

CHIEF EXECUTIVE REPORT

APRIL 2022 ISSUE



EXECUTIVE FUNCTIONS

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

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

14th – 22nd May, 2021
Bike Week 2022

25th May
The deadline for the submission of Measure 2 & 3 applications is the 25th May, 2022.

11th June
Cruinnúí na nÒg (*national day of free creativity for young people*) will take place on Sat 11th June. In Kilkenny there will be a range of exciting creative projects for young people. Details of the final programme will be advertised shortly.

10th June
Calling all Tidy Towns to “Get Buzzing”
Tidy Towns groups are encouraged to get buzzing and enter the Local Authority Pollinator Award in the national Tidy Towns competition. Closing date is **Friday 10th June 2022**. For more details and application forms

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CORPORATE

Modernisation of the Electoral Registration Process

The Electoral Reform Bill 2022 was published on 30th March. When enacted, it will provide the legislative underpinning for a range of significant electoral reforms in line with commitments in the Programme for Government – *Our Shared Future*. These include:

- The establishment of an independent Electoral Commission;
- The modernisation of the electoral registration process;
- The regulation of online political advertisements; and
- Amendments to facilitate voting when Covid-19 type restrictions are in place.

Of particular relevance to local authorities are the provisions relating to the modernisation of the electoral registration process, which are set out in Part 3 of the Bill and are designed to take better account of modern realities such as improved access to technology, a more mobile population and a better understanding of issues that different people face in exercising their rights.

The core provisions of this Part include:

- a move to a continuously updated or 'rolling' electoral register that can be updated at any time of year;
- transparent data sharing provisions that, combined with the introduction of the use of PPSNs in the process, will enable basic data checks to improve the accuracy and integrity of the register, as well as facilitating online applications;
- provisions to enable the Minister to make regulations to designate a single registration authority to manage and maintain a shared database for all authorities to use (more on that below);
- an oversight function in respect of the register for the Electoral Commission with an annual reporting cycle;
- the inclusion of processes for some new cohorts such as pre-registration for 16 and 17-year-olds and anonymous registration for people whose safety may be at risk if their name and address were to be published;
- specific arrangements for people with no fixed address; and
- an extension of current postal voting facilities to people, who because of mental health

difficulties, are not able to attend polling stations to vote.

The Electoral Commission

The Commission will be an independent, specialised body tasked with advising the Government on electoral matters influencing how our electoral system evolves in the future. It will have a significant research and advisory role in relation to electoral matters and a public information function. It will also have oversight of the electoral register, again supporting the integrity of the register and its processes for the future. The Commission will be empowered to set standards and make recommendations to registration authorities in the administration of the register and to the Minister in respect of improving the process.

A cycle of annual reports by registration authorities will feed into an annual report by the Electoral Commission on the status of the register. That report will include any recommendations the Commission considers appropriate to improve the integrity of the register.

A Shared System For Registration Authorities

The Bill provides for the designation of a single local authority to manage a shared database for all local authorities to use in their registration duties, which when established, will allow for a single high standard of security and data protection to apply to electoral registration data.

Next Steps

The Department has been working closely with the local government sector to put in place the practical arrangements necessary to ensure that the legislation can be implemented once the Bill has been passed. This includes working with the LGMA and DCC in relation to the management and upgrade of existing systems to ensure the realisation of many of the benefits of the modernisation project in the short term, as well as regular information sessions with local authority staff on progress of the project.

Cognisant of the need for awareness of the changes amongst the wider public, the Department intends to launch a significant communications campaign on foot of the passage of the legislation seeking public engagement with the new processes. The campaign will focus on the benefits of the modernised system and encourage the public to take actions to ensure their information is brought up to date, including through the provision of new information, such as PPSNs.

St. Patrick's Day Parade Prize Winners 2022



Covid Remembrance Ceremony



ROADS

MAJOR PROJECTS

(Included in NDP- Funded by TII)

N24 Waterford to Cahir Scheme

With funding now secured to progress the Scheme to a Preferred Option, the public information\consultation on the options report will begin in Mooncoin Hall on the 3rd May.

N25 Glenmore (New Ross Bypass) to Waterford Scheme

With no funding allocation for 2022, detailed design works will not progress in 2022 on this scheme.

MINOR PROJECTS

(Not included in NDP-Funded by TII)

N24 Tower Road (Safety Scheme)

Approval to proceed to tender has been requested from TII. It is expected following approval to proceed that the scheme will go out to tender in Q2 2022 with a view to construction commencing during Q3 2022. An allocation of €3m was received for 2022 to allow the scheme to proceed to construction. The overall outturn cost for the project is expected to be circa €10m.

N77 Ballyragget to Ballynaslee

Statutory approvals have been secured for this scheme. An allocation of €500K was received for 2022 which will fund progression to preparation of contract documents and potentially provide for some land acquisition. The overall outturn cost for the project is expected to be circa €10m.

N24 Carrick Road:

An allocation of €150K was received for 2022 which will fund progression to statutory approvals stage (177AE Planning Approval and Compulsory Purchase Order Approval. This will be submitted to An Bord Pleanála in May 2022. The overall outturn cost for the project is expected to be circa €10m.

OTHER PROJECTS

Kilkenny Ring Road Extension

Roadplan consulting are continuing to work on the SAR report (Strategic Assessment Report) for this project. This report will be ready in Q2 2022 for submission to the Department for consideration to proceed with the design and planning.

WATER SERVICES

Troyswood

Works are continuing on the upgrade of Troyswood water treatment plant. The upgrading and increase in capacity at the treatment plant at Troyswood will equip the plant to become the primary water treatment plant facility for Kilkenny City.



Works at Troyswood

Kilkenny County Council Leak Reduction Plan 2022

A leakage reduction plan was issued in January 2022 setting out the plan for Irish Water and Kilkenny County Council to reduce leakage and demand to achieve a net reduction of 1.3 ML/d in leakage in 2022. This reduction is the equivalent demand of supplying circa 3,500 housing units. The leakage savings will be a combination of efficient and effective find & fix activities, continued focus on pressure management and targeted mains replacement.

Mains Rehabilitation Works

The following works are approved for construction in 2022

- Knocktopher Village – 1,250m (in progress)
- Knockanore Cross to Norelands WTP + rising main to Rathduff Reservoir – 4,600m
- Carrickmourne, Thomastown – 3,250m
- Slieverue Village – 1,050m
- Dublin Road, Thomastown – 750m
- Michael Street, Kilkenny – 450m

Following works are being progressed to design stage:

- Norelands Bridge (Knocklynnon Bridge) circa 85m.

Ten year Water Supply capacity register and Waste Water Treatment capacity

Irish Water issued the above to assist Kilkenny County Council in preparing new or amended development plans and for any other forward planning activities, by indicating the ability of the Irish Water Infrastructure to accommodate growth. It gives a clear indication of where we have capacity and areas where intervention is required for future growth in County Kilkenny.

Ten year Water Supply Capacity Register

The water supply capacity register includes the target Settlement Populations to 2031, which were informed by local, regional and national planning policy, and indicates the capacity to produce water to support the planned growth.

Link to Water Supply Register

<https://kcc-intranet.kkcoco.ie/sites/corporate-affairs/Shared%20Documents/Water%20Services/Ten%20Year%20Water%20Supply%20Capacity%20Register.pdf?csf=1&e=loxulx>

Waste Water Treatment Capacity Register

The wastewater treatment capacity register is for all settlements with a public wastewater treatment plant in Kilkenny and is the most up to date information. The register is to assist the Planning Section in the preparation of new or amended County Development Plans and other forward planning activities by indicating where there may be wastewater treatment capacity available to accommodate growth.

Link to Waste Water Treatment Register

<https://kcc-intranet.kkcoco.ie/sites/corporate-affairs/Shared%20Documents/Water%20Services/Waste%20Water%20Treatment%20Capacity%20Register.pdf?csf=1&e=KglRA1>

PARKS/SPECIAL PROJECTS

Parks & Playgrounds

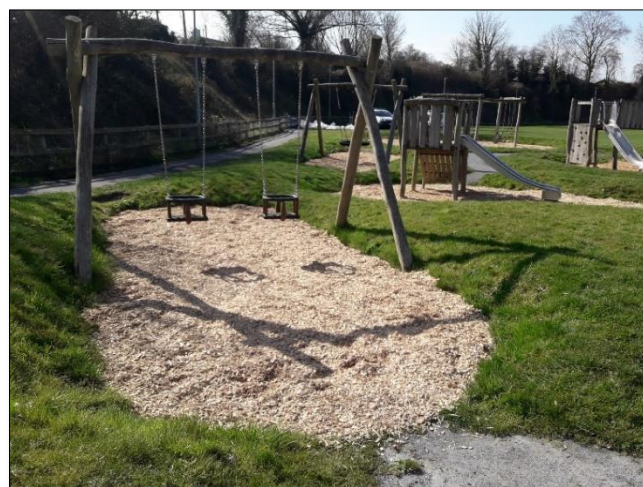
In Slieverue Linear Park, under Phase 1 works, a new gym equipment and a children's outdoor activity trail has been recently added to the Park which has become a popular walking route for local people. Future additions to the recreational offering in the park are being planned and an application to Kilkenny Leader Partnership is being prepared by the local community with the assistance of the Project Office & Parks Department. Tenders for proposed works, which include entrance and footpath improvements, landscaping, signage and seating, fencing and the

provision of a basketball area were recently for pricing.



Recently installed outdoor gym equipment & outdoor activity trail at Slieverue Linear Park

Elsewhere around the County on-going maintenance continues in our playgrounds. This involves the upgrade of the impact absorbing surface which is critical to the operation of playgrounds. Bark chip is commonly used and must be kept clean and to the desired depth at all times. Considerable effort goes into ensuring this is the case with weekly checks and cleaning.



Goresbridge playground with newly laid impact absorbing surface

Both pitches at Garringreen and Newpark were upgraded with sand slitting and overseeding to ensure the surface is in good condition for play for the coming year. The pitches are leased out to a number of clubs for matches and training are in high demand so wear and tear needs to be kept in check.

Woodstock Gardens

Springtime in the garden sees an abundance of pruning and planting jobs to be completed before the summer season. The Winter Garden is being edged and weeded and topiary planting being

pruned. Grass cutting outside of pollinator friendly areas has commenced with over 30 acres of grass to be cut every ten to fourteen days. In the Walled Garden the espallier apples and pears trained along the brick walls have been pruned to promote growth of fruit. Pruning in this manner ensure the fruit receives more light, which helps improve development of natural sugars and fruit colour. Unfortunately, we rarely get to taste the fruit as its is often picked by impatient members of the public before it is ripened.

The upgrade of the herbaceous border is scheduled to take place after the Easter holidays. Knox's Bower Summer House has been repaired where bamboo was damaged on the decorative walls. All materials were sourced from the gardens and skilfully applied to this unusual garden folly.



Knox's Bower Summer House

Work also too place in the natural play area where the willow tunnels which offer a fun natural element to the play area were pruned back. Further elements will be added to this play area this year with funding available for a sensory play area and accessible playground equipment from the Disability Participation and Awareness Fund.



Pruning of willow tunnels around the sand pit in the playground at Woodstock

Woodstock Social Media Activity Quarter 1 2022 Summary

Since January, we have increased our Facebook Following to 11.4k (+708) and our Instagram following to 1.9k (+102).

Our total Facebook Reach was 346k, and we had 5.5k engagements on our posts.

Our total Instagram Reach was 4.7k, and we had 769 Content Interactions (Engagements) on our posts.

There were nine Paid Ad Campaigns running throughout Q1 targeting the local Kilkenny market and the domestic market. Three Paid Ad Campaigns focused on increasing our Facebook following and resulting in 667 of all new Facebook Followers. The other six campaigns focused on general awareness of the offering at Woodstock and resulted in 6.7k 'Learn More' link clicks through to www.woodstock.ie and a combined Reach of 308k.

South East Greenway

Detailed Design: Landowner agreements on the accommodation works for Lots 4 – 7 continue to progress. It has been decided to split Lot 5 into two sections of equal length with Lot 5a (Ferrybank to Luffany) to go to tender in May and Lot 5b (Luffany to Aylwardstown South) to go to tender in July.

Construction: Lots 1 – 3 is progressing well and are approaching substantial completion. The ramp access to the Greenway from the Abbey Road, Ferrybank is complete. Waterford City & County Council has agreed to widen the footpath at the connection point to the ramp access and are tendering these works. The Greenway Project Office is currently exploring the possibility of opening sections of the Greenway as they are completed. In the meantime, the Project Office

continues to stress to the public that the Greenway is a construction site at present and as such it is not safe to enter/ access the lands until it officially opens. The Project Office would like to thank all landowners for their continued co-operation with the Greenway Project works.

Ferrybank Car Park Option: Following detailed environmental assessments it is most likely that a Part 10 Planning Application to An Bord Pleanála will now be progressed for the new Link Road from the Abbey Road to Belmont Road in the coming weeks. The Ferrybank Car Park will be accessed from the Link Road. MWP will prepare a detailed design of the car park which will be a trailhead to include toilets and coach parking.

Railway Abandonment: Kilkenny County Council has now completed the detailed mapping of the Greenway lands. These maps will now be forwarded to CIE to facilitate the transfer of the railway lands from CIE to each Local Authority.

Links to Slieverue and Glenmore: Open evenings were held in Slieverue Parish Hall and Glenmore Parish Hall during March to give the public an opportunity to inspect the route options under consideration and to engage with the Design Team and Council Officials. Both evenings were well attended with 30-40 attendees on both evenings. The information documents were also made available for inspection in the Ferrybank Area Office and Ferrybank Library and also online at www.trailkilkenny.ie and www.southeastgreenway.net. The closing date for comments or observations was 31st March and in total 5 submissions were received. The submissions are currently being reviewed and will assist in determining the preferred option for each village to progress to Part 8 / Part 10 as appropriate.

Amenity Grants

The 2022 amenity grants scheme application closing date was the 25th of March. Late applications are still coming in but early indications are that the number of applicants will exceed that of last year's number of 186. The fund for 2022 is set at €140,000. This will be distributed to groups across the County to enable them to maintain their own outdoor recreation spaces. The range of works typically involve tree planting, grass cutting, planting flowers, erecting signage and many other amenity type projects.

Tender Awards

Working in partnership with Kilkenny LEADER Partnership and Trail Kilkenny the following two tenders were awarded recently and works are due to commence on same over the coming weeks:-

- (a) Bennettsbridge Riverside Amenity Area & Pedestrian/Cyclist Bridge- Feasibility Study & Design Options Report, which was awarded to local company Kilgallen & Partners Consulting Engineers.
- (b) Recreational Connectivity Link between Woodstock Estate and the South East Greenway - Feasibility Study & Route Selection Report, the successful tenderer was Punch Consulting Engineers.

The costs associated with this brief are being provided for under the current LEADER Programme with match funding from the Council. Technical assistance and supports, provided by the Council will be ongoing throughout this contract.

2022 Call for new applications under the Outdoor Recreation Infrastructure Scheme (ORIS)

In mid-February, the Department of Rural & Community Development announced a call for new applications under ORIS. The scheme is open to all Local Authorities and a number of other State Agencies. Funding is allocated via a competitive process based on the quality of the applications put forward. We are endeavoring to ensure the highest quality applications are put forward.

The funding applications are divided into following four categories:

Measure 1:

Grant available €30,000 - Local Authorities can submit a maximum of 7 applications (*Increased by €10,000/application on previous years*).

Measure 2:

Grant available €200,000 - Local Authorities can submit a maximum of 3 applications.

Measure 3:

Grant available €500,000 - Local Authorities can submit a maximum of 1 application.

Project Development:

Grant available €50,000 - Local Authorities can submit a maximum of 2 applications (*An increase on 1 application last year*).

(10% Match funding must be provided by the Local Authority)

The deadline for the submission of Measure 1 & Project Development Applications is the 18th April 2022. Applications are currently being finalised for same. The deadline for the submission of Measure 2 & 3 applications is the 25th May, 2022. A full list of the applications across the various headings will be presented in the next Chief Executive's Report.

Sports Capital Grants 2022

The following is a summary of the allocations secured recently under the Sports Capital Grant Scheme funded the Department of Tourism, Transport and Sports:

- Kilkenny Countryside Park Sports Wall construction of a ball wall in the proposed Park at Dunmore on the site of the former landfill. The amount of the grant awarded is €74,264. Works on the Park will commence later this year.
- Upgrade of the Multi Use Games Area at Newpark – refurbishment of fencing and relaying of new all-weather surface on the Multi Use Games Area which was originally constructed in 2011. The amount of grant awarded is €23,962.
- Provision of a new Multi Use Games Area at Ferrybank Park – a new all-weather multi sports facility to be provided for informal ball games to add to the offering already provided in this newly opened park. The amount of grant funding awarded is €61,168.

PLANNING

Planning Summary	TOTAL MARCH	
	2021	2022
Planning Applications Received	123	85
Planning Applications Granted	79	58
Planning Applications Refused	6	7
Complaints Received	29	20
Warning Letters Issued	30	15
Enforcements Notices Issued	2	9
Cases Closed	16	27

The Planning Department is open for business subject to Covid-19 recommendations for social distancing and other safety measures for the protection of customers and staff. Visits to the Planning Office are by pre-booked appointment.

Appointment can be made by telephoning the planning office at 056 7794010 or by email to planning@kilkennycoco.ie

Forward Planning

City & County Development Plan:

Following adoption of the City & County Development Plan 2021-2027 in October 2021, the Minister for Planning, Local Government and Heritage issued a Draft Direction in relation to certain renewable energy elements of the Plan. After a period of public consultation, the written submissions or observations in respect of the Draft Direction were forwarded to the Office of the Planning Regulator in December 2021, who has subsequently made a recommendation to the Minister on the matter.

Masterplans:

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. Several workshops were held during December 2021 and January 2022 to progress design concepts around land use and movement. Following consultation with the HSE on these concepts, a plan will be drafted. Once a draft plan is available, it will be presented to the Council and HSE before it is placed on public display.

Work is continuing on the preparation of a Masterplan for Loughmacask. An initial draft Loughmacask Masterplan was prepared and was internally reviewed. The environmental authorities are now being consulted in relation to environmental assessments associated with the draft Masterplan. Once the environmental assessments are progressed, and the iterative process of modifying the draft Masterplan is finalised, all the documentation will be presented to Members prior to public display.

The preparation of the Fair Green Masterplan will recommence following public display of the two other draft Masterplans.

Work has commenced on the preparation of a Masterplan for Urlingford Town Centre. The consultants have been appointed and a meeting is scheduled with the Planning Authority to commence work on this Masterplan.

Taking in Charge

Schedule for 2022:

- Filbuckstown, Mooncoin – taken in charge completed
- Arbourmount, Ferrybank – initiation stage completed
- Seville Rise, Margaretsfield, Kilkenny – initiation stage completed
- Abbeygate, Ferrybank – in progress
- The Paddocks, Gowran – in progress
- Whitehall, Paulstown – in progress
- Kiln Lane, Callan – in progress
- The Greens, Thomastown – in progress
- Ogenty, Gowran
- Rioch Court, Kilkenny
- Internal Road Network, Kilkenny Retail Park, Springhill
- College Park, Kilkenny
- Castlehyde, New Ross

Substantial works are completed on water/wastewater infrastructure at Abhainn Ri, Kilmanagh.

Works are also continuing at:

- Greenoaks, The Fairways, Ferrybank,
- Parc na Gowan, Kilkenny,
- An Choill Rua, Paulstown,
- Friarshill, Graiguenamanagh,
- Clonkill, Callan,
- Dunan, Thomastown.

Vacant sites

- There are 29 sites on the Vacant Sites Register. The number of cancelled entries due to site activation or improvement stands at 18 sites. The most recent cancelled sites were both in the City - VSR18-12 on the Bohernatounish Road and VSR18-15 on the Waterford Road.
- The 2021 levy is now due for qualifying sites and payment demands were issued during February and early March. Owners now have the right of appeal to An Bord Pleanála.

For 2022, the emphasis will be on the activation of sites currently on the Register, the pursuit of levies due and ongoing monitoring.

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.

Update on the Historic Structures Fund and the Built Heritage Investment Scheme as follows:

The **Historic Structures Fund** provides an opportunity for home owners to apply for funding for large scale repair works to protected structures. The national budget for the fund has increased from €3 million in 2021 to €4million in 2022. A total of 11 grant applications were received for the HSF in Kilkenny. The table below details the successful projects.

Stream 1	DHLGH Decision	Vernacular Grant	DHLGH Decision
Four applications were selected by KCC and forwarded to DHLGH for review	Following assessment, DHLGH awarded three projects the following: Old Ennisnag Bridge (€50,000) Kells House (€38,000) St. Canice's Cathedral (€27,820)	One application was selected by KCC and forwarded to DHLGH for review	Following assessment, DHLGH awarded €10,000 to Balief Farmhouse

Stream 2	DHLGH Decision
One application was selected by KCC and forwarded to DHLGH for review	Following assessment, DHLGH decided not to support the application

The **Built Heritage Investment Scheme** encourages applications for repairs to historic fabric of protected structures and proposed protected structures. A total of 21 applications have been received by Kilkenny County Council for works to architectural heritage in Kilkenny. Following assessment, 17 projects have received grant approval. The works include thatch, render,

roof and roof features repair. The total funding for Kilkenny is €156,800 in 2022.

Following an offer of additional funding under the BHIS from the DHLGH, the Conservation Office is now in discussions with two applicants which were placed on a reserve list during the initial assessment process.

Historic Towns Initiative 2022: Following a successful application, €10,000 has been secured from the Heritage Council. This funding is specifically for the appointment a conservation architect to work with owners of a minimum of three building located in Upper Bridge Street Callan. This will provide the basis for returning vacant residential floorspace back into use in the street.

A Heritage Stewardship Fund application was submitted by the Conservation Officer to the Heritage Council. The application focuses on the Early Medieval Town Houses in Kilkenny, and follows collaboration to date between the Conservation Office and the Built Heritage Unit and the National Monument Service of the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage. No decision has been received.

For the month of March 2022, the Conservation Officer responded to the following:

- Planning referrals – 1
- Further information referrals - 3
- Section 57 Declaration - 0
- Section 5 Declaration – 0
- Part VIII – 0
- Post planning – 0

Building Control

Valid Commencement Notices Received Start of Year to End of Month

TOTAL (March 2022)	TOTAL (March 2021)	TOTAL (March 2020)	TOTAL (March 2019)
107	77	97	72

No. Valid Disability Access Applications Received Start of Year to End of Month

TOTAL (March 2022)	TOTAL (March 2021)	TOTAL (March 2020)	TOTAL (March 2019)
22	14	21	21

ENVIRONMENT

Climate Action

One of the main requirements of Local Authorities under the Climate Action and Low Carbon Development Act adopted in 2021 is the preparation of Climate Action Plans setting out how they will reduce the Green House Gas (GHG) emissions associated with the delivery of their services by an average of 7% per annum and by 51% overall by 2030. The Climate Action Region Offices (CAROs) are working with the CCMA and with the Department of Environment, Climate and Communications (DECC) to agree the scope of the Climate Action Plans and to develop appropriate guidance for the sector.

It is expected that towards the last quarter of 2022 the Minister will sign the Order requesting Local Authorities to commence the preparation of their Climate Action Plan for the next five years. In the interim, the Council will be commencing the process and working with the 3CEA in ensuring that the required baseline data is captured and accurately assessed. The Council is also currently in the process of recruiting a Climate Action Specialist to lead the development of the Climate Action Plan.

Smarter Travel Initiatives

Over 100 Kilkenny County Council employees participated in the Marchathon step challenge run by the National Transport Authority as part of a Smarter Travel Initiative for the month of March. Kilkenny County Council were awarded a co-ordinator prize for the running of this initiative and their huge support and participation in the challenge. The initiative was to encourage staff to increase their daily step count, choose walking instead of driving, lead by example and reduce their carbon emissions in the process.

The “cycle at work scheme” is due to be rolled out shortly with five bikes being purchased for staff to use at work as a means of transport when the opportunity arises. Our Cycling Officer has also recently purchased three e-bikes funded by Active Travel. Workshops will be arranged where these bikes will be used for demonstrations throughout the County and with employers and business’s in an effort to promote and encourage the use of e-bikes and carbon free travel. These e-bikes will also be made available for trial by those staff that may be interested.

Recommended Minimum Criteria for Environmental Inspections (RMCEI) – AIR Noise & Water 2022

The proposed inspections for Air Noise and Water in 2022 are summarised on the table below

Air Noise Water Incl. Planning (Planning Referrals)	Planned
6.4 Routine Water / Wastewater Inspections*	1,586
6.5 Non-Routine Water / Wastewater Inspections (typically Complaint related)	51
6.6 Routine Air / Noise Inspections	70
6.7 Non-Routine Air / Noise Inspections (typically Complaint related)	38
6.9 Planning (Environmental) Inspections (Routine)	1,150
Total Air Noise & Water Inspections	2,895

** Includes Farm & Domestic Wastewater Treatment Inspections.*

2,895 inspections under the Air Noise and Water remit above represents approximately 60% of the total planned RMCEI in 2022. Overall there is a 5% increase in the number of planned inspections under Air Noise and Water from 2021 to 2022.

The number of Domestic Wastewater Treatment Inspections (DWWTS) has increased under the new National Inspection Plan (NIP) 2022 to 2026, from 29 to 42 required inspections annually. Around 30 of these inspections in 2022 will be in the Shellumsrath and Brooklawn locations in Kilkenny. DWWTS Inspections under the RMCEI plan have commenced at these locations. Reports and Advisory letters (if required) will be issued to homeowners in due course. It is noted that Homeowners may be eligible to apply for grants for work. Any queries as regards grant eligibility should be sent to environment@kilkennycoco.ie.

Environment Complaints

All complaints are logged on the CRM (Customer Relations Management) System. The number of complaints being received & logged by Environment staff for investigation for the first quarter of 2022 is 264 compared with 453 for the same period last year. The nature of these complaints ranges from littering, illegal dumping, water quality and abandoned cars. However, the vast majority 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 and a total of 605 tonnes of recyclables were collected from our Bring Centres in the first 3 months of 2022. This represents an 11% decrease on the same period last year and is mainly down to society reopening after Covid 19. LIDL Loughboy (with 40.03 tonnes collected YTD), Loughboy Shopping Centre (with 37.19 tonnes collected YTD) and Graiguenamanagh (14.17 tonnes collected YTD) are the busiest outside of the City. Environment staff are continuing to work very closely with our service providers to ensure the collection service is in keeping with demand, especially around long weekends and holiday periods. Kilkenny County Council is looking to increase the number of Recycling Centres in the County this year and is currently in discussions with the Tidy Town committees with regard to suitable locations in towns and villages across the County.

Kilkenny County Council has recently awarded the contract for textile recycling to Textile Recycling Limited (TRL) for the next 2 years following a tender process. The new clothes banks will be installed at all bring bank location in the county over the coming weeks.



Photo of Bring Banks in Glenmore, Co. Kilkenny

Councils Waste Prevention Programme - National Spring Clean

An Taisce continued to accept registrations for the National Spring Clean and Kilkenny has in excess of 70 registrations to date. The Environment Section will provide support to groups who are completing litter picks in their own local area by supplying litter picking supplies and assistance with litter removal after litter picking events between now and September.

Tidy Towns

The 1st Tidy Towns Forum of 2022 took place in Kells on the 2nd April, hosted by Kells Tidy Towns representatives. Over 10 groups registered to meet with other volunteers from across the County. Attendees were led on a village walk to see the variety of projects including their rain water harvesting project and their biodiversity enhancement project at St. Mary's Church. Kilkenny County Council plans to organise another forum in May.

Graveyard Grants

The closing date for the Graveyard Grants Scheme 2022 was Friday 25th February, 2022. There have been 54 applications in total received. Each application will be assessed by the Environment Section in the coming weeks.

The grant may contribute towards the cost of:

- Graveyard maintenance, including appropriate works to help pollinators
- Graveyard recording schemes
- Heritage studies of graveyards
- Costs associated with providing Public Liability Insurance

Community Monuments Fund Applications 2022

Applications below have been submitted to the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage's Community Monuments Fund. We are awaiting an announcement on our applications.

Application Stream 1 Funding Capital Works at Dunkitt Church

Estimated Value €100K

Work to secure walls including buttress Wall.

Application Stream 1 Funding Capital Works at Clomantagh Church

Estimated Value €100K.

Work to secure walls including bell tower.

Application Stream 2 Funding Conservation Reports at Grangefertagh Church

Estimated Value €28K.

Building Survey, Conservation report including Conservation Management Plan
Potential future application for Stream 1 Capital Works funding in 2023.

Tender documents are currently being prepared for a works contract at both Dunkitt and Clomantagh in anticipation of a successful application.

Historic Landfill Sites

The main focus of our activities in 2022 will be the completion of the Risk Assessment process and the submission of Certificate of Authorisation applications on the remaining 7 sites at Ardreagh (Urlingford), Ballykeaghan (Kilmacow), Caherlesk (Dunamaggin), Dungarvan, Grannagh, Mallardstown (Callan) and Sheastown (Bennettsbridge). Tender Documents are currently being prepared for consultancy services at all of these locations with an estimated value of €119k. All costs will be covered by grant allocation of €126,974.

Animal Welfare

Our Veterinary Officer continues to carry out monthly inspections at the Dog Shelter to ensure the site is operating efficiently and effectively. To date this year, 84 dogs have been dealt with in the Carlow/Kilkenny dog shelter, with 55 of these dogs rehomed by the shelter and by charities. There were 9 dogs remaining at the shelter at the end of March.

There were no horses impounded to date this year.

Anti-Dumping Initiative

The Environment Section are currently preparing projects for consideration by the Waste Enforcement Regional Lead Authority (WERLA) under the Anti-Dumping Initiative (ADI) Fund for 2022. Illegal dumping remains high on the agenda for communities across the county and the ADI supports a multi-faceted approach in tackling the issue.

COMMUNITY

CLÁR

CLÁR (Ceantair Laga Árd-Riachtanais) is a targeted investment programme for rural areas that aims to provide funding for small infrastructural projects in areas that have experienced significant levels of depopulation. The funding works in conjunction with local/Agency and other Departmental funding programmes and on the basis of locally identified priorities.

The CLAR Programme allocation has increased from €5.5m to €7 million in 2022. The 2022 programme will be delivered through 3 separate Measures as follows:

Measure 1: Developing Community Facilities & Amenities

Measure 2: Mobility, Cancer Care and Community First Responders Transport

Measure 3: 'Our Islands' – Not relevant for County Kilkenny

Kilkenny County Council advertised the scheme in March with a closing date for receipt of applications to Kilkenny County Council by April 20th, 2022.

Bike Week 2022 14th – 22nd May, 2021

National Bike Week occurs from 14th to 22nd May, 2022, A number of bike week events are being organised in Kilkenny City and County. Bikeweek will also take place in schools, with highlights including bringing school children on local routes and education programmes. Bike Maintenance Workshops will take place throughout the County during this week too. This is a great opportunity for the whole community to get involved in Bike Week activities during this week. For more information on events check out Bikeweek.ie and the social media pages of Kilkenny County Council facebook and Instagram and Cycle Kilkenny on Facebook and Instagram which will be updated by end April 2022.

Estate Management Grants 2022

The closing date for the 2022 Estate Management Grants Scheme was the 26th March. 45 applications were received in total.

Events Grants Scheme 2022

The Closing date for the 2022 Grants Scheme was the 30th March 2022. The main purpose of the Community Event Grants scheme is to provide financial assistance to not for profit groups and organisations engaged in running small scale community events. 33 applications were received.

KRSP Strategic Plan

The final draft of the new Kilkenny Recreation & Sports Partnership Strategic Plan will be circulated to stakeholders in the middle of April with the final sign off of the new Strategic Plan in early May 2022.

Pride of Place 2022

The following groups have been nominated to represent Kilkenny in the 2022 Pride of Place National awards.

- Graiguenmanagh Hub (*Community Tourism*)
- Mullinavat (*Village*)
- Thomastown New Recreational Amenity (*Community Wellbeing*)

HERITAGE

Pledge your Garden for Pollinators Campaign

To help make Kilkenny more welcoming for bees and butterflies the Heritage Office ran a PR campaign (1st-14th April) encouraging people to take simple actions in their gardens and to pledge their gardens for pollinators. Adverts were run on local radio, in newspapers, and on social media.

Free advice packs were sent out to interested gardeners. This action supports the Kilkenny Pollinator Programme and the All-Ireland Pollinator Programme. It is co-funded by the Heritage Council under the County Heritage Plan Programme.

<https://kilkennyheritage.ie/2022/03/pledge-your-garden-for-pollinators/>

Decade of Centenaries Grants Awarded

Films, audio drama, podcasts and public talks are just some of the projects awarded funding under the Kilkenny County Council Decade of Centenaries Programme which commemorates people and events in Kilkenny in 1922. The programme funded by the National Commemorations Unit of the Department of Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport and Media. For full details see

<https://kilkennyheritage.ie/2022/03/decade-of-centenaries-programme-2022/>

Australian Film Festival Award for Kilkenny Decade of Centenaries Film

Congratulations to Kevin Hughes for receiving an *Honorable Mention Award* in the Australian Film Festival for his short film “The Re-burial of Jackie Brett” which was funded by the Kilkenny County Council Decade of Centenaries Grants Programme 2021. It’s great to see such a positive impact from the grants programme. The film, which tells the story of an event in 1921 when a member of the South Kilkenny Flying Column was accidentally shot by a teenage boy, was premiered at Butler Gallery during Heritage Week. <https://www.heritageweek.ie/projects/the-reburial-of-jackie-brett>

Creative Ireland & Cruinnúí na nÒg Grants

17 applications were received under the Kilkenny County Council Creative Ireland & Cruinnúí na nÒg public grant scheme. The grants are currently being assessed and results will be published shortly.

Save the date for Cruinnúí na nÒg (Sat 11th June)

[Cruinnúí na nÒg](#) (national day of free creativity for young people) will take place on Sat 11th June. In Kilkenny there will be a range of exciting creative projects for young people. Details of the final programme will be advertised shortly.

Calling all Tidy Towns to “Get Buzzing”

Tidy Towns groups are encouraged to get buzzing and enter the Local Authority Pollinator Award in the national Tidy Towns competition. The award, with a €10,000 prize fund, supports pollinator-friendly actions. Closing date is **Friday 10th June 2022**. For more details and application forms see <https://kilkennyheritage.ie/2021/06/lets-get-buzzing/>

In 2021, one third of Tidy Towns groups in Kilkenny participated in the award. In order to encourage more groups to support pollinators and enter the award, the Heritage Office sent survey forms to all Tidy Towns groups in the County. The feedback will help us to target our support to the needs of the groups and to see what further assistance, if any, is needed.

LEO/ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

National Enterprise Awards

A local craft manufacturing business from Graiguenamanagh will represent County



Kilkenny at the National Enterprise Awards. Philip and Mary Cushen along with their daughter Miriam from Cushendale Woollen Mills have been nominated to represent Kilkenny at the National Enterprise Awards which will be held in the Mansion House, Dublin on 2nd June. Cushendale Woollen Mills based in Graiguenamanagh, Co Kilkenny is the sixth generation of the family business and one of last remaining mills in Ireland who continue to operate as a vertical mill, working with the sheep's fleece and processing it, all under the one roof.

Since the inception of the Local Enterprise Office and formerly the County Enterprise Boards, Cushendale Woollen Mills has been supported with grant assistance towards salary costs and capital investment. In recent times, they have also availed of the Trading Online Voucher Scheme to enhance their online presence and ecommerce website. The Technical Assistance for Micro-Exporters Grant has supported the business to attend international trade fairs and developing marketing material specifically for their targeted export markets.

IDEAS Kilkenny Competition

As part of Local Enterprise Week, the inaugural 'IDEAS Kilkenny' competition was launched. The competition was open to entrepreneurs based in Kilkenny with a Tech related business idea or in the early stages of trading (less than 18 months). A total of 12 completed applications were received and they will now go forward to the next stages of the competition. The next stages involve a series of business workshops and one-to-one mentoring culminating in a finale comprising of an investor ready pitch for an investment fund worth €10,000 (*€6,000 in the Start-up Category and €4,000 in the Ideas Category*).



Student Enterprise Programme

The virtual county final of the Student Enterprise Programme was held on Friday 25th March. Over 850 students from 14 schools took part in this year's Student Enterprise Programme locally. The local students will now compete for a place in the National Final which takes place on Wednesday 18th May at The Helix in Dublin.

In the Junior Category, the student who will represent Kilkenny is Ciara Ryan from "Sew Stylish" at St. Brigid's College, Callan. Ciara's business creates uniquely designed multifunctional hair scrunchies with a discrete zip pocket that can be used to hide/store money, lip gloss or keys, but can also still be used to tie your hair up. In the Intermediate Category, twin brothers Adam and Liam Doyle, from Coláiste Éamann Rís with their painting service business "Twin Painters" will be representing Kilkenny. In the Senior Category of the competition, Kilkenny representatives going forward will be Presentation Secondary School students Aoibhinn Morrissey and Louise Hearne with their business "Sea Ya later". They identified a need in the market to develop and sell a natural based tan remover.

In the "My Entrepreneurial Journey" competition whereby students interview and map out the life of an entrepreneur and what is required, Saoirse Walsh from Grennan College won the Junior Category while Ned O'Meara from Coláiste Éamann Rís was awarded the Intermediate Category. While in the "Most Creative Business Idea" competition, senior level students were asked to come up with an inventive business idea based around the theme of 'Fitness and Wellbeing Innovations', Maria Salvans from Loreto Secondary School was announced the winner. All three will go forward to represent Kilkenny at the next stages of their respective competitions.

Summary of Awards

- A total of €125,360 in direct financial assistance was approved towards 6 manufacture /export service businesses located in throughout the county. This assistance is linked to the projected creation of 24 jobs over the next three years.
- €112,385 was awarded in Business Expansion Grants assistance to 4 existing businesses and €12,975 awarded in feasibility study grants to 2 businesses.
- 4 Technical Assistance for Micro Exporter grant awarded totalling €7,320. This scheme supports businesses to explore their export market opportunities.
- 12 Businesses have commenced LEAN one to one consultancy programmes to investigate possible resource efficiencies and process improvements their businesses.
- 9 business have been approved a Trading Online Voucher totalling €17,990 to support the enhancement of their online trading capacity.
- 6 Business have commenced our **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 not focusing 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.
- 5 Green for Micro Grant awarded totalling €11,070. This scheme supports businesses to becoming greener and environmentally friendly.
- 2 applicants have been supported to make loan applications to the Micro Finance Ireland loan fund.

Green for Micro – Support for Small Business

Applications are open for the Local Enterprise Office **Green for Micro** programme, which is designed to help prepare small businesses for the low carbon, more resource efficient economy of

the future. This is a FREE programme offering two days business specific advice and technical support and is available to businesses with up to **ten employees**.

With climate change, changing regulations, rising resource costs and changing customer expectations, adopting an eco-friendlier approach is the best way forward for business and this green for micro programme can assist businesses to get started on their green journey.

Green for Micro Webinar Series

To support businesses, consider green issue for their businesses, the Local Enterprise Office have designed a series of Green for business webinars, taking place as follows:

- April 7th - Green for Hospitality - Putting your Best Green Foot Forward: Key steps to reduce food waste and your footprint
- May 5th Green for Packaging

Webinars can be booked online at www.localenterprise.ie/kilkenny

Tourism

The Tourism Department are planning for Easter and Summer Seasons ahead and continue with plans to welcome visitors to Kilkenny to enjoy all the City and County has to offer.

Taste Kilkenny Secures Marketing and PR Funding for 2022 Programme



Kilkenny County Council is delighted to secure grant funding from the Department of Agriculture in the amount of €10,780 for further marketing and promotion of the Taste Kilkenny brand with a dedicated digital and social media marketing campaign to promote the website both locally and nationally. #tastekilkenny will support Kilkenny City and County in its re-opening efforts post COVID restrictions.

The core elements to this project are:

- Savour Food Festival collaboration –an event at Savour Kilkenny Food Festival, entirely dedicated to the showcasing of local #tastekilkenny products - cooked by

renowned and nationally acclaimed chefs for the duration of the festival.

- Delivery of Taste Kilkenny Restaurant Week 2023 – this now annual project will support and enhance the partnerships locally between our local eateries and our local producers. The success of Taste Kilkenny Restaurant week 2022 has highlighted a great opportunity to grow an annual event like this in the tourism off-season to both encourage local people to experience eating out in Kilkenny.
- Continued Social Media Marketing and PR 2022 –our digital marketing campaign for 2022 which will feature monthly prizes to eat in our local restaurants/hamper prizes etc. all with the aim of strengthening our brand awareness and building on existing relationships with our local hospitality and production sectors.



Kilkenny Catwalk ~ Last Chance to see the Cats!!!

March saw work continue to plan for the final weeks of our Catwalk Art Trail. This fun trail will come to an end and culminate in an auction of the wonderful pieces of Art at Butler House on May 5th.

The upcoming Easter Holiday break will be the final chance for families to get out and about the City, get their selfies with our Kilkenny Cats and follow the app to collect them all.....

Kilkenny Tourism and visitkilkenny.ie

Kilkenny Tourism continues its work in delivering Kilkenny's Marketing and PR plan for 2022.

Springs 2022 campaign continues to keep Kilkenny to the forefront of the domestic visitors' mind for a staycation this year. March's marketing efforts showcased and promoted all our wonderful St. Patricks Day events and the Tradfest activity that worked seamlessly into the activity in Kilkenny City and County over the extended bank holiday weekend.

Our "Be Our Guest" campaign in March was a really positive intervention to support the B&B and Guesthouse Sector of our industry and kicked

off the season for them with nationwide promotion.

March activity also included:

- March Website visits - Up 70% from last year
- Events page – 2,652 page visits
- St Patricks Festival event page - 855 visits
- Hotels page - 848
- B&Bs page – 608

Kilkenny County Council continues to work closely with Fáilte Ireland to continue to develop and deliver exceptional visitor experiences and activity in Kilkenny. We are currently working with Fáilte Ireland to kick off a planning process to develop a five year Destination Experience Development Plan for Kilkenny City and County.

All local marketing campaigns will also be closely aligned with the national domestic "Keep Discovering" campaign to ensure maximum exposure for Kilkenny to all potential visitors to the county.



HOUSING

Current Projected New Build Housing Delivery for 2022

Scheme	Project Name	No of Units	Approved Housing Body	Projected Substantial Completion Date
CAS CONSTRUCTION	Grennan Villa, Thomastown	5	Camphill Communities of Ireland	Q1 2022
CAS CONSTRUCTION	Kingsriver, Ennisnag	2	Kingsriver Housing Association Limited	Q1 2022
CAS CONSTRUCTION	Fiennes Court, William Street	7	Good Shepherd Services	Q1 2022
CAS CONSTRUCTION	Brother Thomas Place, Church Lane, Kilkenny	12	Good Shepherd Services Ltd	Q3 2022
CAS CONSTRUCTION TURNKEY	Tinnypark, Callan Road, Kilkenny	6	SOS	Q3 2022
SHIP CONSTRUCTION	Ayrfield, Kilkenny City	2		Complete
SHIP CONSTRUCTION TURNKEY	Pennefeather Court, Hebron Road, Kilkenny City	8		Complete [expected allocation April 22]
SHIP CONSTRUCTION TURNKEY	Limegrove, Ferrybank	10		Complete
SHIP CONSTRUCTION SINGLE STAGE	Shanganny, Jenkinstown	2		Q1 2022
SHIP CONSTRUCTION TURNKEY	Pennefeather Green, Hebron Road, Kilkenny City	52		Q2 2022
AHB CALF Turnkey	Nuncio Road, Kilkenny Phase 3	22	Respond	Q3 2022
AHB CALF Construction	Orchard Close, New Orchard, Kilkenny	23	Cluid Housing	Q2 2022

151

Other Units 'Under Construction' as of 31st March 2022

- 25 Units at Ladywell, Thomastown (*KCC direct build*)
- 6 units at Golf Links Road (*Mulhalls Shop*) Kilkenny (*KCC direct build*)
- 2 Units at Inchacarron, Mullinavat (*KCC direct build*)
- 2 Units at Old Fire Station, Graignamanagh (*KCC direct build*)

Recently Started on Site

- 1 Accessible bungalow, Circular Road, Kilkenny (*KCC direct build*)
- 1 Accessible bungalow, Haggardsgreen, Callan (*KCC direct build*)

Tender Stage

- 88 units (*houses/apartments*) and community facility at Crokers Hill, Kennyswell Road, Kilkenny (*KCC direct build – re tender*).

HOMELESS SERVICES SUMMARY MARCH 2022	
Homeless Presentations	51
Homeless Assessment Outcomes	
Prevention & Interventions	21
Emergency Service	7
Not eligible / Did not avail of service	23
HAP Place Finder Service	
No of Homeless HAP tenancies @ 1 st day of month	103
No of Homeless HAP tenancies created during month	1
No of Homeless HAP tenancies in place @ last day of month	104
Number of Homeless HAP tenancy breakdowns	1
Other Social Housing Tenancies supported /created during month	5
Households in Temporary Emergency B&B accommodation	6
Households in Temporary Emergency B&B accommodation with families	3
Households (singles/couples) in Transition Emergency Accommodation (<i>Own Front Door</i>)	19
Households (Families) in Transition Emergency Accommodation (OFD)	8

SOCIAL HOUSING SUPPORT APPLICATION SUMMARY March 2022	
Number awaiting Social Housing Support at March 31 st (Gross Need)	1,656
Number awaiting Social Housing Support at March 31 st (Net Need)	726
No. of Social Housing Applications received as @ March 31 st	110
No. of applications incomplete / awaiting further information / clarification	67
No. of applications validated and ready for assessment during the month	52
No. of applications assessed during March	45
No. of applications awaiting assessment as @ March 31 st	58

HOUSING ASSISTANCE PAYMENT SUMMARY UP TO March 31 st 2022	
Number of active HAP tenancies to March 31 st 2022	767
New HAP tenancies set up	27
HAP tenants allocated Social Housing	14
Closed HAP Tenancies	36
HAP Rent Reviews	52
Other tenancy amendments	106
HAP Calls Received 2022 year to date	766
HAP Calls Received March	216

MONTHLY STATISTICS – MARCH 2022	
LA/RAS/Leasing allocations up to end of March (<i>offers made</i>):	12
Number of LA tenancies surrendered in March:	6
Tenant Liaison Officer cases in March:	57
Maintenance Calls for March:	557
Maintenance Calls year to date	1,749

Housing Loan Activity 1 st January 2021 to 31 st March 2022					
<i>Loan Type</i>	<i>Received</i>	<i>Approved</i>	<i>Amount Approved</i>	<i>No. Paid</i>	<i>Amount Paid</i>
Rebuilding Ireland Home Loan		1	€135,000	1	€348,000
Local Authority Home Loan	21	0	€0	0	€0
Caravan Loan	0	0	€0.00	0	€0
Total	21	1	€135,000	1	€348,000

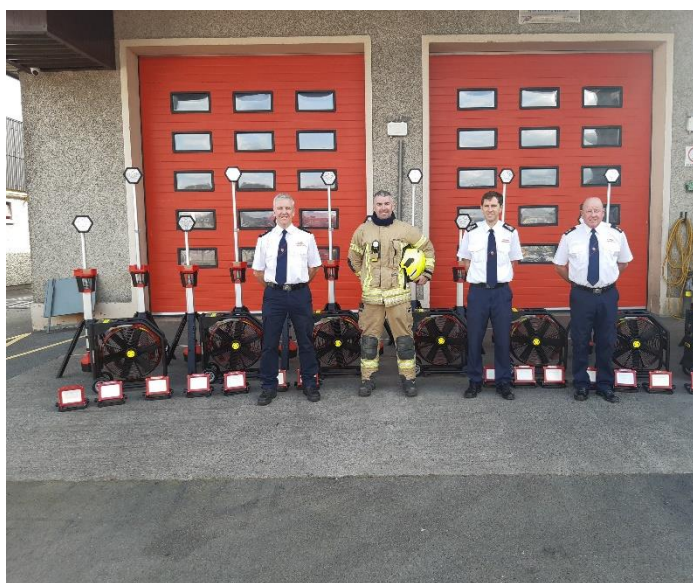
Grants Approved & Committed up to March 2022		
<i>Scheme</i>	<i>No.</i>	<i>Amount</i>
HGD - Housing Adaptation Grant	94	€956,326
MAG - Mobility Aid Grant	9	€39,683
HOP - Housing Aid for Older Persons	60	€373,799
Total	163	€1,369,808

Grants Paid out up to 31 st March 2022		
<i>Scheme</i>	<i>No.</i>	<i>Amount</i>
HGD - Housing Adaptation Grant	27	€257,460
MAG - Mobility Aid Grant	5	€16,918
HOP - Housing Aid for Older Persons	18	€107,590
Total	50	€381,968

FIRE SERVICES

Capital Projects

Assessment of the tenders for the construction of a new fire station for Urlingford has taken place. Approval to accept the tender has been given by the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage. Contracts for the construction of the new fire station is to take place in the coming weeks.



Delivery and training in battery operated scene lights and positive pressure ventilation fans has taken place. Funding was received Department of Housing, Local Government to purchase this equipment.

Fire Safety Certificates

26 applications for fire safety certificates were received to date.

17 were received 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.

9 Licence Applications were processed under Section 24 of the Fire Services Acts 1981 and 2003.

1 Dangerous Substance licence applications were received and assessed to date

22 Fire safety inspections of premises have taken place so far this year.

Community Fire Safety

Engagement with agencies / groups such as Age Friendly Counties Programme (Kilkenny), An Garda Síochána, Muintir na Tíre, the Irish Farmers Association (IFA), ICA, Neighbourhood Watch

Schemes, Active Retirement Groups, St Vincent De-Paul, HSE, Local Community Alert Groups, Local Text Alert Groups is key to improving and continuing to deliver fire safety awareness in our communities.

Brigades carried out a number of fire safety presentations e.g. Threecastles Community, Scouts Club. Home Fire Safety Checks (HFSVs) are a significant element of our Community Fire Safety strategy. 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.



Resumption of the Primary Schools Fire safety programme is underway and a number of schools have been visited recently.



Training

Breathing Apparatus Training for our new firefighters took place in Newbridge and

Tullamore fire training centres. The QQI standards for using Breathing Apparatus are at Level 6 on the National Framework of Qualifications and a component certificate is awarded on successful completion of the course.



Fire Brigade Operations

The Brigades have attended 224 incidents to date. These incidents included a number of road traffic collisions, public road hazards, automatic fire alarm activations, chimney fires, Ambulance assists.

The Fire Service was represented at the Local Ceremony of Remembrance and Reflection at the Bandstand at Canal Square, Kilkenny City.

Familiarisation visits of the Abbey Quarter have taken place with Kilkenny City Fire Brigade.



Fire & Emergency Operations Plan 2022-2026

Kilkenny County Council considered and adopted a Fire and Emergency Operations Plan 2022-2026 at its March meeting.

ARTS

Literature

Character Development & Story Structure with Ken Bourke

Ken Bourke completed his five-week workshop series in March. Using well-known stories, he explored the relationship between character development and story structure, the nature patterns that underlie storytelling in all its forms, in fiction, fairy-tales and novels and in scripts for the stage and screen. A total of 10 writers took part in the course, all giving positive feedback.

Feedback from participants: *The content of the course was such that it appealed to all the different types of writing styles of people on the course.*

Ken gave an excellent course and was extremely informative and met more than my expectations.

Broadsheet 2022

The closing date for receipt of entries for our Poetry Broadsheet was 1st April and this year's editor, Elaine Feeney, now has the very hard task to select the poems that will be published in this year's broadsheet. A total of 60 poets submitted their work with 108 poems up for consideration. This is higher than previous years.

Visual Artists Ireland

43 Kilkenny artists attended the final online sessions with Visual Artists Ireland in collaboration with the Arts Office. The session focussed on - Exploring Budgets with Visual Artist. It explored the sometimes tricky topic of budgeting for Visual Artists and provided outline information on figuring out budgets for applications for funding and supports, grant applications, bursaries and residencies etc. The session examined a number of budget headings, which could be used to support them in working out project costs, including as examples Artists Fees, hourly rates, travel and subsistence, overheads and admin costs, contingency, etc. The webinar was suitable for visual artists at all career stages and experience levels and included a Q&A session. We also offered series of eight 20min One-to-One Clinics for Artists based in Co. Kilkenny.

Artlinks Collaboration Information Session

Kilkenny Arts Office hosted an online information session for artists interested in applying for the Artlinks Collaboration Award. The aim of this award is to encourage more collaboration

between artists across the ArtLinks counties (Kilkenny, Waterford, Wexford and Carlow) and support artists seeking to expand their practice and networks regionally.

Emerging Curator Development Programme

Sinéad Keogh has been appointed as the 2022 Emerging Curator in Residence. This programme will enable Sinéad to gain direct experience in the field of curating exhibitions with the Arts Office. Three exhibitions or projects in total will be organised between June and December this year, providing Sinéad with the platform to further develop a career, expand artistic and creative networks and avail of a mentoring programme with Curator Kate Strain. This programme will also enhance the cultural vibrancy of Kilkenny by showcasing the works of local and national artists with an outreach programme complementing the programme seeking to involve communities in Kilkenny and diversifying audiences and engagement.

LLPPS

Kilkenny TradFest returned for 2022: Trad Trail, Great Gigs and Brand-new Music Series!

The new programme featured some of Ireland's best musicians with established and new names. This 5-day programme, kicked off on Wednesday 16th to Sunday 20th March. It comprised of the Trad Trail: a wide variety of FREE music sessions and **The Medieval Mile Music Series** is a very special new addition to the festival and features five headline acts.

The five headline performances in the series featured exciting blends of fiddle and guitar music from husband and wife folk duo Zoë Conway and John Mc Intyre, songs from sean-nós tradition by the uniquely talented Iarla Ó Lionáird and Steve Cooney; Ireland's most renowned Irish button accordionist Mairtin O'Connor; award-winning folk singer Aoife Scott from the renowned Black family, trad virtuoso Kevin Burke and also The Goodman Trio, featuring acclaimed uilleann piper Mick O'Brien, multi-instrumentalist Emer Mayock and the renowned fiddle player Aoife Ní Bhriain. All monies raised are going to Amber Womens Refuge & the St. Vincent de Paul

Poetry Phone

The Kilkenny Arts Office Poetry Phone got a mention in the Irish Times magazine What's Hot slot last weekend. Anyone can free-phone the

Poetry Phone 1800 272 994 and press 0 to 9 to listen to a selection of beautiful poetry written by Kilkenny poets and published over the years in the Arts Office Poetry Broadsheet. Our next collection selected by Mary Fitzgerald Paralympian will go up mid-April.

March 2022



13,539
Items borrowed



10,105
visitors



1,216
Members

New Library Management System: Spydus

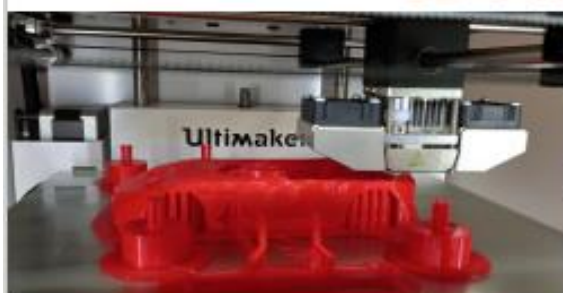
We have spent much of March preparing for a new national library management system - Spydus, which went live on 29th March. We worked to ensure all of our third party hardware and software were set up - from our library app to eBooks and music streaming services to photocopiers to printers. Staff were trained in issues and returns, memberships, cataloguing new stock, and reporting.

Spydus will allow us to offer our users a local, branded experience while retaining in full the access to other libraries and the wide range of stock that our users have become accustomed to.

Spydus will also allow users to access a selection of our existing and popular online services such as eBooks, eAudiobooks and online magazines and comics directly through the main library catalogue.



3D Printer: Loughboy



Our 3D printer in Loughboy Library is in full swing recently, with some interesting projects! Library staff helped print the alphabet in braille for a teacher, and also printed a model of Magorban Church in Tipperary, as part of a programme on Open Street Mapping of Irish monuments and buildings. We also printed an Aston Martin DB9 model car.

Mobile Library



2,606
books
borrowed



28
Schools
visited




6
New venues
visited



17 Early
Learning
Centres visited

Mayfair Library update



- Ground work and erection of steel on south west extension ongoing
- South East Elevation
- Library staff have commenced the purchase of stock across all formats .



Online Services usage:



2,086
eAudiobooks borrowed
▼ 3% on 2021



5,566
eNewspapers borrowed
▼ 20% on 2021



1,216
eBooks borrowed
▼ 25% on 2021



1457
Online Course sessions
▲ 15% on 2021



951
eMagazines borrowed
▼ 2% on 2021



317
Songs accessed
▼ 63% on 2021



Digital Engagement

Our staff have prepared, recorded, edited and published **389** posts on our social media platforms in March. Our video views for the month were **3,267**.

FINANCE

The expenditure by service division to the end of March is set out in Table 1. Total Expenditure for the period was €18.5m compared with the annual budget of €93.9m.

Table 1	Actual YTD March 2022	Budget Full Year 2022
	€'000's	€'000's
Housing & Building	5,406	22,101
Road Transport & Safety	3,827	26,590
Water Services	1,629	7,255
Development Management	1,724	10,502
Environmental Services	2,297	12,178
Recreation & Amenity	1,606	7,175
Agriculture, Education, Health, Welfare	112	680
Miscellaneous Services	1,850	7,390
OVERALL TOTAL	18,451	93,871

The bank overdraft facility was not utilised in the three-month period to the end of March. The unaudited Annual Financial Statements (AFS) for 2021 will be presented to Council at the April meeting. A copy of the draft unaudited AFS will be circulated to Members with the agenda. The Local Government Auditor has commenced the audit for 2021.

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 189 appeals have been completed. The following is a breakdown of the appeal outcomes to date:-

Decrease in Revaluation on Appeal	148 cases
Appeal Withdrawn	33 cases
Increase in Revaluation on Appeal	1 case
No change to Revaluation on Appeal	7 cases
Appeals outstanding	8 cases

The total Annual Income lost to date stands at €841K.

Targeted Rates Waiver Quarter 1, 2022

On 12th October, 2021 a targeted commercial rates waiver to support certain sectors was agreed by Government for the final quarter of 2021. An extension of this waiver for a further period of three months for the first quarter of 2022 was agreed by Government in December, 2021.

The extended waiver took the form of a credit in lieu of rates. The terms and conditions relating to eligibility and administration of the extended waiver remained the same as those outlined in Circular Fin 20/2021 "Targeted Commercial Rates Waiver Final Quarter 2021.

The broad categories of businesses the credit in lieu of rates applied to were as follows:

- Hospitality, including restaurants and cafes;
- Leisure;
- Miscellaneous entertainment;
- Certain tourism related categories; and
- Airports.

The value of the waiver is the equivalent value of 25% of the annual rate bill for 2022 for eligible categories of business. The waiver (Jan to March) was applied to eligible rate accounts by the Rates Section as a credit in lieu of rates in the value of €748,378 in March and eligible businesses were notified by letter.