

# CHIEF EXECUTIVE REPORT

## DECEMBER 2022 ISSUE



## YULEFEST - CHRISTMAS IN KILKENNY IS BACK!

JOIN US ON  
SATURDAY 26<sup>TH</sup> NOVEMBER!

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KILKENNY COUNTY COUNCIL



## EXECUTIVE FUNCTIONS

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

### DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

#### **N24 Carrick Road:**

The public consultation period runs until the 20<sup>th</sup> January, 2023

#### **Stream for Vernacular Structures**

The deadline for applications is 5.00 p.m. on 20<sup>th</sup> January, 2023.

#### **Taste Kilkenny Restaurant Week**

Taste Kilkenny Restaurant Week is a promotional opportunity for restaurants, gastro bars, cafes and food producers taking place in Kilkenny from 27<sup>th</sup> January to the 5<sup>th</sup> February.

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## CORPORATE

**checktheregister.ie**

### Electoral Rolling Register

The new Electoral Rolling Register was rolled out in November. All electors are now being asked to visit [www.checktheregister.ie](http://www.checktheregister.ie) to confirm or update their entry by adding their PPSN, Date of Birth and Eircode or register for the first time using a newly upgraded [www.checktheregister.ie](http://www.checktheregister.ie). This will help to ensure that entries are accurate and up to date as well as enabling the identification of entries on the register that require follow up. We need everyone to check their details, update and complete their information.

The Electoral Reform Act 2022 delivers the legislative underpinning for a range of significant electoral reforms set out in the Programme for Government – Our Shared Future.

A national communications campaign has been launched to encourage people to visit [checktheregister.ie](http://checktheregister.ie) and update their details. To date the Franchise Section have received in excess of 800 requests for update or new registrations via [checktheregister.ie](http://checktheregister.ie). Checking, updating or registering has never been easier.



### Launch of Yulefest

Yulefest Kilkenny 2022 was launched by the Cathaoirleach, Cllr. Pat Fitzpatrick, on Saturday 26<sup>th</sup> November with

the arrival of Santa and the switching on of the lights in the City by Mayor of Kilkenny Municipal District, Cllr. David Fitzgerald.

Beginning on November 25<sup>th</sup> and running until Christmas eve, Kilkenny's Medieval City will transform into a wonderland of festive cheer for all the family.

Kilkenny County Council this year have supported many of the county's towns and villages in helping them to light up the County for Christmas 2022. As well as a jam-packed programme in Kilkenny City there is plenty to see and do across the County including:

- Christmas Markets around the County in Graiguenamanagh, Ballyhale, Ballyraggett, Glenmore, Callan, Piltown, Dunnamagin.
- Santa will visit Ballyraggett, Castlecomer, Mountain View and Thomastown.
- Christmas illumination ceremony on the Green in Freshford.
- Parade of Light in Thomastown.
- Festival of Light in Castlecomer.

## ROADS

### MAJOR PROJECTS

*(Included in NDP- Funded by TII)*

#### **N24 Waterford to Cahir Scheme**

The public consultation No 2 on Alternatives & Options is complete and the design team is working on corridor options. Some site investigations/studies have taken place with more to commence in February 2022 which will feed into the selection of the preferred corridor.

### MINOR PROJECTS

*(Not included in NDP-Funded by TII)*

#### **N24 Tower Road (Safety Scheme)**

The tender in respect of construction of the scheme was awarded to Wills Bros Ltd, Co. Mayo on the 1<sup>st</sup> December 2022. Construction is scheduled to commence on the 16<sup>th</sup> January 2023 with a 12-month time period envisaged. The overall outturn cost for the project will be in excess of €10m.

#### **N77 Ballyraggett to Ballynaslee**

An allocation of €500K was received for 2022 which has funded archaeological investigations and some advanced enabling works.

The formal Notice to Treat under CPO procedures issued to all affected landowners and occupiers in mid-September 2022 and responses to same continue to be received and will be evaluated. A reminder to those who have not responded in respect of the notice to treat was issued on the 2<sup>nd</sup> December 2022. The preparation of contract documents is on-going. The overall outturn cost for the project is expected to be in excess of €10m.

#### **N24 Carrick Road:**

An allocation of €150K was received in 2022 which has funded progression to the statutory approvals stage. The simultaneous applications for approval to An Bord Pleanála for 177AE Planning application and Compulsory Purchase Order

Approval was made on the 25<sup>th</sup> November 2022. The public consultation period runs until the 20<sup>th</sup> January, 2023. A decision is not expected until Q3 2023. The overall outturn cost for the project is expected to be in excess of €10m.

## OTHER

### *Pavement Schemes*

The N78 Webbesborough Pavement Improvement Scheme has been completed.

The N10 Danesfort Pavement Improvement Scheme commenced construction during November. Depending on the weather conditions works may be completed before the end of 2022 but may extend into Q1 2023.

The N77 Georges Tree to Dunmore West (*Phase 1 Ardloo Junction North*) Pavement Improvement Scheme is presently undergoing the final stages of tender assessment and will be awarded during December 2022. Works on this scheme will likely not commence until the latter end of Q1 2023.

## ENVIRONMENT

### **Climate Action**

The following actions are in progress or have been completed as part of the Advance Planning Stage of the preparation of the Kilkenny Climate Action Plan (CAP).

### **Climate Risk Assessment**

RPS Consultants have recently been appointed to undertake a Climate Change Risk Assessment for Kilkenny County Council as part of our preparation work for the Climate Action Plan. The assessment will identify current and future climate hazards such as flooding, heatwaves, extreme rainfall etc., and the potential impacts on infrastructure, health and well-being, environment, biodiversity, heritage, society, finance, and reputation.

The findings of the report will be used to inform the new Kilkenny Climate Action Plan. RPS Consultants are also preparing Climate Change Risk Assessments for Wexford, Waterford, Carlow and Tipperary County Councils as part of this joint project. Funding is provided by the Department of Environment, Climate and Communications.

### **Audit of Greenhouse Gas Emissions**

Kilkenny County Council have commissioned the South East Energy Agency to undertake an audit of current greenhouse gas emissions in County Kilkenny. The findings of the report will be used to inform the new Kilkenny Climate Action Plan and will be a baseline against which we measure changes in emissions over the next 5 years.

Funding is provided for the project by the Department of Environment, Climate and Communications.

### **New Communities Climate Action Officer Post**

The Council have received approval for a new Community Climate Action Officer post (Grade VI, 3 Year Fixed Term Contract). The new role will form part of the Climate Action Team and will support communities to take positive climate action, including administering a Community Climate Grants Programme.

### **Climate Action Steering Committee**

The Membership of the Climate Action Steering Committee has been agreed. All service areas of the Council are represented on the committee. A facilitated meeting of the committee will be held in January.

### **Decarbonising Zone (DZ)**

The nominated Decarbonising Zone has yet to be agreed by the Department. Once approval is received a baseline emissions inventory (Tier 3) for the DZ will have to be completed, as part of the advance planning stage of the CAP.

### **Statutory Phase of the Climate Action Plan preparation (Stage 2)**

We have been advised by the Department of Environment, Climate and Communications that the Minister has until 6<sup>th</sup> March, 2023 to issue Direction to Local Authorities to start the 12-month statutory phase of the preparation of the Climate Action Plan.

### **Recommended Minimum Criteria for Environmental Inspections (RMCEI)**

The following table provides a summary of the completed inspections under the RMCEI for Air Noise and Water.

<b>Air Noise Water Incl. Planning (Planning Referrals)</b>	<b>Planned</b>	<b>Update End Dec. 2022</b>	
Subtotal 6.4 Routine Water / Wastewater Inspections	1586	1598	101%
Subtotal 6.5 Non-Routine Water / Wastewater Inspections	51	41	80%
Subtotal 6.6 Routine Air / Noise Inspections	70	59.5	85%
Subtotal 6.7 Non-Routine Air / Noise Inspections	38	15	39%
Subtotal 6.9 Planning ( <i>Environmental</i> ) Inspections ( <i>Routine</i> )	1150	780	68%
<b>Total &gt;&gt;</b>	<b>2895</b>	<b>2494</b>	<b>86%</b>

There has been a reduction in the number of non-routine Water / Wastewater Inspections and Air / Noise Inspections as there has been a reduction in the number of complaints received in 2022 compared to 2021.

Planning related inspections are currently at 780. When compared to last year we anticipate an end of year reduction in planning inspections of between 25% to 30%, in line with the reduction in Planning Applications.

Despite ongoing staff resourcing issues in 2022 the Waters Team has managed to complete 75 out of the 103 planned farm inspections in 2022. We anticipate a significant increase in the number of required planned inspections in 2023 with the onset of the 3<sup>rd</sup> cycle River Basin Management Plan (RBMP) 2022-2027. Additional staff resources will be required going forward and discussions are ongoing with the Department and LAWPRO in this regard.

### **Focus: Air Quality – Solid Fuel Enforcement Pilot Activities**

In order to assist with Air Quality Monitoring the Environment Section has purchased a mobile Air Quality Monitor. This equipment will be used to carry out surveillance activities and to respond to Air Quality complaints related to the burning of solid fuels. The monitor also has a dual function in that it can be used for transport related assessments of vehicle emissions within urban areas. The full cost of the monitor has been claimed from the Department grant allocation under Solid Fuel Enforcement Activities 2022.

### **Environment Complaints**

All Environment complaints received are logged on the CRM (Customer Relations Management) System. The number of complaints being received and logged by Environment staff for investigation up to the end of November 2022 is 908 compared with 1,149 for the same period last year (*i.e. down circa 21%*). The vast majority of complaints continue to be related to littering and illegal dumping.

## **WASTE, RECYCLING & COLLECTION**

### **Bring Banks Usage**

The Council provides and manages 46 Bring Centres across the City and County. A total of 1,956 tonnes of recyclables have been collected from our Bring Centres so far this year. This represents an 20% decrease on the same period last year and is mainly down due to the lifting of all Covid restrictions. Loughboy Shopping Centre (131 tonnes collected YTD), Newpark Shopping Centre (117 tonnes collected YTD) are the busiest locations in the City and Graiguenamanagh (90 tonnes collected YTD) is 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.

### **Deposit-return scheme on bottles and cans announced**

It is planned to roll out a deposit return scheme in accordance with emerging Government Policy. It will impose a small extra charge on cans and bottles to be refunded to the customer if the container is returned.

A 15c deposit will apply to cans and bottles up to 500ml and a 25c deposit on those over 500ml under the new measure. This scheme is aimed at reducing litter and increase recycling rates nationally. Retailers selling cans and plastic bottles will be required to register with the scheme operator on Return.ie and will receive a fee worth 10% of the value of deposits.





Machines will be fitted in shops for customers to return their containers, where they will be able to choose whether to receive their refunded deposit as cash or credit for the shop, or make a donation to charity. The scheme will not be fully operational until February 2024 but some shops have already introduced it on a pilot basis.

## LITTER AWARENESS

### Green Schools

The Environmental Awareness Officer is back in schools completing Green School Renewal Assessments. Three renewal visits were completed in November. There are 59 schools due to renew their flag by the end of this academic year, which is 72% of all participating schools in the Green Schools Programme. Schools planning to renew their flag must submit their application form before the 24<sup>th</sup> of March 2023 and prior to this date must undergo a renewal visit by the Council's Environmental Awareness Officer. Schools will be issued a reminder of the dates on their return from their Christmas holidays.



### Let's Team Up to Clean Up, Together for Kilkenny

"Let's Team Up to Clean Up, Together for Kilkenny" saw over 50 groups registered to participate in the 1<sup>st</sup> environmental day of action, with 600 litter pickers distributed along with 6,000 flowering bulbs to neighbourhoods across Kilkenny City. The pilot event took place on Kilkenny Day, the 9<sup>th</sup> of October. It helped the Council to gain logistical experience in advance of running the much larger event next spring, that will incorporate both the City and County. The corporate sponsors have been instrumental to allow this initiative to become a reality by providing the necessary financial support for the next three years to cement this environmental day of action into the County's community calendar.

Kilkenny County Council along with its sponsors have agreed to hold the whole county event in March 2023. Holding it over a weekend in March, will allow participating groups to receive pollinator flowering bulbs to plant and day light hours will be lengthening at this time of year. The registration portal remains open via <https://cleanup.kilkenny.ie/> and a promotional drive is currently being prepared for launch early in the New Year to encourage groups to participate once the date has been confirmed. Thanks and gratitude goes to all our sponsors: - PRL, Dawn Meats, John O Shea Trust and Glanbia PLC/Glanbia Co-op together with our waste management sponsor Panda.

Photos taken of participating groups in 'Lets Team Up to Clean Up' on 9<sup>th</sup> October 2022.



*Kilkenny Volunteer Centre*



*Loughlin Court, Kilkenny*



*Tidy Towns Forum in Ballyragget*



*Kilkenny Library*

## **Veterinary Services Report Q1 - Q3 2022**

It was proposed in 2021 that the service would be redeployed to the Department of Agriculture Food and the Marine in 2022, however negotiations are still on-going and this transfer has now been postponed. There is an extension of the FSAI Service Level Agreement with Kilkenny County Council (*which also covers the Carlow Local Authority area*) for another year – until 31<sup>st</sup> December 2023.

Following on from the challenges of COVID 19 issues in the meat industry in 2020 and 2021, this year brought its own unique challenges of rising energy costs for this energy intense industry.

The Pandemic highlighted the importance to local areas of small food businesses. However, the energy crisis is undermining a lot of these businesses presently and many are struggling with rising energy costs. The value of the maintenance of local food supply chains to local retail outlets to service their local communities should not be underestimated from many perspectives - the reduction in food miles, the circular economy and its importance to rural areas.

Q1 - Q3 2022 slaughter figures were as follows - 4,017 cattle and 8,749 sheep, and 73,595 chickens were slaughtered with a corresponding number of Ante Mortem and Post Mortem Inspections conducted by Veterinary Inspectors.

In Q1 - Q3 2022 there were 161 Official Control Inspections / Audits conducted of food businesses and 131 Official Control Samples were taken by the Veterinary Service consisting of the following - 36 for animal remedy residues, 8 for chemicals in food, 17 water samples, 40 carcass swabs for microbes, and 30 for microbes in food, all these samples were sent to designated Official Control Laboratories in accordance with Ireland's National Official Control Sampling Plan.

The challenge of Veterinary Certification for trade with GB for food of animal origin was postponed from July 2022 to Dec 2023. The Veterinary Service continued to attend BREXIT /TRACES training in 2022 on this subject to enable food businesses to do this trade into the future if required.

During Q1 - Q3 2022 there were 40 Dog Breeding Establishment Inspections completed in conjunction with the Dog Warden Service and the Dog Shelter was inspected at least monthly by the Veterinary Service.

### **Animal Welfare**

At the end of November 2022, the total number of dogs dealt with at the Dog Shelter was 337. This compares to 169 for 2021, which is a 99% increase.

Of this year's 337 dogs - 284 were strays and 53 were surrenders. There were 117 dogs rehomed by the shelter and 134 were transferred to charities for rehoming along with 74 dogs being reclaimed by their owners. There were 11 dogs remaining on site at the end of November.

This upward trend in dogs being dealt with in the shelter is nationwide which is possibly due to dog owners returning to their workplaces away from their home and hence are unable to commit the time required to care for and exercise their pet.

On the 20<sup>th</sup> October 2022, the shelter remained operational, however it was unable to accept surrendered dogs due to reaching full capacity which is currently 22 dogs. After a combination of successfully reuniting dogs with their owners and finding homes for dogs that were not reclaimed, the shelter was once again able to accept dogs from the 25<sup>th</sup> October 2022. It is expected that the dog shelter will reach capacity again in the near future due to this ongoing trend nationwide.

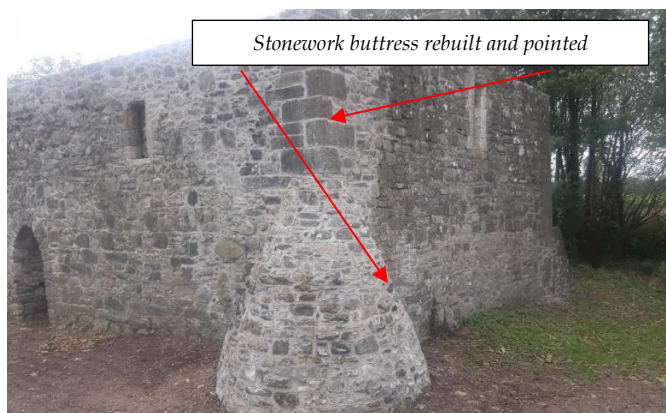
This year we would like to encourage families to consider adopting a dog from Carlow/Kilkenny Dog Shelter if they are planning on getting one for Christmas.



## Burial Grounds

### Community Monuments Fund - Clomantagh & Dunkitt Capital Works

Kilkenny County Council has almost completed works to help conserve and protect two medieval churches and graveyards, (Clomantagh, Dunkitt) under the Community Monuments fund 2022. Works will be fully completed on both projects by the end of the year. The projects were managed by the Environment Section and Heritage Office. See photos below.



*Dunkitt Church and Graveyard*



*Clomantagh Church and Graveyard*

### Community Monuments Fund - Grangefertagh Church Conservation report

The draft conservation report for Grangefertagh Church & Graveyard is almost complete. Final report is due to be submitted by the end of the year. It is anticipated that an application for Stream 1 Capital Works will be made in 2023 for this location through the Community Monuments Fund.



*The MacGiolla Phadraig Tomb, Grangerfertagh will be addressd in the Conservation Plan*



### **St. Kieran's Cemetery – Columbarium Wall Garden**

O'Riordan Monumental from Cashel has been appointed (*following Tender*) to complete the Columbarium Wall Garden in St Kieran's Cemetery and work has commenced on site. The contractor has also commenced construction of the Columbarium Wall Units. A total of 100 niches will be available within the Columbarium wall units in the garden, with the option to add more units subject to future demand. The project is due for completion by the end of February 2023.

The Project will include the following:

- Site Clearance including topsoil strip, circa. 370m<sup>2</sup> for the garden development;
- Provision of foundations and installation of pre-made Columbarium Wall units (5 No.);
- Provision of paved areas from the existing access road / path;
- Provision of seating; and
- Landscaping

A change to the rules and regulations for St. Kieran's Cemetery will be required for the provision of a Columbarium Wall Garden. This will be developed during the construction phase of the project along with the proposed price point for each niche.



### **Graveyard Grant Scheme 2022**

There was a total of 54 applications received earlier this year under the Graveyard Grants Scheme 2022. Two of these applications were deemed ineligible as the works proposed in these applications did not come under the scope of the Scheme. The total awarded under the Graveyard Grants Scheme for 2022 was €20,000. Payment of these grants is now complete.

## PARKS/SPECIAL PROJECTS

### Playgrounds

Annual independent inspections of all playgrounds under our care were completed recently. These are an added layer of checks to complement our own in house weekly and quarterly inspections. The annual checks are a detailed check of safety of all playground features and highlight any issues which require attention to ensure continued safe play.

The Parks staff continued with general maintenance and improvement works during the month of November. Some of the works included re-mulching under the play equipment in Kells playground along with the installation of 3 composite new age friendly seats and 1 picnic bench. In Ferrybank Park, 9 semi mature native Oak trees were planted to enrich the biodiversity of the Park.



We feel it is important to acknowledge the community groups involved in assisting us with the maintenance of the playgrounds, as their local involvement is invaluable.

### Amenity Grants

The drawdown of amenity grants for 2022 funding is in its closing stages. The majority of applicants that received Amenity Grants are now in the process of submitting claims to drawdown their grants with 90% of the funding drawn down to date. In total €139,465 was allocated to 171 groups across the County. The range of works involved tree planting, grass cutting, planting flowers, erecting signage and many other amenity type projects. An increase in the number of groups making efforts to manage their areas in a more sustainable way has been observed and is being supported by the Amenity Grant.





## Outdoor Recreational Infrastructure Scheme (ORIS) - Funding Announcement

We are delighted to advise that in addition to the 7 Measure 1 and 1 Project Development applications allocated funding in August, Minister Heather Humphreys, Department of Rural and Community Development, announced in November that the following applications have also been successful under our Measure 2 and 3 submissions:

Measure	Project Name:	Project Description	Grant Allocation
Measure 2	Millennium Forest - Trail Enhancement and Accessibility Scheme	Millennium Forest is sited on a very level parcel of land to the south of Kilkenny city. Proposed enhancement works to Green Loop to include 2.1km's of trail rehabilitation to facilitate universal access with a particular focus on wheelchair users, improvement and provision of universal and age friendly accessible amenity spaces with dedicated car parking. General trail improvement, c.500lin.m, to Red Loop, the longer loop walk. The installation of wheelchair accessible toilet (Dry loo). Carpark, entrance and signage improvements to promote awareness, improve safety and enhance offering.	€200,000
Measure 2	Jeninstown Wood – Walking Trail Rehabilitation Scheme	Works include the rehabilitation of the existing two loop walks, the creation of a new fully accessible loop walk, with age friendly seating and upgraded signage along all trails. Upgrading of picnic amenity space with age friendly and accessible seating, a new access ramp to provide connectivity to the carpark, landscaping and general signage upgrade.	€200,000
Measure 3	River Nore Linear Park Lacken Walk Timber Boardwalk Replacement Scheme	The works involve the removal of the existing c.445lin.m narrow 1.2m wide timber boardwalk and its replacement with a 3.0m to 4.0m wide accessibly boardwalk, constructed using 100% recycled plastic components. The works will also include for the provision of age friendly seating, an accessible amenity space and interpretative signage.	€500,000

In total, funding in the amount €1,102,482 was awarded to Kilkenny County Council for new applications under ORIS, and when combined with match funding the total investment in outdoor recreational amenities in 2023 will be c.€1.43million. This investment is in addition to the ORIS projects that will be carried over from 2022, such as the Kilkenny Countryside Park and Woodstock Accessibility Enhancement Scheme.

## Outdoor Recreational Infrastructure Scheme (ORIS) - Works

Minister for Rural and Community Development, Heather Humphreys T.D., was in Kilkenny on Monday the 28<sup>th</sup> November to officially re-open the Ardra Loop Walk and Arboretum Walk in the Castlecomer Discovery Park. Those in attendance were bathed in winter sunshine as Minister Humphreys cut the ribbon to re-open these wonderful free amenities. The project was funded under Measure 2 ORIS, the total cost was c.€220,000 with c.€196,000 funded through the ORIS with the balance from the Council's own funds.

The National Outdoor Recreation Strategy was also launched by Minister Humphreys on the day and what a fitting place to launch such a strategy which will shape the future of outdoor recreation in Ireland over the next 5 years. The strategy is all about embracing Ireland's outdoors and Castlecomer Discovery Park offers the best in outdoor recreation and adventure tourism.





*Before and After Images of the Ardra Loop Walk*



Works to improve the visitor experience on Tory Hill were completed in November. The works included repairs to the stone enclosure/Cross area, the installation of a new viewing platform and steps, along with the installation of 7 bespoke location marker plates around the circular enclosure capping. The latter identifying the main landmarks and points of interest that are visible from the summit, such as Hook Head Lighthouse, Mt. Leinster and the Blackstairs Mountains and Slievecoiltia Mountain in County Wexford to name but a few.

### **Freshford Playground and Amenity Area**

Works continue to progress on the delivery of the Freshford Playground and Amenity Area. The Council are assisting the local community to develop this project. The fencing along the southern boundary and boundary with the GAA grounds is now completed. The Castlecomer Area Office are currently undertaking the civil works, which include the construction of an access road, parking area, footpaths, drainage etc. Good progress has been made over the month of November with the completion of the access road and parking area sub-base and slipform kerbing.

The works are being funded through a combination of Town & Village Renewal, CCFCS grant, Council's own funds and community funding.





# PLANNING

## DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT

Planning Summary	Total November	
	2021	2022
Planning Applications Received	966	762
Planning Applications Granted	813	600
Planning Applications Refused	72	93
Complaints Received	116	87
Warning Letters Issued	98	76
Enforcements Notices Issued	21	40
Cases Closed	94	80

The total number of planning applications received to-date this year (*at 762*) is circa 21% less than the same period last year.

## FORWARD PLANNING

### Masterplans:

#### Abbey Quarter

Following the appointment of O' Mahony Pike Consultants a site visit was undertaken by the consultants and they have been holding meetings with stakeholders and interested parties to get an understanding of the key issues involved. A public survey on the Abbey Quarter is currently live and accessible on the Council's website and on [Consult.kilkenny.ie](http://Consult.kilkenny.ie). The questionnaire was circulated to all Council staff and Elected Members, as well as advertised in the local newspaper, with a closing date on 12<sup>th</sup> December. The findings of the survey will aid the Consultants who are currently preparing a draft plan. It is anticipated that the revised Masterplan will be completed in the second quarter of 2023.

#### St. Canice's Campus

The preparation of the Masterplan for the HSE's St. Canice's Campus is ongoing. Loci consultants are assisting the Project Steering Committee in the drafting of the Masterplan. Draft concepts were presented to the HSE in October and they are considering the proposals against their needs for the next 30 years. A further meeting with the HSE was held at the end of November and another meeting is planned for mid-December. A draft plan is still subject to agreement with the HSE, but when available will be presented to the HSE Board for consideration, whereafter it will be

brought to the Municipal District Members before it is placed on public display.

#### Loughmacask

The draft Loughmacask Masterplan was placed on display from the 26<sup>th</sup> August, 2022 to the 28<sup>th</sup> October, 2022. Three public information sessions on the draft were held in September and October and a total of 182 submissions were received during the consultation timeframe. These submissions are currently being assessed and summarised and a Chief Executive's Report will be completed. Following the presentation of the CE's recommendations to the Municipal District Members early in the new year and following their consideration the amendments to the draft plan will be put out on public display.

#### Urlingford

The Council's Consultants are currently drafting the Urlingford town Centre Masterplan and it is estimated that the draft Masterplan will be completed by mid-December. Once available the draft plan will be presented to the Municipal District Members before it is put on public display.

#### Ballyragget/Paulstown/Kilmacow

Work has commenced on the preparation of Masterplans for the settlements of Ballyragget, Paulstown and Kilmacow. The appointed Consultants are currently undertaking a review and updating Health Checks for each settlement along with various other surveys. A Stakeholders meeting is scheduled for each settlement in mid-January 2023, after which the consultants will commence drafting these Masterplans.

### Taking in Charge

Works are continuing on the following estates:

- *Abbeygate, Ferrybank*
- *The Greens, Thomastown*
- *Kiln Lane, Callan*
- *Whitehall, Paulstown*
- *An Choill Rua, Paulstown*

Schedule of works to be prepared and costed for the following:

- *College Park, Kilkenny*
- *Ogenty Gowran, Co Kilkenny*
- *Rioch Court, Kilkenny*

## Active Land Management

- The Draft Maps of land in scope for the Residential Zoned Land Tax were published on the 1<sup>st</sup> November and submissions are now invited. This is a national exercise and all maps will be on display until January 2023.
- There are 21 sites on the Derelict Sites Register at present; one site was added in November. Valuations of derelict sites are being carried out at present.
- There are 28 sites on the Vacant Sites Register, and the number of cancelled entries due to site activation or improvement stands at 19 sites. The Vacant site levy will be replaced by the Residential Zoned Land Tax in 2024, but any outstanding levies 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.

Kilkenny County Council are currently receiving applications for the following two conservation grants:

**Built Heritage Investment Scheme 2023** - determined by the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage has a national fund of €4.5m. The minimum funding awarded for successful projects will be €2,500 up to a maximum of €15,000 and to a maximum of 50% the project cost. The Local Authority will allocate funding for projects based on good quality applications. Priority will be given to small-scale, labour-intensive projects.

## Historic Structures Fund 2023

**Stream 1** will offer grants from €15,000 up to €50,000 and is aimed at essential repairs and smaller capital works for the refurbishment and conservation of heritage structures.

**Stream 1, Historic Shopfronts Sub-Stream** - To incentivise the conservation of historic shop fronts, for essential repairs and small capital works for the refurbishment and conservation of historic shop facades, windows, signage and other associated details to safeguard them and keep

them in use. Kilkenny County Council are particularly keen to receive applications for Irish Language shopfronts.

**Stream 2** will offer a small number of grants from €50,000 up to €200,000 for larger enhancement, refurbishment or reuse projects involving heritage structures, where a clear community or public benefit has been demonstrated.

**Stream for Vernacular Structures** - The purpose of the stream is to support conservation repairs and small capital works to vernacular structures that are not listed in Local Authority's Records of Protected Structures or otherwise legally protected. Such structures may be located within an Architectural Conservation Area. Funding will be between €5,000 and €10,000 for eligible projects.

The deadline for applications is 5.00 p.m. on 20<sup>th</sup> January, 2023.

## Building Control

- Valid commencement notices submitted: 318 for the first 11 months of 2022.
- 68 Disability Access Applications have been received during the first 11 months of this year.

# COMMUNITY

## Community & Cultural Facilities Capital Grant Scheme 2022.

The Community & Cultural Facilities Capital Grant Scheme is funded from development contributions and an annual budget of €250,000 is provided.

Applications for the 2022 CCFCFS were advertised with a closing date for receipt of applications of Wednesday, 2<sup>nd</sup> November, 2022. The Council received a total of 15 applications

The following applications were approved for funding by Members at the November Council Meeting.

Applicant & Project	Amount
St. Lachtains GAA Club <i>Floodlight Community Walkway</i>	€40,000
Ballyhale Shamrocks GAA Club <i>Walkway with Lighting</i>	€40,000
Johnstown Sports Field Committee	€40,000



<i>Floodlight Community Walkway</i>	
1 <sup>st</sup> Kilkenny Scout Group <i>Upgrade to LED lighting, attic insulation, upgrade boiler &amp; installation of solar panels</i>	€15,000
Bigwood Childrens Playground <i>Community Playground</i>	€35,000
Thomastown Community Centre <i>Community Cinema</i>	€15,000
Mooncoin Celtic FC <i>Spectator Railing around Playing Pitch</i>	€10,000
The Rower Inistioge GAA Club <i>Floodlighting as part of the Facility</i>	€30,000
Carrigeen GAA Club <i>Replacement of Side Panels on Astro turf Pitch</i>	€25,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>€250,000</b>

### Comhairle na nÓg

The Annual General Meeting of the Kilkenny Comhairle na nÓg was held on Tuesday 25<sup>th</sup> October, 2022 in Langton's Hotel. Over 150 young people from secondary schools across the County gathered to identify issues that affect them and their peers. The young people participated in a number of workshops and identified the following as the three main issues that affect young people living in County Kilkenny.

- Lack of transport links connecting to rural parts of the county.
- Lack of community/youth facilities for young people.
- School-related issues.

Following a final vote, school-related issues were selected as the main topic to be acted upon by the incoming Comhairle na nÓg group. This encompasses an imbalance of subjects, work/life balance, access to mental health services, all forms of bullying, equality, and diversity. 43 young people also expressed an interest in joining the 2022 / 2023 Comhairle na nÓg group.

### Healthy Ireland

Consultation and planning is taking place with stakeholders across the County under the Healthy Ireland Round 4 Fund Strategy that will contribute to improving health and wellbeing outcomes outlined in the National Healthy Ireland Framework. The three-year plan will include key actions that address the health priorities outlined in the Kilkenny LCDC Healthy

Kilkenny Community Plan. The final document will be ready for sign off in late January before submission to Pobal for final approval.

Kilkenny County Council (Healthy Kilkenny & Kilkenny Age Friendly) is a partner of the 3-year EU funded project "Urban Action for cancer prevention: adult and senior citizens practice physical activity within public urban green spaces to prevent cancer diseases". This project is an intersectoral initiative, joining together physiotherapists, local authorities, non-profit organization, higher education and research institutions from across Europe with the overall objectives:

- (i) To engage adult and senior citizens to practice physical activity (PA) and contribute to the EU policies, aimed at encouraging the participation of EU citizens in PA within public green spaces
- (ii) Seek to apply physical activity as a tool for cancer prevention addressed to adult and senior citizens.

Consultation is currently taking place with participants across the City, with focus groups planned for January.

### LCDC - Community Enhancement Programme

The Department of Rural and Community Development have announced €290,749 in funding for Kilkenny for the Community Support Fund under the Community Enhancement Programme 2022, which provides funding to support community groups.

The Community Support Fund will support groups, particularly in disadvantaged areas with their non-pay running costs for example energy costs/bills or other non-pay operating costs for example rental/lease costs, insurance bills. Groups will also be able to use the funding to carry out necessary repairs and improvements to their facilities, purchase equipment for example tables and chairs, tools and signage, laptops and printers, lawnmowers, canopies and training equipment etc. A portion of the funding has been ring-fenced specifically for women's sheds.

The application process will not be open until early 2023 - further details to follow early 2023.

### Age Friendly - MacDonagh Train Station

On Monday 21st November 2022: Age Friendly Ireland awarded Age Friendly recognition to

MacDonagh Railway Station, Kilkenny, acknowledging it as the first age friendly train station in the country. MacDonagh Railway Station received its official Age Friendly Charter at the launch event and will now also be recognised by the World Health Organisation (WHO) internationally as model of good practice for age friendly stations. A case study publication was also launched by Age Friendly Ireland, outlining the work undertaken by Irish Rail and partners in the initiative.

The work in MacDonagh Railway Station funded under Active Travel Measure was delivered through a partnership between Irish Rail, Kilkenny County Council, the Department of Transport, the National Transport Authority, and Age Friendly Ireland, a local government shared service. The changes implemented in the station responded to the findings of a walkability audit carried out in February 2022 with support from older people and people with disabilities.

The specific improvements made to the station include:

- New pedestrian crossing.
- Age Friendly car parking spaces.
- Upgrade of disability parking spaces.
- Alterations to kerb to improve access.
- Landscaping.
- Safety decals on glass doors.
- JAM (*Just a Minute*) cards used in the station and training for staff.

A key feature of this development was the opening of a new walkway which links the station with the adjacent MacDonagh Junction Shopping Centre, significantly reducing the walking distance from the train to the shops and also lift access to bus stops close to the railway station.

## LEO/ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

### Design Kilkenny Conference

Kilkenny County Council staged a unique conference event showcasing the past, present, future on how Kilkenny is positioned to drive design excellence. This event celebrated Kilkenny's design legacy on Friday, 18th November at the Parade Tower, Kilkenny Castle. This event was one of many events taking place nationwide during Design Week 2022.

Building on the legacy of design in Kilkenny, this conference celebrated the strong history of design in Kilkenny and cast an eye on how this rich legacy could contribute to the future of design in Kilkenny. The event also seen the launch a new publication by Minister Malcolm Noonan, '*Designing for Ireland*' commissioned by KIDCo and authored by Mark Duncan. This book examines the political context of the Kilkenny Design Workshops and design in Ireland.

Event MC, Richard Curran chaired two panels on the morning. The first panel commemorated the history of design in Kilkenny and in Ireland, including Mark Duncan; Mary Mullin and Dr Mary Ann Bolger.

The second panel examined, the future of design and included industry experts Aoife Murphy of Tirlan; Carol Gibbons, Enterprise Ireland; Tom Watts, DCCI; Dr. Fiona Chambers, and Elisa Luoto representing Young Finnish Design.

### Careers Kilkenny 2022

Kilkenny County Council, through its Local Enterprise Office, is staging an extensive careers event showcasing the hundreds of jobs on offer in leading companies located across the City and County in Kilkenny's Medieval Mile Museum on December 30<sup>th</sup> this year.



A range of local businesses in the Life Sciences and Financial Services sectors will be in attendance including Tirlán, State Street, CluneTech, Loanitt, VHI, Bank of Ireland, UPMC, Asgard Cleanroom Solutions and CF Pharma.

Companies who will attend the event are seeking to fill hundreds of positions across the Life Sciences and Financial Services sectors and we expect that number to increase between now and December 30<sup>th</sup>



## Careers Kilkenny - Careers Kilkenny



**Key statistics for LEO Kilkenny year to date 2022 are as follows:**

### Summary of Awards

- €604,174 in direct financial assistance has been approved for 32 manufacture /export service businesses located throughout the county. This assistance is linked to the projected creation of 57 jobs over the next three years.
- €374,969 in Business Expansion Grant assistance awarded to 15 existing businesses with forecasted new job creation of 49 jobs. Business Expansion grants assist businesses trading greater than 18 months to make investment in growing their businesses and employment numbers.
- €47,778 in Agile Innovation Funding to support a business to carry out research and development on a new product for their business
- €104,029 in Priming Grant (Start-up assistance) to 3 new businesses
- €27,975 awarded in feasibility study grants to 3 businesses.
- €30,000 in Grad Start funding to 1 business
- 10 Technical Assistance for Micro Exporter grant awarded totalling €19,467. This scheme supports businesses to explore their export market opportunities.
- 17 Businesses have commenced LEAN one to one consultancy programmes to investigate possible resource efficiencies and process improvements for their businesses.
- 4 Business have completed the LEO Building Better Business LEAN programme:
- Building Better Business program is about building a stable, secure, and sustainable business that is agile enough to face economic challenges. This programme is centred on the belief that waste exists in all processes and while it is a practical, hands on programme but it does not focus on the obvious ways of looking at problems and opportunities. It is

about finding ways to do things faster, better, and together as a team.

- 30 businesses have been approved a Trading Online Voucher totalling €61,023 to support the enhancement of their online trading capacity.
- 11 Green for Micro supports awarded totalling €22,426. This scheme supports businesses to becoming greener and environmentally friendly.
- 4 Digital Start Vouchers to the value of €15,869
- 10 business applicants have been supported to make loan applications to the Micro Finance Ireland loan fund.
- 516 people participated on focused small business training, including 112 people participating on the Starting Your Business programme
- 544 businesses have availed of specialised business specific mentoring on a variety of topics including finance, marketing, social media marketing and HR.

### **Data Sharing Agreement (DSA) for the sharing of LEO Suite of Services Data between Enterprise Ireland and all Local Authorities**

Kilkenny County Council is intending to enter into a Data Sharing Agreement with Enterprise Ireland along with all other Local Authorities (including Kilkenny County Council) and will be available for public consultation until 2<sup>nd</sup> January 2023.

The public are invited to make submissions by email to [consultations.dsa@per.gov.ie](mailto:consultations.dsa@per.gov.ie).

Further information and Documents for reference are available:

[https://www.kilkennycoco.ie/eng/your\\_council/public-consultations/public-consultation-notice-data-sharing-agreement-dsa-for-the-sharing-of-leo-suite-of-services-data-between-enterprise-ireland-and-all-local-authorities.html](https://www.kilkennycoco.ie/eng/your_council/public-consultations/public-consultation-notice-data-sharing-agreement-dsa-for-the-sharing-of-leo-suite-of-services-data-between-enterprise-ireland-and-all-local-authorities.html)

### **#Shop Kilkenny**

On November 24<sup>th</sup>, Local Enterprise Office Kilkenny launched the winter #ShopKilkenny campaign with an Outside Broadcast with KCLR in Graiguenamanagh. The winter campaign consists of social media campaign focused on towns and villages around the County and the daily Shop Kilkenny Elfie Selfie competition with KCLR.



### Kilkenny Tourism

Kilkenny Tourism working in partnership with Kilkenny County Council continues in its marketing and PR campaign for Kilkenny for the remainder of 2022. Focus of the campaign includes;

*PR & Marketing Social Content* - Showcasing members equally, promoting web content, highlighting media coverage & interacting with audiences to build.

*Increasing video content & UGC* - Building autumn/winter imagery into content plan.

*Website Content* - Continued website checks - Bi-monthly blogs on Visit Kilkenny - Event guide & members list regularly updated, *Planning PR visits* for upcoming events & to highlight Kilkenny's year-round tourism offering.

All this digital marketing will work in conjunction with the National Keep Discovering Campaign highlighting all the festivals, events and activities to see and do in Kilkenny throughout the Christmas Season.

### Festivals and Events

Kilkenny County Council continues to support our year-round calendar of events with November welcoming in excess of 3,000 visitors to the city to enjoy Kilkenomics from 3<sup>rd</sup> to 6<sup>th</sup> of the month.

Kilkenomics – the world's Economics Festival – brings together some of the world's leading economists, financial analysts and media commentators with some of our funniest, sharpest standup comedians.

### Yulefest

Beginning on the 25<sup>th</sup> November and running right up to Christmas Eve, Yulefest sees a packed programme of events for all the family to enjoy. Returning festival favourites include the Yulefest Christmas Market, the Medieval Mile Santa Run, the Bandstand and Yulefest Movie Night. [www.yulefestkilkenny.ie](http://www.yulefestkilkenny.ie)

### Taste Kilkenny

November saw Taste continue in its support of our local food producers and local hotels and restaurants by working to cross promote all Activity through its social media platforms:

- The Taste Facebook page has reached 4,200 followers.
- The Taste Instagram Page has passed 2,000 followers.
- Social Media Competitions have been run to promote.

### Taste Kilkenny Restaurant Week

With an eye on delivering additional things to see and do for visitors to Kilkenny in 2023, "Taste Kilkenny Restaurant Week" is at planning stage for 2023. Taste Kilkenny Restaurant Week is a promotional opportunity for restaurants, gastro bars, cafes and food producers taking place in Kilkenny from 27<sup>th</sup> January to the 5<sup>th</sup> February.

Taste Kilkenny Restaurant Week is an event, supported by Kilkenny County Council through Department of Arts funding, where restaurants, gastro bars, cafes, hotels and food producers offer special dishes, special prices, or fixed price menus to encourage customers to try different premises and different foods that they might not normally consider.

Failte Ireland's schedule of Tourism Capability Supports for 2022 will also continue to focus on the area of climate action and coming up over the next month, we have an Introduction to Energy Management for Tourism with SEAI virtual training session and a webinar on How to Calculate Your Carbon Footprint.



## HOUSING

### Homeless Services

The Housing Office continues to see an increase in the number of homeless presentations with 445 new homeless presentations to the end of November, compared to 370 for the full year in 2021 and 252 for the year 2020.

The cases presenting are increasing in complexity and the options to provide emergency accommodation are diminishing making the provision of effective homeless services extremely challenging.

In line with the South East Regions Severe Weather arrangements additional emergency beds have been provided at the Good Shepherd Centre on a nightly basis to ensure that rough sleepers at risk from severe weather events can be provided with shelter if required.

We continue to focus on the prevention of homelessness and offer emergency accommodation as a last resort only.

<b>HOMELESS SERVICES SUMMARY NOVEMBER 2022</b>	
<b>Homeless Presentations</b>	41
<b>Homeless Assessment Outcomes</b>	
Prevention & Interventions	18
Emergency Service	14
Not eligible / Did not avail of service	9
<b>HAP Place Finder Service</b>	
No of Homeless HAP tenancies @ 1 <sup>st</sup> day of month	112
No of Homeless HAP tenancies created during month	3
No of Homeless HAP tenancies in place @ last day of month	115
Number of Homeless HAP tenancy breakdowns	0
Other Social Housing Tenancies supported / created during month	2
<b>Households in Temporary Emergency Supported Accommodation @ November 30<sup>th</sup></b>	29
<b>Households in Temporary Emergency B&amp;B accommodation</b>	5
<b>Households in Temporary Emergency B&amp;B Accommodation that are families</b>	3
<b>Households (singles/couples) in Transition Emergency Accommodation (Own Front Door)</b>	24
<b>Households (Families) in Transition Emergency Accommodation (OFD)</b>	11

### Homeless Presentations

	Jan	Feb	Mar	April	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Total
<b>2022</b>	34	34	51	25	44	40	32	54	56	34	41		<b>445</b>
<b>2021</b>	18	34	26	24	42	37	34	24	41	42	35	13	<b>370</b>
<b>2020</b>	23	27	24	19	14	11	20	22	26	26	23	17	<b>252</b>
<b>2019</b>	28	13	16	19	21	16	24	32	23	26	18	17	<b>253</b>

## Social Housing Assessment

SOCIAL HOUSING SUPPORT APPLICATION SUMMARY NOVEMBER 2022	
Number awaiting Social Housing Support at November 30 <sup>th</sup> (Gross Need)	1,589
Number awaiting Social Housing Support at November 30 <sup>th</sup> (Net Need)	760
No. of Social Housing Applications received in November	74
No. of applications incomplete / awaiting further information / clarification	53
No. of applications validated and ready for assessment during the month	26
No. of applications assessed during November	45
No. of applications awaiting assessment as @ November 30 <sup>th</sup>	77

Income thresholds for eligibility for social housing supports have remained, largely unchanged, since 2011. Changes to the income eligibility thresholds have been recently announced, to come into effect from January 3<sup>rd</sup> 2023. An increase on the baseline income threshold by €5,000 has been agreed.

The new thresholds are outlined below:

Band	Counties	Revised Threshold
1	Cork City, Dublin City, Dun Laoghaire – Rathdown, Fingal, Galway City, Meath, South Dublin, Kildare, Wicklow	€40,000
2	Carlow, Claire, Cork County, Galway County, Kerry, Kilkenny, Laois, Limerick, Louth, Waterford, Westmeath, Wexford	€35,000
3	Cavan, Donegal, Leitrim, Longford, Mayo, Monaghan, Offaly, Roscommon, Sligo, Tipperary	€30,000

The revised thresholds for different household compositions are detailed in the table below:

Band	Single Adult	2 Adults	1 Adults 1 Child	1 Adult 2 Children	2 Adults 1 Child	2 Adults 3 Children	2 Adults 4 Children
1	€40,000	€42,000	€41,000	€42,000	€43,000	€45,000	€48,000
2	€35,000	€36,750	€35,875	€36,750	€37,625	€39,375	€42,000
3	€30,000	€31,500	€30,750	€31,500	€32,250	€33,750	€36,000

The number of tenancies under the Housing Assistance Programme (HAP) continues to fall with 698 properties currently supported in the HAP scheme compared to 888 in 2021. We continue to seek new tenancies at every opportunity.

HOUSING ASSISTANCE PAYMENT SUMMARY UP TO NOVEMBER 30 <sup>th</sup> 2022	
Number of active HAP tenancies to November 30 <sup>th</sup> 2022	698
New HAP tenancies set up	84
HAP tenants allocated Social Housing	84
Closed HAP Tenancies	147
HAP Rent Reviews	249
Other tenancy amendments	472
HAP Calls Received 2022 year to date	3,450
HAP Calls Received November	350



## Tenancy Management

The Tenancy Management Section deals with allocations, maintenance and anti-social behaviour complaints in relation to our tenants.

- LA/RAS/Leasing allocations in November (offers made): ..... 5
- LA/RAS/Leasing allocations to date (offers made):..... 189
- Tenant Liaison Officer cases in November: ..... 29
- Maintenance Calls for November:..... 799
- Maintenance Calls year to date..... 5,746

The Tenancy Management Section has also commenced legal proceedings in respect of four tenancies where repossession orders have been sought. Where anti-social behaviour if ongoing tenancy notifications and warning notices continue to be served.

## Housing Grants

Kilkenny County Council administers a number of grant options to assist older people and people with a disability in carrying out works which are necessary for the purposes of rendering a house more suitable for their accommodation needs. The annual budget is €1,977,000. An increase in works under the various grant schemes has resulted in an increase in expenditure in the current year with a projected spend in the region of €2,057,389 for the year 2022. An application for additional funding was made to the Department of Housing during November 2022 with approval received to increase the 2022 budget allocation for Housing Grants by €64,000 to meet increased demand.

Grants Approved & Committed up to 30 <sup>th</sup> November, 2022		
Scheme	No.	Amount
HGD - Housing Adaptation Grant	149	€1,482,435
MAG - Mobility Aid Grant	23	€87,359
HOP - Housing Aid for Older Persons	171	€944,464
<b>Total</b>	<b>343</b>	<b>€2,514,258</b>

Grants Paid out up to 30 <sup>th</sup> November 2022		
Scheme	No.	Amount
HGD - Housing Adaptation Grant	114	€1,117,204
MAG - Mobility Aid Grant	21	€81,335
HOP - Housing Aid for Older Persons	117	€637,822
<b>Total</b>	<b>252</b>	<b>€1,836,361</b>

## Housing Loans

Housing Loan Activity 1 <sup>st</sup> January 2022 to 30 <sup>th</sup> November 2022					
Loan Type	Received	Approved	Amount Approved	Number Paid	Amount Paid
Rebuilding Ireland Home Loan	0	5	€559,750	5	€794,000
Local Authority Home Loan	59	9	€1,125,025	5	€652,525
Caravan Loan	0	0	€0.00	0	€0
<b>Total</b>	<b>59</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>€1,684,775</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>€1,446,525</b>

## Housing Capital Delivery

In November 2022, Minister Darragh O'Brien was welcomed to Kilkenny to officially open a number of housing developments and to view other projects underway. While Kilkenny County Council have a strong delivery pipeline under the Housing for All Programme the target for delivery in 2022 of 170 units will not be met. Delivery for the year 2022, of substantially complete new build housing units will be 166. In addition to this delivery, 14 acquisitions and 3 units under the Traveller Accommodation Plan will also be delivered giving an overall social housing delivery for the current year of 183.



*Station Avenue, Ballyragget*



*Minister O'Brien and John O'Donovan Tenant in Pennefather Green*



*Opening of Pennefather Green and Court*



HOUSING CAPITAL DELIVERY 2022	
New Build Housing Units Complete Nov 2022	129
New Build Housing Units Substantially Complete Nov 2022	37
Acquisitions Complete Nov 2022	14
Traveller Specific Acquisitions Complete Nov 2022	3
Total Capital Delivery 2022	183

HOUSING CAPITAL DELIVERY 2023	
New Build Housing Units On Site Nov 2022	63
New Build Housing Units To Commence On Site 2023	136
Acquisitions Underway to Complete in 2023	10
Total Capital Delivery Projected 2023	140

The Housing Capital Delivery Team continues to source new projects and sites for capital delivery during 2024, 2025 and 2026.

#### ***Vacant Homes***

The Vacant Homes Officer is currently processing applications under the Vacant Homes Refurbishment Grant, now extended for applications to rural applicants. For further details contact [vacanthomes@kilkennycoco.ie](mailto:vacanthomes@kilkennycoco.ie) New CPO procedures are to commence in respect of a further six properties around the County with five previous CPOs reaching conclusion.

## FIRE SERVICES

### Capital Projects

The keys for a new Emergency Tender and a previously owned fire engine were handed over in November from Minister Darragh O'Brien. The Capital Funding was received from the National Directorate for Fire and Emergency Management, Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage.



The new Emergency Tender and the fire engine are replacing two older vehicles, both over 20 years old. These fire engines will be utilised in Kilkenny City Fire Station as front-line emergency response vehicles serving the people throughout Kilkenny for many years to come.

### Fire Safety Certificates

82 applications for fire safety certificates have been received to-date this year compared to 94 applications for the same period last year.

### Fire Services Acts 1981 and 2003

Fire Prevention staff made targeted inspections of premises both to provide advice and to enforce legislation. 64 Licence Applications were processed under Section 24 of the Fire Services Acts 1981 and 2003. 64 Fire Safety Inspections of premises have taken place so far this year.

### Community Fire Safety

Fire service personnel call to houses by appointment and give fire safety advice to the occupants. A HFSV is usually carried out by two uniformed operational fire service personnel. The primary aim of these HFSVs is to reduce the numbers of fires, deaths and injuries in the home by firstly preventing fires occurring and to ensure that when fires do occur, the occupiers are given early warning, and they know how to react quickly and safely.



*Cathaoirleach Pat Fitzpatrick met Thomastown Fire Brigade personnel at the recent Annual Fire Service Mass.*

Cathaoireach Pat Fitzpatrick presented a Recognition Award to Fire Fighter John O'Neill for saving a member of the public's life on the evening of 10<sup>th</sup> December 2021 on William Street in Kilkenny City. Whilst off duty, Firefighter John O'Neill performed key lifesaving CPR skills on a member of the public to keep them alive prior to the arrival of the National Ambulance Service. Through John's quick and decisive actions, he saved this person's life.



*John with his family, Cathaoirleach Pat Fitzpatrick and Station Officer Damien Ryan.*

### Fire Brigade Operations

The Brigades have attended over 825 incidents to date this year. These incidents included a number of fatal road traffic collision, successful river rescues, public road hazards, domestic fires, automatic fire alarm activations, grass fires, chimney fires and ambulance assists.

### Fire Service Training

Members of Kilkenny Fire and Rescue Service attending an Emergency Services Driving Standard Course. Learning essential skills and a responsible attitude to driving greatly reduces the risks associated with emergency response driving.





## ARTS

### The Arts Show

The Arts Show, with support and funding from Kilkenny County Council Arts Office and Creative Ireland commenced on 4<sup>th</sup> November on KCLR. In the first episode presenter, Hugo Jellett, discussed the future of cinema, local Visual Artists' minds and a musician's life. If you missed this episode you can listen back to it at <https://kclr96fm.com/episode-1-the-future-of-cinema-local-visual-artists-minds-and-a-musicians-life/> The programme continues on Wednesday nights from 6 -7pm. Don't forget to tune in!

### ArtEd

ArtEd, a new School Residency Programme devised by Kilkenny County Council Arts Office and the Kilkenny Education Centre, hopes to inspire and encourage the next generation of children to develop their creative potential by participating in hand-on projects across different art forms, whilst also providing opportunities for educators to explore innovative teaching strategies and skills with the support of artists.

A call out for schools and artists participation was made with four successful applicants notified of their acceptance into the programme. This programme will run from December 2022 – February 2023.

### Autumn Writer Workshops with John McKenna

Our writer workshops with John McKenna, titled Six Steps To a Story finished on 10<sup>th</sup> November. John worked with the participants on the basics needed for developing their work. They examined the essentials required before they began writing their stories, poems, novels, memoirs or plays.

### Newpark Fen Men's Shed

Following on from their participation in our 2022 Knitted Together project, Newpark Fen Men's Shed displayed a selection of their items for sale in the run up to Christmas - seats, wishing wells, planters, dog boxes and wooden bowls - in the Johns Green House window gallery. Plenty of ideas for family or friends presents!

### Emerging Curator Development Programme

Sinead Kehoe, emerging curator has now completed her development programme. After organising 3 art exhibitions and numerous community engagements over the course of 2022, a total audience of 765 engaged with the

programme. Sinead's feedback was extremely positive and she gained much experience on the programme.

### Feedback from Sinead:

*'I would like to state that I am very grateful for this programme and what I have learned. I will speak very highly of this opportunity. I believe the ECDP will be a critical tool in shaping the future leaders of Irish curating. The system set up for ECDP is very developed in terms of;*

- (i) paying the curator an equitable fee for their time;*
- (ii) providing a fair budget for three separate shows;*
- (iii) providing a leading industry professional curator to mentor them and;*
- (iv) providing the support of the arts office to educate the curator on promotion strategies,*

*My mentor, Kate Strain was also a massive benefit to me from this programme as having such an experienced curator guide my work improved my confidence and ability to complete the goals I had set out to achieve.'*

### Visual Artist Mentoring Sessions

The Visual Artist Mentoring sessions have now finished, five professionals working in the area of visual arts provided mentoring sessions for nine artists. The programme provided an opportunity for artists to meet face-to-face with a specialist mentor who has expertise in their artform to discuss and develop their artistic practice.

### Arts Act Grants 2023

Applications for Arts Act Grants 2023 is to open on the 19<sup>th</sup> December, 2022 with a closing date of 23<sup>rd</sup> January, 2023. Details will be published on the Council's website. Grants of up to €1,000 are on offer.



**28,447 Items borrowed**



**15,880 Visitors**



**1,745 Members**

## Lapsafe Launch in Urlingford Library

We are delighted to have launched our laptop borrowing service in Urlingford Library in November, in partnership with Urlingford Town Team and Urlingford on the Move.



*Urlingford Library Laptops*

8 Laptops can be borrowed for use in the library by adults, young adults and under 12's with adult supervision, furthering the library role as a digital equity hub. This service is available for individual and group use. Laptops are equipped with Microsoft suite and Internet browsers, and can be borrowed using your library card and pin number.

## Science Week 2022

We had an action-packed Science week in Kilkenny this year again, working with Calmast as part of Kilkenny Science Festival. With 9 school class events, across the county and a Climate change themed escape room day in City Library. 311 children enjoyed our workshops and 150 daffodil bulb packs were handed out to as part of our age friendly Science week event.



*City Science week Loreto TY*

## Library Activities

Events	In Branch	Online	Live	Numbers
156	156	4	95	1887

This month we had lots of activities in our libraries, from Flower arranging & wet felting classes, to Kilkenny Gaol history talk and author visits from Rónán Hessian, Edel Coffey, and local author Gerry O'Brien. Dr. Mary Roche held a series of talks as part of our Winter literacy programme funded from Dormant Accounts Funding.

We hosted 33 class visits in our libraries across the County, bringing 571 school children through our doors and our mobile van drove the length and breadth of the County visiting communities, schools and creches.

We have a number of groups and events running across our Library Network throughout the month of October. Here are some that you can still join! For more information on any of these groups/events contact your local Library.

### Mayfair Library Update

- Installation of windows substantially complete.
- External insulation to southern elevation substantially completed.
- Reinforced Concrete stairs installed.
- Installation of roof currently being progressed.
- Electrical first fix commenced.



### Online Services Usage



2,409 eAudiobooks borrowed



181 Class sessions



1,031 eMagazines borrowed



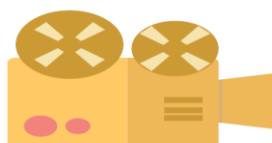
1,119 eBooks borrowed



134 Online Courses sessions



535 Songs accessed



### Digital Engagement

Our staff have prepared, recorded, edited and published 401 posts on our social media platforms in November. Our video views for the two months were 2,915



# FINANCE

The expenditure by service division to the end of November is set out in Table 1. Total Expenditure for the period was €92.55m compared with the annual budget of €93.87m.

Table 1	Actual YTD November 2022	Budget Full Year 2022
	€'000's	€'000's
Housing & Building	21,641	22,101
Road Transport & Safety	27,741	26,590
Water Services	6,482	7,255
Development Management	9,610	10,502
Environmental Services	10,928	12,178
Recreation & Amenity	7,151	7,175
Agriculture, Education, Health, Welfare	522	680
Miscellaneous Services	8,477	7,390
<b>OVERALL TOTAL</b>	<b>92,552</b>	<b>93,871</b>

## Finance Update

Inflation is having a significant impact on the cost of delivering all services and on the delivery of the Capital Programme.

Energy costs for all Council buildings is expected to be €600k over budget for the year as a result of recent price increases. The impact of inflation on other goods and services is estimated to cost an additional €550k in 2022, which will have to be absorbed within existing budgets. The public sector pay agreement that was recently negotiated will result in additional payroll costs of €936k for 2022. Government did provide compensation for 80% of the additional cost arising from the pay restoration in recent years. The sector will be seeking similar compensation for the additional cost arising from the latest agreement.

The issue of recoupment of salary and overheads from the Department for the RAS Scheme has still not been resolved. This will result in a shortfall for the year of €650k.

Car parking income is 10% below budget level for the year. The budget income figure was based on pre Covid-19 income levels. A 10% reduction will result in the income for the year being €230k lower than budget.

The completion of social housing voids is costing significantly more than the grant available. The estimated shortfall per unit is €13k.

Commercial rates income is estimated to be €700k higher than budgeted which will partially offset the shortfalls outlined. Additional compensation of €460k is also being provided by Government to compensate for loss of income on the Global rate payers. The projected net deficit could be in the region of €1m in the absence of further support from Government to deal with the impact of spiralling inflation.

The bank overdraft facility was not utilised in the eleven month period to the end of November.

## 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 193 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 .....	10 Cases
Appeals Outstanding.....	4 Cases

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

### **Commercial Rates Vacancy**

The Commercial Rates vacancy remains at 90% for 2022. A 90% vacancy strike off will be applied to eligible commercial rate accounts for 2022 where the customer formally applies, provides proof of vacancy and clears any outstanding rate arrears, where applicable.

### **Budget 2023**

The 2023 budget was adopted by the Members at the Statutory Budget Meeting on Friday November 25<sup>th</sup> 2023. The total budget expenditure for 2023 is €98.7m. The LPT variation of +15% was maintained.

A commercial rate increase of 3% was approved. This is the first time commercial rates has been increased since 2008. Prompt payment discount of 5.8% (*capped at €250 per rate account*) was approved also (*increased from 3%*). This effectively means that there will be no net increase in the rate demand for 74% of rate payers if they avail of the prompt payment discount

The majority of discretionary expenditure items were maintained in the budget. Extra expenditure was required for the Library Service, Fire Service, Parks and open spaces, Building energy costs (*77% compensated by Government*) and National Pay Agreement extra cost of €1.65m will be fully compensated by Government.