



New Pedestrian Bridge at Castlecomer
Officially Opened 28th January, 2022

CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S REPORT

FEBRUARY 2022 ISSUE



**To: *Each Member of
Kilkenny County Council***

Monthly Management Report to Members of
Kilkenny County Council for consideration at
the February Monthly Meeting

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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

Community Awards Night - 23rd February 2022

The Council Community Awards Night will take place at 7.30 p.m. in the Parade Tower in Kilkenny Castle.

Sunday 27th February to Wednesday 2nd March

Showcase 2022, the annual international trade show for design and craft makers will take place.

End of February - Taste Kilkenny Restaurant Week.

7th to 11th March - "Energy in Focus" Week on KCLR Live

The main objective is to encourage householders to reduce their energy consumption and it will also promote the Home Energy Saving Kits which are available to borrow from all libraries.

25th March, 2022 - Amenity Grants

#CareersKilkenny is back on the 28th of December at the Medieval Mile Museum

7th to 11th March, 2022 - Local Enterprise Week 2022

The week provides the opportunity for small businesses and budding entrepreneurs from across the country to sample the range of supports that are on offer from their Local Enterprise Office across an array of events, workshops and seminars.

April 2022 - Wednesday Weeklies

Starting in April 2022 informal sessions will be led by experienced practitioners and professionals in the field of literature who can support and advise our writers.

Ireland's Best Kept Towns Competition 2022

The Department of Rural and Community Development has indicated that the competition is resuming this year. Judging takes place in May with the Award ceremony planned for Belfast in June, 2022.



CORPORATE



Register of Electors 2022/2023.

The Live Register for 2022/2023 will be live on www.checktheregister.ie with effect from 15th February, 2022 and members of the public can check their details from this date.

St. Patrick's Festival 2022

Our St. Patrick's Day Festival is a time to celebrate our Community and County. It is a day to show off our creativeness and achievements. Work is underway by the St. Patrick's Day Committee and there will be something for everyone and events to encourage people from all ages and all corners of the community to get involved in this year's celebration.

We are asking everyone to join us for St. Patrick's Festival Kilkenny 2022! After a successful virtual festival last year, the festival will be taking to the streets of Kilkenny again with a six day programme of Events which will include: The St. Patrick's Day Parade, Performances by American Marching Bands, Street Entertainment including acrobats, children's shows and stilt walkers, Carnival Rides, Rogu Fire Show, Fireworks Display, Street Food Vendors, Drum Workshops, Live Music and more! This is the biggest St. Patrick's Festive Kilkenny yet.

The theme of this year's Parade is "Run with the Wolves" based around the famous Kilkenny Animation Studio Cartoon Saloon's latest Oscar nominated movie, Wolfwalkers.

The Council will be turning the City green and will be supporting communities in greening our County. Our iconic buildings in the City including County Hall, City Hall and Kilkenny Castle will be lit up in an emerald glow.

All details of what is happening for this year's St. Patrick's Festival are available on the festival website www.stpatricksfestivalkilkenny.com and on the Festival's social media channels.

We want to encourage communities, schools, etc. to get involved in the Parade and the Application Form can be downloaded from the Festival's website.



ROADS

Major projects (Included in NDP- Funded by TII)

N24 Waterford to Cahir Scheme & N25 Glenmore (New Ross bypass) to Waterford Scheme

With no funding allocated in 2022 for the above schemes, a meeting of the regional Councillors and Oireachtas members was convened on Monday 07th February, Chaired by Cllr Pat Dunphy Piltown MD Chair. It was agreed that the regional Oireachtas members would seek an urgent meeting with Minister Eamon Ryan to seek clarification on the process/way forward for the scheme.

Minor Projects (Not included in NDP-Funded by TII)

N24 Tower Road (Safety Scheme)

It is envisaged that the scheme will go out to tender towards the end of Q1 2022 with a view to construction commencing towards the end of Q2 2022. An allocation of €3m was received for 2022 to allow the scheme 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 which are likely to be submitted Q1 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.

North -South Link Road, Ferrybank

Kilkenny County Council will submit for Members consideration a Part 8 for the construction of a new road, the South – North Link Road, Ferrybank approximately 1km in length, from the end of the existing access road serving the Clover Meadows Housing Estate to the end of the existing access road serving the Abbeygate Housing estate/Abbeygate Shopping Centre (Mr. Price). Funding for the project will come from a combination of the Urban Regeneration Development Fund (URDF) and Council's own resources. The overall cost of the project is expected to be in the region of €10m.

Castlecomer Footbridge:

The Castlecomer Footbridge was officially opened on the 28th January, 2022 by Cllr. Fidelis Doherty, Cathaoirleach of Kilkenny County Council, in the presence of the Cllr. Pat Fitzpatrick, Chairman of the Municipal District of Castlecomer and the Elected Members of Kilkenny County Council.

PLANNING

Development Management

Planning Summary	TOTAL (January 2021)	TOTAL (January 2022)
Planning Applications Received	48	52
Planning Applications Granted	62	75
Planning Applications Refused	4	7
Complaints Received	10	4
Warning Letters Issued	12	3
Enforcements Notices Issued	1	6
Cases Closed	6	9

The Planning Department continues to remain 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

The Chief Executive submitted her Report on the draft Ministerial Direction on aspects of the Council's Wind Energy Strategy to the Office of the Planning Regulator (OPR) on 10th December last. It is understood that the OPR has now reported to the Minister and made a further recommendation and we await the outcome. In the meantime, all other aspects of the Wind Energy Strategy and the adopted City & County Development Plan are deemed to be settled policy.

Masterplans:

An appointment has been made for Consultants to assist the Project Steering Committee for the St. Canice's Masterplan to commence the drafting of a Masterplan for the HSE's St. Canice's Campus. 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 put out for public consultation.

Work is continuing with the preparation of a Masterplan for Loughmacask. A draft Loughmacask Masterplan has been prepared and was internally reviewed. The Council is awaiting the Environmental Reports associated with the draft plan before it is presented to Members in the coming weeks prior to public display.

The preparation of the Fair Green Masterplan will recommence shortly after.

Taking in Charge Schedule for 2022

There are a total of 35 estates at various stages of the Taking-in-Charge (TIC) process. The following estates have been prioritised in the TIC Work Programme to progress this year:

- Filbuckstown, Mooncoin
- Arbourmount, Ferrybank
- Abbeygate, Ferrybank
- The Paddocks, Gowran
- Whitehall, Paulstown
- Ogenty, Gowran
- Rioch Court, Kilkenny
- Seville Rise, Margaretsfield, Kilkenny
- College Park, Kilkenny
- Kiln Lane, Callan
- The Greens, Thomastown
- Castlehyde, New Ross

Works are also ongoing on Abhainn Ri, Kilmanagh; Greenoaks, The Fairways, Ferrybank; Parc na Gowan, Kilkenny; An Choill Rua, Paulstown; Friarhill, Graiguenamanagh; Clonkill, Callan; Dunan, Thomastown.

- Lakeside, Kilkenny – works almost complete.

Vacant sites

- There are 29 sites on the Vacant Sites Register, and the number of cancelled entries due to site activation or improvement stands at 18 sites.
- The 2021 levy is now due for qualifying sites and payment demands are currently being prepared.

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

PLANNING

Conservation

Currently, applications are being received for two conservation grants: Historic Structures Fund and the Built Heritage Investment Scheme.

Built Heritage Investment Scheme:

encourages applications for repairs to historic fabric of protected structures and proposed protected structures.

21 grant applications have been received under the Built Heritage Investment Scheme 2022 and these are currently being assessed.

There has been a steady increase in funding for Kilkenny under the Built Heritage Investment Scheme from €98,000 in 2020 to €156,800 in 2022.

Historic Structures Fund: The Historic Structures fund notes the success of the Pilot Shopfront and Vernacular Schemes from 2021 by including these elements again for 2022, while Stream 1 and Stream 2 funding are also continued.

11 grant applications have been received under the Historic Structures Fund 2022 and these are currently being assessed.

Building Control

In January 2022, valid Commencement Notices have exceeded January 2021's level. However, it is still too early in the year to draw any definitive conclusions except that this appears to be a continuation of the increase of 136% seen in 2021.

Valid Commencement Notices	Total (January 2022)	Total (January 2021)
Number of Valid Commencement Notices received.	39	15
Percentage on Previous Year	260%	50%



ENVIRONMENT

Environmental Complaints

The number of complaints logged and investigated during January 2022 were 115 compared to 150 during January 2021, representing a decrease of 23% from the same period last year. Of the complaints received in January, 79% were attributed to illegal dumping and litter complaints. The table below illustrates the range of complaints logged by the Environment Section in January.

COMPLAINT TYPE	NO. OF COMPLAINTS
Illegal Dumping	82
Litter and Dog Fouling	7
Abandoned Car	6
Dead Animal Collection	5
Burning of Waste	3
Slurry Management	3
Water Pollution	3
Air Pollution	2
Noise	1
Nuisance	1
Odour	1
Unauthorised Waste Collector	1
TOTAL	115

Acorn Nursery County Hall

In advance of the preparation of the Climate Action Plan that the Council will be required to progress later this year, an acorn nursery will be planted in County Hall this month to symbolise our commitment to climate action. There are a number of acorn nurseries across the county under the Acorn Project and the planting of the acorns is a second part of a staff inclusion programme which merged wellness and climate action together last October. The Climate Action Plan will set out how the Council intends to reduce the carbon emissions associated with the delivery of its services by 7% per annum by 2030 and by 51% overall.

“Energy in Focus” Week on KCLR Live

After the success of the Waste in Focus week last September which aired on KCLR, a joint collaboration with Carlow County Council is now being prepared to focus on Climate Change and Energy Use in the home. It will run on KCLR between the 7th-11th of March live each morning and the main objective is to encourage householders to reduce their energy consumption and it will also promote the Home Energy Saving Kits which are available to borrow from all libraries.

Christmas Trees

The annual county wide Christmas tree drop off locations were in operation again in January 2021. Organised through the Dunmore Recycling & Waste Disposal Centre approximately 14 Tonnes of trees were collected from 10 sites around the county with another 8 Tonnes of trees taken to the Dunmore Civic Amenity Site. These Christmas trees are all taken to Bord na Mona's composting site in Kilberry, Co. Kildare for shredding and in turn composting.



ENVIRONMENT

Dunmore Waste Disposal and Recycling Centre

January was another busy month at the Dunmore facility with approximately 7,350 customers using the facility. There was 10.7 Tonnes of Cardboard, 6.8 Tonnes of Plastic and 15.8 Tonnes of Paper presented for recycling in January.

Bring Banks

The County Council provides and manages 46 Bring Banks across the City and County. The Bring Banks have seen a slight increase in usage in January 2022 compared to the same month of the previous year. It is clear to see from the tonnages collected that the increased usage with the continuation of Covid 19 restrictions over the Christmas & New Year has been largely maintained in January 2022. A total of 231.59 tonnes were collected in January 2022 compared with 216.35 tonnes during January 2021, representing an increase of 7% from the same period last year. The County Council will look to install new Bring Banks at additional locations county wide in 2022 and make collection points more localised in some areas of the County.



Litter Management Plan

The Litter Management Plan 2021-2023 lists a number of actions to prevent litter and raise awareness on the impacts of litter. Projects currently underway:

- The Picker Pals Programme which engages over 1,000 families to participate in family orientated litter picks throughout the academic year is underway. Starting in February, the Council is running a competition with participating schools in association with Voice Ireland who administers the programme to encourage schools to share their experiences with the wider public.
- The Castlecomer Discovery Park is collaborating with the Environment Section to pilot a new initiative the #2minParkPick, park users can contribute to the park by undertaking some litter picking while using the park amenities and a number of litter picking supply boxes will be stationed around the park to accommodate the activity.
- The National Spring Clean registration is now open, the public can sign up to participate via www.nationalspringclean.org. The Council is currently ordering stock to assist local volunteers in the months ahead.



Kilkenny County Council has pledged its support to the “Leave No Trace Ireland 2022” litter campaign. We will be promoting the campaign later in the year.

Tidy Towns

A plan is being prepared to run a series of tidy town forum events throughout the spring and summer to reconnect with volunteers. The events will be predominately outdoors and a schedule will be released in February. Should you like to be kept informed of the tidy town forum activities, please connect with the Environmental Awareness Officer who sends out group emails on forum activities.



Ireland's Best Kept Towns Competition 2022

The Department of Rural and Community Development has indicated that the competition is resuming this year. Inistioge is nominated along with Abbey Co. Galway, Abbeylisk Co. Laois, Birr Co. Offaly, Raheny in Dublin, Tramore Co. Waterford, Athlone Co. Westmeath and Dundalk Co. Louth. Judging takes place in May with the Award ceremony planned for Belfast in June, 2022.



ENVIRONMENT

Waste Awareness Activities

In line with the commitment in the Southern Waste Regional Plan the Council continues to engage in activities to promote waste prevention and the circular economy.

Kilkenny County Council made a successful funding application to the EPA via their Local Authority Prevention Network funding stream and received €17,250 to support 5 community projects which will promote the circular economy in early 2022. Three projects are currently underway.



- A junior bicycle appeal has been completed within two business organisations and bicycles are being repaired and serviced. They will be donated to a primary school to facilitate a cycle training programme by specially trained local transition year students.
- A shed in the Dunmore Refuse and Recycling Centre is undergoing minor repairs to make it water tight and the interior is being fitted to suit a storage area to increase the centre's capacity to support local circular economy initiatives in the future.
- A project is currently being prepared in association with Music Generation and the Library Services. The library branches will serve as a drop off location for a selected number of musical instruments which will be repaired and rehomed to young musicians or donated to educational facilities.

Environment Education Activities

Green Schools:

An Taisce's Green School Office informed Kilkenny County Council that 61 schools are due to renew their green flag before the end of the academic year. The Environmental Awareness Officer reached out to these schools in January to determine how many assessment visits will be required. Assessments this year will be predominately online and the objective is to hear how the school progressed through the 7-step environmental programme. An Taisce is being very understanding regarding the difficulties schools are facing due to Covid restrictions and the programme has adjusted accordingly.

Active Travel Programme:

The Environmental Awareness Officer is working with the Cycling Officer to progress some elements of a wider project called "Creative Connections". The project aim is to make the lanes and school routes more commuter friendly for pupils and the pilot and first route being explored is Cootes Lane in Kilkenny City. This initiative links in with the national Safe Routes to School Programme.

Biodiversity Training:

A secondary and primary school has been selected to undergo biodiversity training to assist the schools in their green school programme. Each school will be asked to submit a report on their activities to their local tidy towns group. The training is being supported by the Heritage Officer and complements the objectives of the All-Ireland Pollinator Plan.

Carlow/Kilkenny Dog Shelter



In line with HSE/Government guidelines on essential services the Carlow/Kilkenny Dog Shelter and Dog Warden Service has remained open to the public but by appointment only.

January Statistics for the Carlow Kilkenny Dog Shelter

	January 2022
Total Stray Dogs	27
Total Surrenders	4
Total Reclaims	6
Total Dogs Rehomed	17
	10 by Shelter, 7 directd to various animal rescues
Total Dogs at month end	8

PARKS & SPECIAL PROJECTS

Parks and Playgrounds

The Parks Team will shortly undergo training that will allow for the quarterly condition assessment inspections of our 31 playgrounds to be taken in-house. These inspections are required under our playground insurance cover and are in addition to the in-house weekly and annual independent inspections undertaken. We would like to acknowledge the community groups who assist us at a number of these amenities in our efforts to keep the playgrounds to a high standard. This local involvement is invaluable in maintaining playgrounds around the county and alerting us to anything of concern requiring our attention.

New equipment was recently added to the playground in Kells thanks to a grant of €15,650 secured from the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth. Once the ground works have settled the new zip line and sand play area will be available for play, further increasing the offering in this popular Amenity.



Image of recently installed zipline in Kells Playground

Woodstock Gardens and Wider Estate

Gardening staff are preparing to undertake a significant replanting of the herbaceous borders which are located in the Walled garden. The box hedging delineating the borders is infested with box blight and will be removed and replaced with a more disease resistant evergreen hedge. The herbaceous borders will also be refreshed with new planting of specimens popular in the Victorian era. There will also be a focus on pollinator friendly plants which will provide a valuable food source for our important pollinators.

Elsewhere in the county our annual programme of playground repairs has been completed and the total budget allocated for 2021 has now been utilised. Annual playground inspections will take place in December which will inform our programme of works for next year.

A significant programme of tree surgery will take place in the ruins of Woodstock House. The ruins of this 1740's building are being compromised by seedling trees which have taken root in the mortar in the walls and will cause problems to the structure of the building as they grow if not addressed. An ambitious scheme of tree surgery and removal will commence in mid-February by expert tree surgeons with specialist experience in conservation. The top of Woodstock house will be accessed by means of a large crane to enable the tree surgeons reach the tree's roots and remove them carefully.



PARKS & SPECIAL PROJECTS

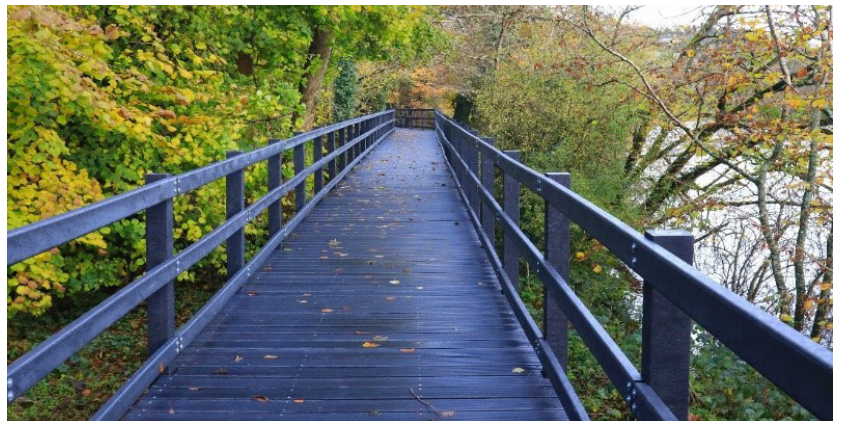


Aerial view of the walled Garden and Upper Flower Terrace, part of the formal gardens at Woodstock. The walled garden will get a revamp this year to refresh the Victorian

A story trail based on Slí na Scéalta is currently being installed in Woodstock around the story of an elephant on a farm. An initiative of Kilkenny Library Services which will encourage children to follow a story along the formal avenues in the gardens. A series of pedestals with the story mounted on same will be located at intervals along the walkways to encourage children to walk and read and follow the story as they go. The story trail will be in place for six months.

Silaire Woods

In the interests of health and safety an extensive programme of tree surgery was undertaken in Silaire Wood to removed dead and dangerous trees overhanging the main path network and in particular the boardwalk. The latter being damaged in the summer by a fallen 800 year old oak tree. The majority of the trees reduced or removed were ash which sadly are in decline nationally due to ash dieback. All resulting wood has been left on the forest floor for invertebrates and new planting will take place later in the year following the preparation of a woodland plan for the site.



PARKS & SPECIAL PROJECTS

South East Greenway

The construction of the South East Greenway over a length of 24km has been divided into a number of Lots, some of the progress to-date is provided hereunder:-

Construction

Lot 1 (Mount Elliot to Rosbercon) construction is substantially complete and the public lighting along same is now complete.

- Lot 3 (New Ross Boatyard to Glenmore) is nearing substantial completion stage and during January the existing railway bridges were shot blasted and repainted.
- Lot 2 (Ferrybank) the 90m access ramp connecting the Abbey Road with the Greenway is now complete and approximately 50% of the public lighting along this section has also been erected.

Planning & Detail Design

Landowner agreements on the accommodation works for Lots 4 – 7 continue to progress. Works continue on the preparation of the detailed design and tender documents for Lot 4 (New Ross to Mount Elliott) and Lot 5 (Ferrybank to Aylwardstown) and it is expected the latter will be advertised shortly.

A Part 8 planning application is currently being finalised for the development of a temporary construction compound and access at Rathinure to facilitate the construct of Lot 5. This access will facilitate construction of the longest section of the Greenway where the majority of agricultural crossings are located from the Ferrybank Environs to Aylwardstown.

Railway Abandonment

Kilkenny's Road Design Office has now finalised the draft detailed mapping to facilitate the transfer of railway lands from CIE to the relevant Local Authorities. The said mapping will now be issued to CIE for review and comment.

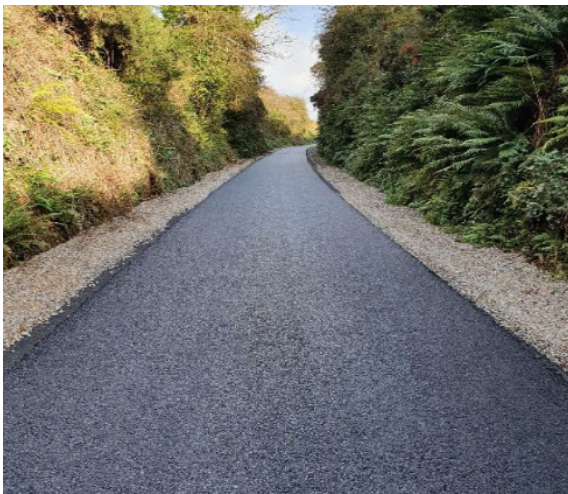


Image of completed sections along Lot 3 - New Ross Boatyard to Glenmore

Links to Slieverue and Glenmore:

A presentation was recently given to the Elected Members of the Piltown Municipal District outlining the route selection process to-date and the emerging preferred routes to connect Slieverue and Glenmore to the Greenway. The next step will include a public information evening in each village at which the proposals will be explained and submissions invited in order to inform the next stage of the route selection process.

PARKS & SPECIAL PROJECTS

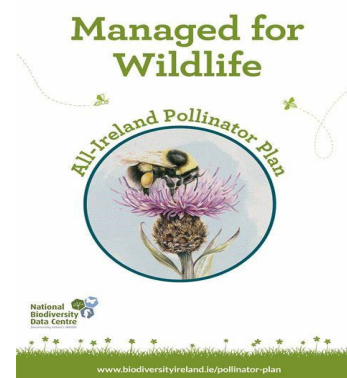
Amenity Grants

The 2022 Amenity Grants scheme is now open to receive applications and has been advertised in the Kilkenny People, on Kilkenny County Council's website and within the recently published Grant Booklet. The drawdown of amenity grants for 2021 funding is now complete. In total, €139,884.55 was allocated to 181 groups across the County. The range of works involved tree planting, grass cutting, planting flowers, erecting signage and many other amenity type projects. We expect an even greater number of applications for 2022 as more estates are taken in charge and more groups become aware of the scheme. **The closing date for applications is the 25th March, 2022.**

Grass cutting Pollinator and wildlife friendly projects

Tenders for grass cutting across the City and County have now been received and are being assessed with a view to awarding contracts to the successful tenderers shortly. Where possible traditional fortnightly cycles of mowing grass short is being replaced with longer mowing cycles of six weeks and annual to encourage pollinators. These pollinator areas will be mainly on embankments, wide road verges and in bigger residential areas with large greens in consultation with residents.

Attitudes towards grass cutting is changing amongst the population and whilst some still prefer the traditional mown lawn it is critical that we continue to get our message out there on the importance of leaving and creating space for pollinators



Bennettsbridge Riverside Amenity Area & Pedestrian/Cyclist Bridge– Feasibility Study & Design Options Report

Tenders for the Bennettsbridge Riverside Amenity Area & Pedestrian Bridge – Feasibility Study & Design Options Report have been assessed and it is expected the appointment of the successful tenderer will be concluded shortly. The costs associated with this brief are being provided under the LEADER Programme with match funding provided by the Council. Technical assistance and supports provided by the Council will be ongoing throughout this contract.

PARKS & SPECIAL PROJECTS

Abbey Hall Recreational Area – Graiguenamanagh

The rehabilitated Abbey Hall recreational and amenity space was opened to the public at the end of January and has been a hive of activity since. Works were undertaken over three levels which include the installation of a multi-games 3G Sports surface on the lower tier. The rehabilitation of retaining walls, hard and soft landscaping within the middle tier, the installation of ornate and safety railings, lighting, the restoration of the Hall clock and the installation of a replacement bell in the bell tower. This new multi-games area is free to the public to use and has unrestricted access. The response locally has been very positive with locals delighted to see this much loved public amenity in the heart of the town brought back into use.

The design and works elements of the project were managed by the Council and funded through the LEADER Programme with match funding provided by the Council and the local community.



Recreational Connectivity Link between Woodstock Estate and the South East Greenway – Feasibility Study & Route Selection Report

Eight tenders were received for consultancy services to prepare a Feasibility Study & Route Selection Report for a Recreational Connectivity Link between Woodstock Estate and the South East Greenway. Tender assessment is now complete. It is anticipated that the successful tenderer will be appointed over the next month. Technical assistance and supports, provided by the Council will be ongoing throughout this contract and the costs associated with same will be part funded by the Kilkenny Leader Partnership (KLP)



Slieverue Linear Park



Initial works, including the installation of pathways, seating and planting were completed under the Town and Village Renewal Programme last year. We are currently working with the community and Kilkenny Leader Partnership (KLP) to advance Phase 2 of this project. Under this next phase we hope to develop the Park further and some of the proposals include: entrance enhancements, additional landscaping with a strong focus on biodiversity, installation of an outdoor classroom, development of a small basketball area, provision of outdoor gym equipment and country style outdoor play features. Consultation is ongoing locally and it is expected a consensus will be reached shortly on the design. Thereafter, and subject to the outcome of an AA Screening Report, construction prices will be sought which will allow a full application to be submitted to KLP for LEADER Funding to allow the project advance to delivery stage.

COMMUNITY

2022 National Pride of Place Awards

The 2022 National Pride of Place Awards have been rescheduled for June 2022 (date to be confirmed) in Killarney in County Kerry.

Community Awards Night

The Kilkenny County Council Community Awards Night will take place on the 23rd of February at 7.30pm in the Parade Tower in Kilkenny Castle.

2022 Grants Booklet

The Kilkenny Country Council Grants booklet is now available in hard copy and an interactive version is available on-line. The interactive version can be viewed on mobile phones, mobile devices and home computers. This version can also be downloaded.

Town Team Meetings

Meetings have commenced to establish Town Teams. The first meeting took place with the Mullinavat Town Team on the 8th of February in Mullinavat.

Rural Regeneration IN FOCUS Newsletters

The most recent Thomastown IN FOCUS Rural Regeneration and Town & Village Renewal Newsletter was widely received by the local community with a reach of 28,000 This was a follow on from the Callan INFOCUS Newsletter which reached 20,000 The next issue will focus on Graigueenamanagh and will be published in April 2022.



LEO / ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Green for Micro

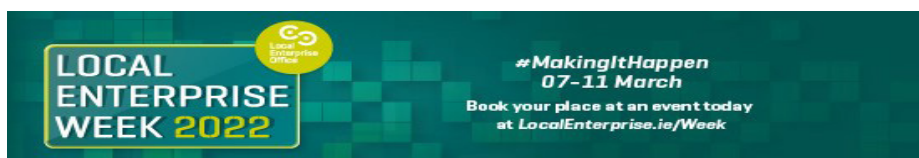
The Green for Micro programme is designed to help prepare small businesses for the low carbon, more resource efficient economy of the future. This is a FREE programme, offering two days business specific advice and technical support and is available to businesses with up to 10 employees. With climate 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. Further information available at **Local Enterprise Office Green for Micro programme.**



Local Enterprise Week 2022

Plans are well underway for Local Enterprise Week which takes place from Monday 7th to Friday 11th March. The week provides the opportunity for small businesses and budding entrepreneurs from across the country to sample the range of supports that are on offer from their Local Enterprise Office across an array of events, workshops and seminars.

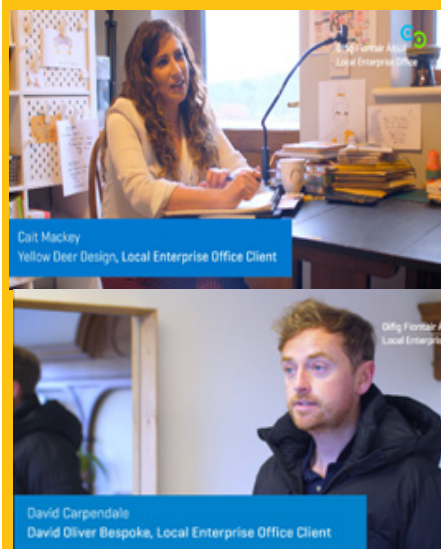
The national spotlight events include Growing Lean and LEAN Digitization within your Business, Green & Sustainability event for small businesses featuring Green4Micro, Raising Finance for your Business and lots more. LEO Kilkenny will be hosting one-to-one mentoring clinics across various topics; Exporting, Procurement, Trading Online and Social Media and will also be launching our series of 'Green for.' seminars. Entries will also be open for our new 'IDEAS Kilkenny' competition aimed at start up clients, i.e. people with a business idea who are trading less than 18 months or who are pre-start up stages of development in the technology sector (e.g. Agri-Tech, AI, Ecommerce, FinTech, etc.) who have an innovative idea with the intention of setting up a business in Kilkenny or already in the early stages of development. For more information visit [Local Enterprise Week 2022](#).



Lunch Time Seminars Series

In January, the LEO hosted two lunch-time Seminars. The first Seminar provided information on the range of LEO services for business in Kilkenny and can be watched back at - Lunch & Learn Kilkenny Videos - Local Enterprise Office – Kilkenny

Showcase 2022



Showcase 2022, the annual international trade show for design and craft makers will take place from Sunday 27th February to Wednesday 2nd March. LEO Kilkenny is supporting start-up clients Cait Mackey, Yellow Deer Designs who creates beautifully illustrated greeting cards and David Carpendale, David Oliver Bespoke furniture maker in the curated Local Enterprise Showcase area. Both will be exhibiting for the first time at Showcase. Other LEO supported clients participating in the curated Design Ireland exhibition include Annaliese Fallon, DFM Clothing Ltd, Fred O'Mahony, Woodturning and Jerpoint Glass. Further information about the event can be found at showcaseireland.com.

LEO / ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

TOURISM

Kilkenny County Council Festival Grant Scheme

Kilkenny County Council has provided funding for festival organisers to aid with the development and promotion of festivals with a significant tourism impact. The main purpose of the Festival Support Grant Scheme is to support festivals which drive tourism in Kilkenny, underpinning Kilkenny County Council's Tourism Strategy and improving the visitor experience in Kilkenny City and County.

To be considered for funding, applicants were asked to provide details demonstrating the following:-

Tourism Impact

2. Visitor numbers / participation
3. Organisational expertise
4. Future viability of event
5. Financial planning

Application deadline for same was 16th February, 2022.

Applications received have been assessed. A recommendation for award of grants will be submitted for approval by Elected Members.

Welcome Team' manned the stand and engaged with visitors to the City to answer all their queries on tourism, outdoor activities, must see attractions and much more.

Stakeholder's leaflets were distributed on the day and we also ran a very popular competition with over 600 entries. Prizes were donated by local businesses such as Paris Texas, The Brewery Corner, Cake Face and the Kilford Arms Hotel.



Faillte Ireland Festival Grant Scheme

Faillte Ireland (FI) have confirmed that their Festival Grant Scheme will return for 2022 and Kilkenny County Council have been awarded €8,000 from this fund to be used to enhance its' grant awards to festival organisers locally.



TOURISM

Kilkenny County Council Festival Grant Scheme

Kilkenny Tourism continued its work in preparing Kilkenny's marketing and PR plans for 2022. Spring's 2022 campaign aims to keep Kilkenny to the forefront of the domestic visitor's mind for booking breaks for St Valentine's Day, at mid-term and for St Patrick's Day. By showcasing Kilkenny's wonderful food and accommodation offering alongside all that the City and County has to offer for families, we are aiming for Kilkenny to be top of the visitors "must see" destinations again this year. Check out www.visitkilkenny.ie for further details and up to date blogs.



Look out for upcoming Taste Kilkenny Restaurant Week at the end of February, our Children's Kiddies Catwalk Art Exhibition at mid-term and St. Patricks Day fun all in Q1 2022.

HOUSING

Housing Capital – January 2022

Current Projected New Build Housing Delivery for 2022

Scheme	Project Name	No. of Units	Approved Housing Body	Projected
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	Q1 2022
SHIP Construction	Ayrfield, Kilkenny	2		Complete
SHIP Construction Turnkey	Pennefeather Court, Hebron Road, Kilkenny City	8		Complete
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		Q1 2022
AHB Calf Turnkey	Nuncio Road, Kilkenny Phase 3	22	RESPOND	Q2 2022
AHB Calf Construction	Orchard Close, New Orchard, Kilkenny	23	Cluid Housing	Q2 2022

Other Units 'Under Construction' as at 31st January, 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)

Tender Stage [90 units]

- 88 units (houses/apartments) and community facility at Crokers Hill, Kennyswell Road, Kilkenny (KCC direct build)
- 1 Accessible bungalow, Circular Road, Kilkenny (KCC direct build)
- 1 Accessible bungalow, Haggardsgreen, Callan (KCC direct build)



Works ongoing on Pennefeather Green
Hebron Road



2 houses at Shanganny Jenkinstown
almost complete.



Site Development Works at Ladywell
Thomastown

HOUSING

HOMELESS SERVICES SUMMARY JANUARY 2022

Homeless Presentations	34
Homeless Assessment Outcomes	
Prevention & Interventions	24
Emergency Service	
Not eligible / Did not avail of service	3
HAP Place Finder Service	
No of Homeless HAP tenancies @ 1st day of month	100
No of Homeless HAP tenancies created during month	1
No of Homeless HAP tenancies in place @ last day of month	101
Number of Homeless HAP tenancy breakdowns	0
Other Social Housing Tenancies supported /created during month	4
Households in Temporary Emergency B&B accommodation	3
Households in Temporary Emergency B&B accommodation with families	3
Households (singles / couples) in Transition Emergency Accommodation (Own Front Door)	24
Households (Families) in Transition Emergency Accommodation (OFD)	7

SOCIAL HOUSING SUPPORT APPLICATION SUMMARY JANUARY 2022

Number awaiting Social Housing Support at January 31st (Gross Need)	1,621
Number awaiting Social Housing Support at January 31st (Net Need)	691
No. of Social Housing Applications received as @ January 31st	92
No. of applications incomplete / awaiting further information / clarification	
No. of applications validated and ready for assessment during the month	22
No. of applications assessed during January	18
No. of applications awaiting assessment as @ January 31st	53

HOUSING ASSISTANCE PAYMENT SUMMARY UP TO JANUARY 31st 2022

Number of active HAP tenancies to January 31st	772
New HAP tenancies set up	11
HAP tenants allocated Social Housing	3
Closed HAP Tenancies	
HAP Rent Reviews	7
Other tenancy amendments	3
HAP Calls Received 2022 year to date	250
HAP Calls Received January	250

HOUSING

Monthly Statistics

January 2021

LA/RAS/Leasing allocations up to end of January (offers made):	16
Number of LA tenancies surrendered in January:	4
Tenant Liaison Officer cases in January:	44
Maintenance Calls for January:	
Maintenance Calls year to date	625

Housing Loan Activity at 31st January 2022

Loan Type	Received	Approved	Amt approved	No. Paid	Amt Paid
Rebuilding Ireland Home	0	1	€135,000	0	0
Local Authority Home Loan	4	0	€0	0	€0
Caravan	0	0	€0.00	0	€0
Total	4	1	€135,000	0	€0

Grants Approved & Committed up to 31st January 2022

Scheme	No.	Amount
HGD - Housing Adaptation Grant	72	€770,939
MAG - Mobility Aid Grant	5	€20,558
HOP - Housing Aid for Older Persons	38	€270,897
Total	115	

Grants Paid out up to 31st January 2022

Scheme	No.	Amount
HGD - Housing Adaptation Grant	15	€123,330
MAG - Mobility Aid Grant	3	€12,473
HOP - Housing Aid for Older Persons	6	€40,917
Total	24	€176,719

FIRE SERVICES

Capital Projects

Assessment of the tenders for the construction of a new fire station for Urlingford is nearing completion. Construction of the new fire station is now planned to commence in Q2 2022 subject to Departmental approval.

Fire Safety Certificates

8 applications for fire safety certificates were received to-date. 3 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.
- 2 Licence Applications were processed under Section 24 of the Fire Services Acts 1981 and 2003.
- 1 Dangerous Substance licence application was received and assessed to date.
- 3 Fire safety inspections of premises have been carried in January 2022.

Community Fire Safety

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. They use a checklist to ask questions, try to identify the fire safety hazards in the house and recommend solutions. Fire safety advice is given, fire safety leaflets handed out and smoke detectors may be provided and fitted, where necessary. They also discuss the occupant's response should a fire occur in their home. The fire fighters leave the occupier with further advice and information, to also make available to other members of the household. 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.



Fire Brigade Operations

The Brigades have attended a variety of incidents in the month of January. These incidents included a number of road traffic collisions, public road hazards, car fire, automatic fire alarm activations, chimney fires, Ambulance assists, trees down and also assisted An Garda Síochána.



Fire and Emergency Operations Plan 2022-2026

Kilkenny County Council is required to adopt a Fire and Emergency Operations Plan. This plan for 2022 to 2026 is now available for public consultation and comment. We are now asking the general public to view the plan to raise awareness around the essential services provided, throughout the County by our fire and rescue service. The plan will be discussed at the next Community and Culture SPC and brought forward to the full Council for consideration at its March meeting. The plan is available on the link <https://consult.kilkenny.ie/en/consultation/fire-and-emergency-operations-plan-2022-2026-kilkenny-county-council-fire-and-rescue-service>.

Closing date for receipt of submissions was Tuesday, 15th February, 2022.

WATER SERVICES

Troyswood

Works started in December 2021 on the €30m investment of the upgrade of Troyswood water treatment plant. The works will take 2 ½ years to complete. 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. A new 2.9 km watermain from Troyswood to the Radestown site will connect to the existing service reservoirs and enable the Radestown plant to be decommissioned.



Kilkenny County Council Leak Reduction Performance

A leakage reduction plan was issued in February 2021 setting out the plan for Irish Water and Kilkenny County Council to reduce leakage and demand to achieve a net reduction of 0.75ML/d in leakage in 2021. This reduction is the equivalent demand of supplying circa 2,100 housing units.

Leakage Baseline MLD	2021 Target Leakage MLD	2021 Actual Leakage MLD	Reported Leakage on Target
11.80	11.05	10.24	YES

Based on above data, leakage savings of 1.56MLD have been achieved in Kilkenny County for 2021, greater than the proposed target of 0.75MLD.

First Fix (FF)

Cold calling resumed in Q2 2021 after Covid-19 restrictions lifted. New regional contractor commenced FF works in Q3 2021 on Customer-Side-Leaks in Kilkenny where waivers were received by property owners.

Mains Rehabilitation Works

Detailed designs have been completed on mains rehab schemes at Knocktopher and Norelands with commencement dates scheduled for Q1 2022.

Backyard Services

- Michael St, Kilkenny - Preliminary design submitted for mains rehab (196m) and backyard services (9) – scheduled for construction in 2022.
- St Fiacre's Place, Kilkenny - Preliminary design submitted for mains rehab (697m) and backyard services (909) - scheduled for construction in 2022.

ARTS

Character Development & Story Structure Course

Ken Bourke, playwright, producer and workshop facilitator will facilitate a 5-week course commencing in March, titled Character Development & Story Structure and will use well-known stories to explore the relationship between character development and story structure.

Kilkenny Arts Office Poetry Broadsheet Issue 22

A call out for submissions for our 2022 Poetry Broadsheet has been circulated. Elaine Feeney is our 2022 Broadsheet editor. She will also facilitate a workshop where participants will have an opportunity to meet the editor and gain a perspective on the editorial process. Louise Naughton will illustrate this year's publication.

Wednesday Weeklies

Following the success of our 2020 and 2021 Wednesday Weeklies, we are currently planning another series of online meetings for 2022 and this time they will be aimed at writers in Kilkenny to explore ideas and various themes. Starting in April 2022 informal sessions will be led by experienced practitioners and professionals in the field of literature who can support and advise our writers.

Congratulations!

Congratulations to the following two Kilkenny writers on their recent successes and thanks for their acknowledgement to the Arts Office for our part in their success to date:

- Orla Mackey a finalist in the Irish Writers Centre 2022 Novel Fair.
- Brendan Casey who recently signed a publishing deal with John Murray Press, a London based literary agency. His debut novel will be published in 2023.

Arts & Creativity School Bursary 2022 – call out for applications.

This new bursary was very successful last year and a welcome addition to schools, enabling them to organise creative activity and workshops for their students during the pandemic. This year's bursary was advertised in January with a mid-February deadline

Professional and Emerging ArtLinks Bursary Award 2022

The ArtLinks partners - Kilkenny, Carlow, Waterford and Wexford local authorities have issued a callout for their 2022 bursary awards for Professional and Emerging artists. All applicants for this bursary must be registered members of ArtLinks.



**New poems on the
POETRY PHONE
from February 4th
Selected by
writer Colm Keegan
FREE PHONE
1800 272 994**



Poetry Phone

The Arts Office has invited a number of new selectors for this year. The current selection has been selected by writer Colm Keegan. Other selectors for 2022 include Mary Fitzgerald, 22-year old Paralympian from Kilkenny, Edward Hayden chef and food writer and Elaine Feeney, writer and 2022 Poetry Broadsheet editor.

Visual Artists Ireland & Kilkenny Arts Office Partnership

Continuing our successful partnership with VAI, two online sessions hosted by VAI and funded by Kilkenny Arts Office will take place in February:

- Creating Video to Tell Your Artist Story
- Understanding Budgets and funding Applications.

Creative Ireland

The Arts Office has made an application to Creative Ireland through their Creativity in Older Age grant. If successful, this project will enable us to work with a diverse range of groups and individuals focussing on the older generations. The project will also include an intergenerational aspect and will actively encourage men to engage with us.

The expenditure by service division to the end of January is set out in Table 1. Total Expenditure for the period was €6.45m compared with the annual budget of €93.9m.

Table 1	Actual YTD November 2021	Budget Full Year 2021
	€'000's	€'000's
Housing & Building	1,728	22,101
Road Transport & Safety	1,826	26,590
Water Services	658	7,255
Development Management	632	10,502
Environmental Services	741	12,178
Recreation & Amenity	179	7,175
Agriculture, Education, Health, Welfare	42	680
Miscellaneous Services	645	7,390
Overall Total	6,451	93,871

Finance Update

The bank overdraft facility was not utilised during the month of January 2022.

The draft Financial Statement for 2021 will be finalised in the coming weeks and will be presented to Council shortly.

The Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage notified the Council in January that compensation of €627k will be provided for costs and income losses related to Covid. This is a provisional allocation and is in line with expectations.

The annual rate demands for 2022 will be sent out to all rate customers on the week beginning February 21st.

Rates Revaluation

Following the full revaluation of all commercial properties carried out by the Valuation office in 2017, 197 customers with a total rate demand value of €4.5m appealed their new valuation to the Valuations Tribunal. To date, 187 appeals have been completed. 147 of the 187 appeals have resulted in a decrease in rates. The total income lost to date stands at €840k. If this trend continues the total loss of income may be in excess of €1m once all appeal decisions have been completed by the Tribunal.

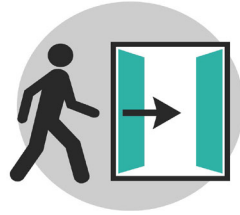
totalling €2m have been deferred until more clarity is available on the projected outcome for the year.

LIBRARY

January 2021



23,096
Items borrowed



7,818
visitors



1,001
Members

OWL Oral Words and Language Literacy Programme

Our OWL literacy programme focused on developing the oral language skills of 0-3 year olds, by helping support parents, childcare practitioners and teachers to ensure a good oral language base from an early age, and reduce potential literacy problems in the future.

The series of 12 specialised talks from Speech and Language Therapist Melissa Lanigan, Behavioural Specialist and Trainee Educational Psychologist Simone Coleman, and Storyteller Neil Griffiths ran over a two-month period, and were supplemented by 8 storytimes for children and 50 short tips for parents to use at home.

Video
Views:
5,191



The Oral, Words & Language Project



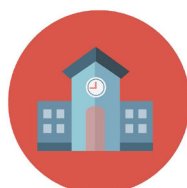
Mobile Library



2,612
books
borrowed



9,193
Borrowers



28
Schools
visited

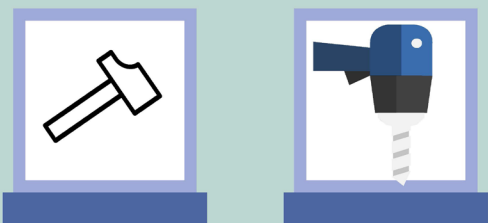


13
Early Learning
Centres visited



3,209
Students
served

Mayfair Library update



Demolition and Piling works along with on site monitoring continues on the Mayfair Library Site



Online Services usage:



2,148

eAudiobooks borrowed

▲ 11% on 2021



6,162

eNewspapers borrowed

▲ 11% on 2021



1,296

eBooks borrowed

▼ 18% on 2021



632

Online Course sessions

▼ 74% on 2021



951

eMagazines borrowed

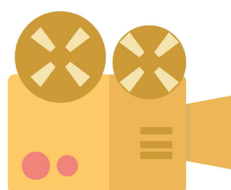
▼ 14% on 2021



349

Songs accessed

▼ 65% on 2021



Digital Engagement

Our staff have prepared, recorded, edited and published **422** posts on our social media platforms in January. Our video views for the month were **5,899**.

