in Thomastown Library
- Chair yoga classes in Urlingford Library
- A paper flower workshop in Callan Library



Digital Engagement

Library staff prepared, recorded, edited and published **302** posts and videos on our social media platforms in May. Our engagements for the month were **2,798** and our videos and reels had **7,962** views. Our virtual newsletter was sent to **7,994** email accounts.

Alignment with the Sustainable Development Goals



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

The Mayfair Library in Kilkenny hosted a photography display to mark the beginning of Traveller Pride week 2025. Titled “Unfiltered”, this exhibition aimed to capture the lived experiences, culture, and community of Travellers in Kilkenny over the past 15 years.



Kilkenny libraries hosted a number of events to celebrate biodiversity week including storytimes, craft sessions and talks on gardening for pollinators.

ARTS

Tea Houses

A solo exhibition 'With Inclined Ear' - by artist Saidhbhín Gibson opened in the Tea Houses on 10th May 2025. At the core of the exhibition is the video of the same title accompanied by photographic pieces. The exhibition looks at sheep's wool and its value, highlighting the disconnect between humans and natural materials. The work follows the farm-to-fibre journey of wool, interrogating the commodification of animals and wildlife habitats, both locally and internationally, in terms of tourism and intensive farming. It broadly proposes a less human-centric world that aims for a mutual alliance with the land and animals.



With Inclined Ear
Saidhbhín Gibson

As part of this exhibition National Drawing Day on 17th May 2025 was celebrated with a trip to a nearby farm to draw sheep in a field with artist Saidhbhín Gibson. In Saidhbhín's video scenes of a Wicklow Cheviot flock are captured over four seasons, highlighting the farm-to-fibre journey of wool. This outing aims to look at a less human-centric world that advocates for a mutual alliance with the land and animals.

Wool Research and Weaving Demonstration took place on 24th May 2025 at Rothe House. A workshop with textile conservator Alexis Bernstorff in the McDonagh Room in Rothe House, home of John Rothe, a prominent wool merchant and owner of a mill on the river Nore. Rothe House hosts the creation of the fifteenth and final panel "Battles in the Kingdom of Ossory" of the Ros Tapestry. The session included the history of wool in Ireland and demonstrate simple weaving and tapestry weaving.

The Tea House hosted 'HUDDLE', a roving, inclusive event for the discussion around contemporary art and associative narratives on 24th May 2025. It was devised and is chaired by Saidhbhín Gibson. The project was initiated to facilitate those interested in contemporary art, and supplementary subjects, to come together.

Art of Change

The Art of Change schools programme finished with Presentation Secondary School, Kilkenny completing their final Upcycling Fashion workshop with Miriam Keegan, adapting and embellishing a piece of clothing to give it a new lease of life. The students explored the use of slogans on clothing as a form of activism, and the use of embroidery to achieve this.

Four introductory workshops on sustainable fashion were delivered in Loreto Secondary School, Kilkenny and Kilkenny Vocational School to Transition and Third Year students. The workshops were delivered by the Rediscovery Centre and were very well received and they have expressed an interest in being involved in Arts of Change programme in the future.

Creative Future Academy

The Arts Office received four applications for the Creative Futures Academy and Arts Office Bursary. All four applicants were offered a bursary. Artists will complete the following courses: Professional Certificate in Art and Ecology NCAD. Certificate in Writing Television Drama. Certificate in Radio + Podcast Production.

Big Look

Big Look in partnership with Kilkenny Arts Office offered an online mentoring programme designed to provide subsidised access to a mentoring programme on contemporary painting/drawing practice to artists living and working within Kilkenny. There were nine Kilkenny artists took part in the programme which provided a framework and set of tools for artists to reflect on their existing painting practice and find new opportunities to develop and refine a cohesive vision for their work. The final session was a day long in-person meeting at Lavistown House, Kilkenny. The focus for the day was 'Taking the Next Steps in Your Art Career'. It is a crucial closing event for the programme, featuring an inspiring day filled with round table discussions, group critiques, and a showcase of all the artists' work for review.



Big Look programme in partnership with Kilkenny Arts Office

Waste Not Want Not Embroidery Sampler

Throughout the months of May and June 2025, the Waste Not Want Not Embroidery sample is located at Rothe House, Kilkenny. Members of the community are invited to drop in and take part in this great community project and contribute some stitches to this large piece. Sessions take place every Tuesday (7:00pm-9:00pm), Wednesday (2:00pm -4:00pm and Saturday (10:30 – 12:30pm). The final session is Saturday 28th June 2025.



Waste Not Want Not Embroidery Sampler

Creative Ireland

Funded Creative Ireland Programmes

A number of programmes have commenced under the Creative Ireland funding stream which include:

- National Drawing Day at Butler Gallery
- Biodiversity on the block workshops and talks as part of Biodiversity week led by Kilkenny County Council Biodiversity Officer.
- Pop up dance performance at Bunscoil McAuley Rice and a drawing and sound collaboration at the Powerhouse yard as part of the Callan Open Doors events.
- Colour Field dye garden and printmaking workshops through Workhouse Union in Callan.
- 'I am me – not just a refugee' photography workshops led by Kilkenny County Council Integration Team. Exhibition of work created by participants will be held on the 17th June 2025 at the Butler Gallery.

Living Artfully Project

Living Artfully workshops continue weekly across the County with each group. A new male group from the Cois Nore cancer service has commenced, working with a writer and poet leading the workshops. Additional funding has been secured under the Creative Health and Wellbeing strand which enabled the project to be extended until December 2025. Artists met with Iarla O' Lionard to discuss the composition of a Ballad capturing the project's story and impact.



Cruinniú na nÓg 2025

Cruinniú na nÓg workshops are well underway with young people across the County engaging in workshops including, pottery, a biodiversity themed mural at the Kilkenny School project, music workshops, drumming, felting, soap making, sewing, printing, costume design, Waterford Walls workshops at the Watergate/Abbey quarter and a heritage project at St. Canice's Cathedral called Windows of imagination. Young people were engaged in workshops over a number of weeks learning through creativity.

Creativity workshops were held at St. Luke's Hospital led by artist Carrie Lynam. Young people were provided with the opportunity to be creative while waiting in Accident and Emergency. Work will be exhibited from June until the end of August 2025 at the hospital gallery.



Windows of imagination workshop at St. Canice's Cathedral

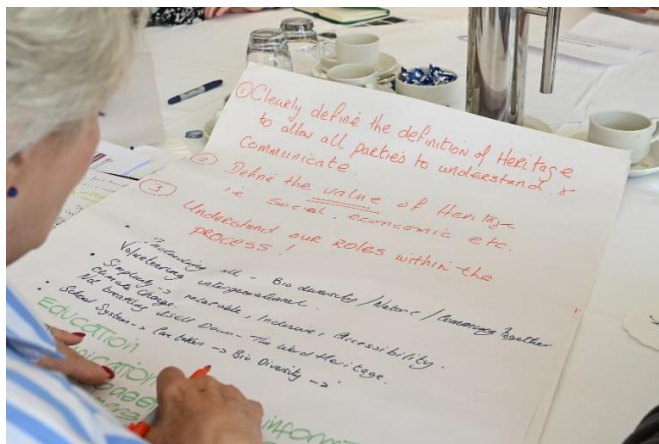


Pop up studios in children's A&E waiting room at St. Luke's Hospital

HERITAGE

Kilkenny County Heritage Strategy Pre-Draft Consultation

Pre-draft consultation has completed for the next County Heritage Strategy. Seven consultation workshops were held across the County and with various stakeholder groups involving approximately 200 people who came to share their priorities for heritage in Co. Kilkenny which ranged across the categories of natural, cultural and built heritage. The findings of the consultation are now being analysed to create a draft of the strategy. The draft will be published for consultation over the summer months.



Kilkenny County Heritage Consultation Workshop

Visit from Armagh, Banbridge, Craigavon Borough Heritage Places Study Trip

The Heritage Office was delighted to host a delegation from Armagh, Banbridge, Craigavon Borough who have been chosen by The National Lottery Heritage Fund for inclusion in an exciting new Strategic Initiative entitled, Heritage Places.

This award will fund a 10 Year Heritage Strategy that will enable them to develop a fully costed and prioritised plan for investment and enable a sustainable future for their heritage. The purpose of the visit was to learn about the delivery of heritage services in Kilkenny County Council.

The delegation included Lord Mayor, Cllr. Sarah Duffy - Armagh City, Banbridge & Craigavon Borough Council; Roger Wilson, Chief Executive, Cllr. Jude Mallon - Economic Development and Regeneration (Vice-Chair); Brian Johnston, Head of Tourism, Arts and Culture along with 10 other key stakeholders.

The visit proved to be rich in the sharing of experiences and expertise and created potential for collaboration in the future.

Heritage Council / Leave no Trace Training

The Heritage Officer attended a two-day training workshop in Westport, Co. Mayo hosted by the Heritage Council and Leave no Trace Ireland. The training focused on the recent development of the National Outdoor Recreation Strategy and the role of Heritage Officers in contributing to County Outdoor Recreation Plans to ensure a sustainable and heritage-led approach. Training was also delivered by Dark Skies.

BIODIVERSITY

Wild Kilkenny: Discover, Learn, Protect and Record

Kilkenny County Council in association with the Community Division of the Kilkenny Carlow Education Training Board commenced a biodiversity course with 15 participants.

Over 5 weeks, the participants have committed to 5 hours a week, with a 2 hour mid-week lecture followed by a Saturday field trip. There are 7 participants from the Castlecomer Municipal District, 3 from Kilkenny City, 2 from the Callan/Thomastown Municipal District and 3 from the Piltown Municipal District.

They have diverse backgrounds including horticulture, agriculture and education, each having a passion for nature and a desire to learn and protect biodiversity.

The course topics include:

- evolution adaptations,
- photography,
- geology,
- woodland and
- grassland ecology.

A project developed by the Biodiversity Working Group, it is an action under the newly adopted Kilkenny's Biodiversity Action Plan 2025-2030.

National Biodiversity Week 2025

National Biodiversity Week ran between the 16th -25th of May 2025. The Kilkenny Library Service ran a series of events and the Biodiversity Officer organised a bat walk in Callan.

Numerous communities held events and promotion was coordinated by Kilkenny County Council in association with the Irish Environmental Network.

A week long radio promotion was aired on KCLR Live that was completed in collaboration with Carlow County Council, it included spot advertising and a daily interview with a biodiversity specialist daily. The local papers featured a two page biodiversity feature which described the habitats of Kilkenny, by Roger Goodwillie, a renowned local botanist, who originally wrote it as a chapter for Kilkenny's Biodiversity Action Plan 2025-2030.

This engagement and awareness activity is an action under the newly adopted Kilkenny's Biodiversity Action Plan 2025-2030.

CIVIL DEFENCE

During the month of May, medical assistance was provided at numerous events including Darkness into Light in Kilkenny City and Inistioge. Kilkenny Civil Defence assisted Laois Civil Defence with the Slieve Bloom Mountain Biking Festival.

Civil Defence volunteers along with the Civil Defence Officer and Assistant Civil Defence Officer were invited to Áras an Uachtaráin by President Michael D. Higgins to celebrate the 75th Anniversary of Civil Defence in Ireland.

The Civil Defence took part in a training exercise with the Fire Service in Kilkenny. Civil Defence Officer and Assistant Civil Defence Officer attended the Office of Emergency Planning in Dublin for familiarisation of processes and look at the essential role Civil Defence plays during emergencies.



Kilkenny Civil Defence invited to Áras an Uachtaráin to celebrate the 75th Anniversary of Civil Defence in Ireland



Kilkenny Civil Defence at Office of Emergency Planning Training



Training exercise between the Fire Service and Civil Defence

FINANCE

The expenditure by service division to the end of May is set out in Table 1. Total Expenditure for the period was €47m compared with the annual budget of €120m.

Table 1	Actual YTD May 2025	Budget Full Year 2025
	€'000's	€'000's
Housing & Building	13,177	30,784
Road Transport & Safety	9,407	31,383
Water Services	2,411	7,180
Development Management	5,008	15,417
Environmental Services	6,666	18,991
Recreation & Amenity	3,119	9,425
Agriculture, Education, Health, Welfare	162	354
Miscellaneous Services	3,555	6,938
Central Management Charges for Allocation	3,004	
OVERALL TOTAL	£46,509	120,472

Rates Invoices 2025

The annual rate invoices for 2025 totalling €24.4 million were issued to 2850 rate customers in February. Commercial rates are payable in full from 1st January 2025. A prompt payment discount of 8.3% (capped at €300 per rate account) is available for customers who pay bill in full before end of May 2025 or enter into a monthly payment plan before April 2025.

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 cases
Appeal Withdrawn	33 cases
Increase in Revaluation on Appeal	1 case
No change to Revaluation on Appeal	9 cases
Appeals Outstanding	2 cases

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

Finance Update

The bank overdraft facility was not utilised during the five month period to the end May 2025. The Local Government Auditor has commenced work on the audit of the AFS 2024.