

CHIEF EXECUTIVE REPORT

OCTOBER 2023 ISSUE

EXECUTIVE FUNCTIONS

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

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

ORIS

Applications for Measures 2 and 3 under the 2023 ORIS call are currently being prepared and the submission deadline for same is the 27th October 2023.

Spooktacular Halloween Celebration

Woodstock Gardens and Arboretum will host a Spooktacular Halloween Celebration themed *The Ghoulish Gardens!!* The event, which is ticket only, will be held on Monday the 30th October from 11.00 a.m. to 5.00 p.m.

Final Your Voice Matters

Session will take place in person as workshop 'Finding Your North Star' on Wednesday 25th October

Arted TAP (*Teacher Artist Partnership*)

Kilkenny Education Centre and the Arts Office will work together on pairing trained artists with appropriate schools. A teacher and artist planning event is scheduled for 25th October with workshops due to commence the week of 6th November, 2023.

REPORT AT A GLANCE

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CORPORATE

A Civic Reception was held on Monday, 18th September, 2023 in the Council Chamber for Gemma Haire and Margaret Turley who have been involved in Special Olympics for a long number of years and who represented their country and county at the Special Olympics World Games in Berlin this year.



ROADS

MAJOR PROJECTS

(Included in NDP- Funded by TII)

N24 Waterford to Cahir Scheme

The display of Preferred Transport Solution is still on schedule for Q4 2023, with the actual dates to be confirmed subject to and following successful completion of the Phase 2 TII Project Peer Review process on the Option Selection Report. We are

currently planning for a Public Display in November 2023.

Landowners within the Study Area will receive notifications on the Public Display of the Preferred Transport Solution in advance and notices will also be published in local newspapers, on local radio, on County Council's social media platforms (Kilkenny & Tipperary County Council) and on the Project Website at: <https://n24waterford2cahir.ie/news/>.

A meeting will be held with Elected Members of both Kilkenny & Tipperary County Council in advance of the Public Display to advise on the Phase 2 Preferred Transport Solution for the project. Date to be confirmed.

MINOR PROJECTS

(Not included in NDP-Funded by TII)

N24 Tower Road (Safety Scheme)

- Works are continuing to progress well.
- Bridge Works on-going.
- Earthworks substantially complete site wide. Some top soiling work continuing in verges and on embankments.
- Works at the tie ins of the Tower Road and the Ink Bottle well advanced.
- Blacktop works are on-going site wide.
- Scheme Drainage substantially complete.
- Accommodation works are on-going.



Bridge Parapet & Public Lighting Installation



Nightworks on Bridge Structure

Construction remains on schedule with substantial completion is expected by the end of 2023.

N77 Ballyragget to Ballynaslee

The tender for the construction of the N77 Scheme issued via Etenders and the OEJU in early August. 5 tenders were submitted by the tender return date of 22nd September 2023 and are undergoing tender evaluation.

The overall outturn cost for the project is expected to be in excess of €10m.

N24 Carrick Road

Simultaneous applications to An Bord Pleanála for 177AE Planning Approval and Compulsory Purchase Order Approval was made on the 25th November 2022. The public consultation period for both ran until the 20th January 2023.

There were 5 objections to the Compulsory Purchase Order Approval application. There were also 5 objections to the 177AE Planning Application.

It is a matter for An Bord Pleanála to determine if there is a requirement for oral hearings for both applications. Kilkenny County Council remains in discussion with the valuers representing objectors to the CPO to discuss their concerns.

Pavement Schemes.

The construction works in respect of the N77 Knockroe to Littlefield Pavement Scheme are substantially completed by Lagan Asphalt Ltd. Accommodation works and final snagging are on-going.



New pavement on N77 near Clintstown

Accommodation works and final snagging are on-going by Priority Construction Ltd in relation to the N77 Suttonsrath Pavement Scheme.

The design work is ongoing in respect of the N76 Callan By Pass Pavement Scheme. It has been decided to proceed to complete one full scheme in 2024 rather than a sub-divide of the scheme and space it over 2 or more years. The Callan By Pass scheme in particular is complex given its semi urban location, the presence of a major bridge structure and addressing active travel requirements. The required PAAR report is in preparation.

National Road Bridge Works.

The N10 Ossory Bridge Rehabilitation Scheme works are progressing with Cumnor Construction Ltd. The works are scheduled to be substantially completed by the end of November. Works are presently underway on the western (city side) of the structure.

The overall outturn cost for the project is expected to be just under €2m.

ENVIRONMENT

CLIMATE ACTION

Climate Action Plan

Work continues on preparing the Draft Kilkenny County Council Climate Action Plan, with actions that the Council will undertake over the next five years to address climate change and meet its statutory obligations in terms of remission reductions. The Draft Plan will be presented at the October Council meeting and will go on out on public consultation shortly after.

Final Report on the Kilkenny County Council Climate Adaptation Plan (2019-2024)

The Climate Action Office has compiled the annual progress report on the Council's Climate Adaptation Plan (2019-2024). This involved liaison with all service areas to collate updates on actions. A report was issued to the Management Team, which shows that 73% of the 226 actions across the organisation were fully completed and 25% are on-going. This is the last reporting period for the Adaptation Plan, as it will be replaced by the Local Authority Climate Action Plan (2024-2029) currently in preparation. The final report will be submitted to Climate Action Regional Office (CARO).

Public Engagement

Communication is vital in getting public buy-in and support for climate action. To help us with

this, the Climate Action Office has engaged MARLA communications to design a new logo and graphics which will be used on all climate communications. This will help build awareness about all that the Council is doing and plans to do to address climate change.

Climate Action Webpage

We are currently redesigning the climate action page on the Council's website to make it more user friendly for the public. This webpage will provide information on (i) Grants for climate projects, (ii) Kilkenny County Council's action on climate change (iii) inspiring case studies, and (iv) general information on climate change in County Kilkenny.

Climate Action Video Promotion

A climate action promotional video is presently being developed and will be completed in the second week of October. This will be the first of a number of climate action video promos that will be used to inform the wider public on climate action related information.

Community Climate Action Fund

The Community Climate Action Officer (CCAO) has continued to reach out and meet with Kilkenny Communities regarding the Community Climate Action Fund. The Fund has not yet formally launched, however successful applicants under this scheme will deliver a variety of projects that would support them and help to build low carbon communities. Kilkenny County Council has an allocation of €511,000 from the Department of Environment, Climate and Communications for delivery of the programme. Since the last CE report the CCAO has met with the following communities:

| | |
|---------------|---|
| Urlingford | Town Team, GAA Club, Urlingford Childcare |
| Kilkenny City | Kilkenny Traveller Community Movement |
| Ballyfoyle | Community Development Group/Hall, Millennium Park/Garden |
| Gowran | Athletics Club, Community Development Group, Gowran on the Move |
| Paulstown | Paulstown Development Association |
| Ballyragget | CKLP representative on behalf of Ballyragget Community Hall |
| Conahy | GAA Club |

Bring Banks Usage

The Council provides and manages 46 Bring Centres across the City and County. A total of 1,399 tonnes of recyclables were collected from our Bring Centres so far in 2023. This represents the same proportion that was collected in the prior year during the same period. Loughboy Shopping Centre (12 tonnes collected), Aldi Kilkenny City (12 tonnes collected) and Lidl Johnswell Road (10 tonnes collected) are the busiest locations in the City and Lidl-Thomastown (11 tonnes collected) is the busiest outside of the City. Environment staff are continuing to work very closely with our service providers to ensure the collection service is in keeping with demand, especially around long weekends and holiday periods.

Environment Complaints

All Environmental complaints received are logged on the CRM (Customer Relations Management) System. The number of complaints that have been received and logged by Environment staff for investigation for the nine months to the end of September 2023 was 721 compared with 737 for the same period last year (i.e. a decrease of circa 2% for the year to date). The nature of these complaints ranged from littering, illegal dumping, burning of waste and abandoned cars. The majority continue to be related to littering and illegal dumping. Whilst every effort is made to bring unacceptable environmental practice into compliance, Environment Enforcement staff continue to manage significant enforcement cases progressing through prosecution cases.

Waste Enforcement

At Kilkenny District Court on 26th September 2023 in a successful prosecution was brought by Kilkenny County Council against a resident of Co Waterford who pleaded guilty to two offences of holding, transporting, recovering or disposing of waste in a manner that caused or was likely to cause environmental pollution contrary to Section 32(1)(b) of the Waste Management Act 1996, as amended.

These offences occurred at two separate locations at Knockbrack and Listrolin in Mullinavat, Co Kilkenny on 29th March 2022 and 31st March 2022 respectively.

Judge Carty commented that the facts in this case were quite stark. She added that the photographs of the waste dumped at both sites were very distressing. She convicted the defendant and imposed fines totaling €700 payable to Kilkenny County Council and also allowed a contribution to the Council's costs in the sum of €500. The overall cost to Kilkenny Council was just under €5,000 which included our legal fees and clean up costs

Dunmore Civic Amenity Site

Our site at Dunmore continues to be one of the busiest amenity sites in the country. For the first 9 months of 2023 we have seen an increase in the volumes of material delivered to the site compared to the same period in 2022.

Environmental Awareness

Mags Whelan has been appointed to the role of Environmental Awareness Officer replacing Bernadette Moloney.

Over the next number of weeks, the EAO will be reviewing the Litter Management Plan 2021-2023 with a view to developing a new 3-year Plan for Kilkenny County Council. All sections of the organisation will feed into this process. A draft plan will be developed for consultation with the Elected Members and the SPC during Q4.

Kilkenny County Council is supporting 30 schools within the City and County as part of the Picker Pals programme for 2023/2024. This is a litter-picking programme for 1st ,2nd class or special classes in primary school. Picker Pals send a Picker Pack into the classroom and the children take turns to bring the pack home and go litter-picking with their families in their local area. The programme is administered by [VOICE Ireland](#) and Kilkenny County Council supported 15 classrooms in the 2021-22 school year.

37 schools, representing both Primary and Secondary are being funded and supported under the Coill na nOg programme. This is a collaborative project supported by the EAO and the Biodiversity Officer whereby the registered schools attain FREE tree packs to create mini-woodlands and native hedgerows in support of the [EU 3 billion trees initiative](#). Tree packs consist of 8 native trees (bare-root whips) to create a mini-woodland. Hedgerow packs consist of 25 native trees to set 7m of single-row hedge. Schools will also be given access to supporting resources including videos and worksheets to help them plant and get to know their trees.

The EAO will be assisting schools around the County to renew their membership as part of the Green Schools programme under their respective themes- Litter and Waste, Energy, Water, Travel, Biodiversity and Global Citizenship. School assessments will take place upon request.

Community Monuments Fund - The Thomple

Conservations works have recently been completed on The Thomple Historic Church & Graveyard in Thomastown. Works included the repair of a boundary wall and an underground vault. A new gate was also installed at the entrance to the underground vault for security purposes.



Repair of boundary wall at The Thomple Historic Church & Graveyard



Repair of underground vault at The Thomple Historic Church & Graveyard



New gate installed at the entrance to the underground vault at The Thomple Historic Church & Graveyard

Community Monuments Fund – Grangefertagh Church & Graveyard

Conservations works have recently commenced on site at Grangefertagh Historic Church & Graveyard which will be carried out over a 2-year period. Works included the repair of Church Walls and temporary protection of the MacGiolla Phádraig Tomb.



Recent photo of on going works on site at Grangefertagh



Recent photo of ongoing works on site at Grangefertagh.

Stream 2 – Conservation Reports

Our Consultant is currently compiling Conservation Reports for Tubrid & Rathpatrick Historic Church and Graveyards which will be completed by the end of October. These two sites will then be considered with a view of applying for capital funding to carry out conservation works on both sites in 2024.

PARKS & SPECIAL PROJECTS

South East Greenway



Since the opening of Phase 1 of the South East Greenway, from New Ross to Glenmore, visitor numbers have been impressive despite the poor weather. Circa 9,300 visitors used the Greenway in Rosbercon last August alone.

The Lot 5a (*Ferrybank to Curraghmore*) Section will be next to advance to construction. Tender assessment and recommendation report for this section has been approved by Transport Infrastructure Ireland (TII) and a Letter of Acceptance was issued to the successful contractor in early October.

A mini-competition to procure technical consultancy services, to include contract administration and supervision of Lot 5a has been approved by TII and a letter of awarded was also issued in tandem with the works contract.

Wexford County Council, as lead authority, are continuing to prepare a Technical Services Tender for a multi-disciplinary engineering consultancy team to complete all remaining phases of the Greenway. Subject to TII approval this tender will issue this month.

The Project Office would like to sincerely thank all landowners and local communities along the route for their continued co-operation with the planning and development of the Greenway.

Interpretation, Wayfinding & Orientation Plan

Fáilte Ireland have engaged The Paul Hogarth Company (TPHC) to conduct an Interpretation, Wayfinding and Orientation Plan for the Greenway. The Plan can then be used to apply for funding for the implementation of same. The following progress has been on the Plan:

- inception meeting took place involving all 3 local authorities and TII in July.
- a site visit was undertaken by TPHC in August.
- next step is to organise a public consultation on the findings in October.

Related Schemes

Greenway Link to Glenmore: The planning consultation process under Part 8 commenced in early August. Plans and particulars of the proposed development were available for inspection to 5th September last on the consult website: <https://consult.kilkenny.ie/> and at County Hall, Ferrybank Library and the Ferrybank Area Office. A well-attended open information day was also held in Glenmore Community Hall on 13th September and submissions were accepted to 19th September. 12 submissions were received and these are now being assessed.

Greenway Link to Slieverue: Further discussions with TII and possible additional design works will be required with respect to the proposed N29 over bridge, prior to commencing the planning process.

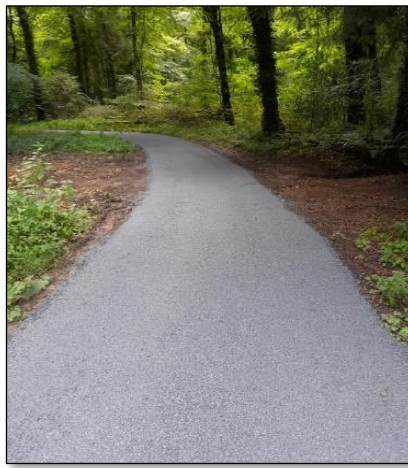
Outdoor Recreation Infrastructure Scheme (ORIS) – 2023 Works Update.

Measure 1 Funded Applications

| PROJECT NAME | STATUS |
|--|---|
| Dock Road to Barrow Valley Outdoor Activity Hub - Pedestrian/Cyclist Connectivity Link Upgrade - Graiguenamanagh | Works completed. |
| Windgap Village Loop - Repair & Enhancement of Walking Trail | Works ongoing and scheduled for completion early November. |
| The Wood Road to the River Barrow Amenity Area - Pedestrian Connectivity Link- Graiguenamanagh | Works completed. |
| Mooncoin Rose Walk - Mooncoin | Works completed. |
| Woodstock Estate Marketing and Communications Plan | O'Connell Marketing awarded 12 month service contract up to April 2024. |
| Outdoor Kilkenny Digital/Social Media, Marketing and PR Campaign 2023 | Ongoing through the Tourism Office until end 2023. |
| Castlemorris Woodland Trail Repair & Enhancement Scheme | Works completed |



Before & After Images - The Wood Road to the River Barrow Amenity Area - Pedestrian Connectivity Link and Amenity Area – Graiguenamanagh



Before & After Images – Castlemorris Woods

Measure 2 Funded Applications – Funding drawdown deadline – July 2024

| PROJECT NAME | STATUS |
|--|--|
| Millennium Forest - Trail Enhancement and Accessibility Scheme | Scope of works agreed with Coillte. Tender documents currently being prepared and agreed contractor will be procured using Coillte's Works Framework. |
| Jeninstown Wood – Walking Trail Rehabilitation Scheme | Scope of works agreed with Coillte. Tender documents currently being prepared and agreed contractor will be procured using Coillte's Works Framework. It is anticipated works will commence later this year. |

Measure 3 Application – – Funding drawdown deadline – July 2024

| PROJECT NAME | STATUS |
|---|---|
| Nore Valley Walk (Lacken Walk) – Timber Boardwalk Replacement Scheme – Consisting of the replacement of the existing 1.2m wide wooden boardwalk with a 3m - 3.5m wide boardwalk constructed using composite or recycled plastic materials | Technical Services procurement for the design and contact administration completed. Consultants appointed. Works have commenced on the design of the new boardwalk. |

Applications for Measures 2 and 3 under the 2023 ORIS call are currently being prepared and the submission deadline for same is the 27th October 2023. Full details will be provided in next month's CE Report.

Amenity Grants

In 2023, 180 applicants under the Amenity Grant scheme were awarded funding totalling €140,000. This funding enabled groups across the County to maintain their own outdoor recreational spaces. The range of works typically involve tree planting, grass cutting, planting flowers and many other amenity type projects. Successful applicants were required to submit documentation (receipts in respect of expenses incurred and photographs of completed projects) to claim their grants by 29th September, 2023.

Community Recognition Fund

Of the €948,063 secured by the Council, under the Community Recognition Fund, €442,612 was allocated to the Project Office and Parks Section. The aim of this Fund is to support the development and enhancement of community infrastructure and facilities in recognition of the contribution being made by communities across the country in welcoming and hosting significant numbers of Ukrainians as a consequence of the terrible conflict in their home country. This allocation, which is 100% funded, allowed the following projects to progress:

- Kilkenny Countryside Park - Phase 2.....€329,405
- Castlecomer MUGA & Outdoor Gym -Upgrade.....€ 25,630
- Ballyragget – Fair Green & Playground - Enhancement.....€ 34,757
- Bennettsbridge Playground Enhancement€ 35,500
- Kilmacow Playground - Upgrade€17,320

Contracts have been awarded for all projects and works are progressing on same and it is anticipated that works will be completed on each project this year.

Woodstock Gardens & Arboretum

In the earlier part of this year O' Connell Marketing (OCM) were engaged to assist in the promotion and marketing of Woodstock Gardens and Arboretum. Their primary focus to-date included regular posts including video content, across various media platforms, encouraging users to the Woodstock website to learn more about the Gardens in a bid to increase visitors numbers.



As part of this marketing and promotion campaign Woodstock Gardens and Arboretum will host a Spooktacular Halloween celebration themed *The Ghoulish Gardens!!* On the day visitors will enjoy a day filled with enchantment and eerie excitement as the Gardens and Arboretum transform into a magical Halloween wonderland for the entire family to enjoy.

The event, which is ticket only, will be held on Monday the 30th October from 11am to 5pm.

PLANNING

Development Management

| Planning Summary | Total as at end of September | |
|--------------------------------|------------------------------|------|
| | 2022 | 2023 |
| Planning Applications Received | 578 | 596 |
| Planning Applications Granted | 448 | 396 |
| Planning Applications Refused | 65 | 86 |
| Complaints Received | 62 | 73 |
| Warning Letters Issued | 68 | 68 |
| Enforcements Notices Issued | 27 | 35 |
| Cases Closed | 63 | 109 |

FORWARD PLANNING

Masterplans:

Abbey Quarter

The Council has, following considerable fieldwork and extensive public consultation, prepared a draft Masterplan User Guide for an

extended Abbey Quarter area (to include Vicar Street & Greensbridge Street), along with a review of policy and the Urban Design Code (2018).

The Draft Masterplan User Guide was on public display from Friday June 2nd to Friday June 30th June (both dates inclusive) and two in-person information sessions were held during this period along with an online information session.

A total of 18 submissions were received on this Masterplan with the Interim Chief Executive's report presented at the September Council meeting, at which the Elected Members adopted this User Guide with several amendments. The Masterplan User Guide along with a review of policy and the Urban Design Code (2018) is now being finalised for publication in the coming weeks.

St Canice's Campus

A draft Masterplan has been completed and the necessary environmental reports are currently being prepared. It is anticipated that the draft Masterplan and environmental documents will be presented to the Kilkenny City Municipal District Members shortly, before being placed on display for a round of public consultation.

Loughmacask

This Masterplan was adopted at the June Council Meeting and the adopted plan is also now published. In the coming months, a variation to the Kilkenny City and County Development Plan 2021 - 2027 (CDP) will go before the Elected Members to incorporate the Loughmacask Masterplan into the CDP.

Urlingford

The Urlingford Town Centre Masterplan was presented to the Castlecomer Municipal District Members at their September meeting, where it was adopted. The Masterplan and environmental documents are being finalised for a publication date within the next week.

Ballyragget/Paulstown/Kilmacow

Turleys Ireland were appointed to prepare Masterplans for the settlements of Ballyragget, Paulstown and Kilmacow. Three public meetings, one for each town, took place on the 18th, 19th and 20th of January last, respectively. With due consideration of inputs from these meetings, the Consultants have submitted the draft Masterplans to the Planning Authority for assessment. The

assessment will be completed in the coming weeks and the three associated environmental reports are also nearing completion. The draft Masterplans will be presented to the respective Municipal Districts at their October or November meetings, prior to them going on public display.

Taking in Charge

The following estates were taken in charge at the September Council Meeting:

- Lakeside Housing Estate and Cycle way
- Friarshill, Graiguenamanagh
- Black Church Square, Inistioge

The taking in charge of steps at Talbots Inch was initiated at the September Council meeting.

E-Planning

Applications through e-planning continue to increase. Approximately 75% of all planning applications received are now through the e-planning portal.

Users must register on the e-planning portal at: <https://planning.localgov.ie/en/local-government-ireland-planning-system>, where after they can then make a planning application, submit documentation online with the application and submit further information later if required. The status of applications can be viewed quickly and easily. Paper applications are still accepted and the same timelines apply to both an online application and a paper application.

Active Land Management

There are 34 sites on the Derelict Sites Register. Two sites in Callan - a house on the Coolagh Road and Lower Bridge Street were added to the Register during September, and 1 site on John Street in the City was served notice of intent to be added to the Register.

A Final Map of lands in scope for the new Residential Zoned Land Tax will be published by 1st December 2023. A proposed Variation to the Development Plan will be published in October, proposing two minor changes to zoning in the City, to ensure appropriate application of the tax.

There are 24 Vacant Sites on the Vacant Sites Register and the number of cancelled entries due to site activation or improvement is 23. The Vacant Site Levy will be replaced by the Residential Zoned Land Tax in 2024, but any outstanding levies will remain due to the Council.

Conservation

The Conservation Office manages all protected structures in Kilkenny County and City. These structures are recognised for their Architectural, Historical, Archaeological, Artistic, Cultural, Scientific, Technical, Social special interest. An advisory service on conservation matters is provided to the public and colleagues, while the conservation grants and funding applications are also delivered.

Conservation Grants 2023: Successful conservation grant projects are underway and working towards completion. Some of the projects already complete are:

- Re-thatching of an 1800s cottage
- Reinstatement of a water wheel to mill, which hasn't worked since the 1960s.
- Window repairs.
- Roof repairs.



Re-roofing of Thatch Cottage, Cloneen, County Kilkenny



New water wheel for Mill in Mullinavat, County Kilkenny

Heritage Stewardship Programme 2023

The laser scan and photogrammetry survey of two 16th century buildings on Parliament Street, Kilkenny City is progressing. A number of successful lectures were held for the public as part of Heritage Week 2023.

Kilkenny's Built Heritage Stocktake

The Conservation Officer has been liaising with the Department of Housing, Heritage and Local Government to undertake a stocktake of protected structures and structures included on the National Inventory of Architectural Heritage (NIAH) in Graiguenamanagh and Castlecomer. The stocktake will survey vacancy and defective elements visible on the exterior of these buildings within both towns.

Building Control

Valid commencement notices submitted: 245
for the first 9 months of 2023

| | |
|---------------------|------|
| September 2023..... | 245 |
| September 2022..... | 266 |
| September 2021..... | 368 |
| September 2020..... | 2255 |

50 Disability Access Applications were received during the first 9 months of this year

| | |
|---------------------|----|
| September 2023..... | 50 |
| September 2022..... | 58 |
| September 2021..... | 44 |
| September 2020..... | 61 |

COMMUNITY & CULTURE

Pride of Place

Kilkenny County Council nominated three exceptional community groups for the prestigious IPB Pride of Place Awards 2023. These nominations celebrate the outstanding contributions made by local organisations in enhancing the quality of life within their communities and fostering a spirit of unity and pride.

The St. Canice's Community Action group were nominated for the Community Category, the Freshford.ie group were nominated under the Population category and the Callan Community Energy group were nominated under the category for Climate Change & Biodiversity. Each group were visited by the judges Mr. John Fitzgerald, former City Manager of Dublin City Council along with Mr. Declan Nelson, former County Manager of Westmeath County Council, on September 14th and 15th, 2023 to assess these community initiatives.

The winners of the IPB Pride of Place Awards will be revealed during a gala awards ceremony scheduled to take place in Armagh in November 2023.



Community Group pictured outside of the Fr. Mc Grath Centre with the visiting judges and Kilkenny County Council Officials.

HERITAGE

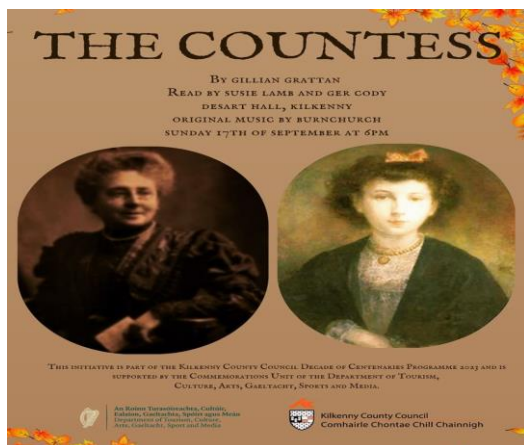
The History Show on KCLR

The History Show on KCLR has been commissioned for another year. Presented and produced by John Moynihan, this series will showcase Heritage Projects that are underway across the County and highlight creative collaborations between people and communities, artists, archaeologists, historians and archivists. The series is funded through the Creative Ireland Programme, Kilkenny County Council which is supported by the Department of Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht and Sport and Media. It is aired each Wednesday evening 6-7pm and you can listen back at: <https://kclr96fm.com/the-history-show/>



The Countess by Gillian Grattan

A reading of a play called *The Countess* written and produced by Gillian Grattan took place at the Desert Hall on Sunday 17th September. The play explores the life of one of the most fascinating characters in Kilkenny's History, Ellen Cuffe Lady Desert and explores her philanthropy in the County along with her political involvement. This initiative is part of the Kilkenny County Council Decade of Centenaries Programme 2023 and is supported by the Commemorations Unit of the Department of Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sports and Media.



Survey of Mass Paths in County Kilkenny

Phase I of a survey to record mass paths in County Kilkenny is underway. This will be the first survey of its kind in Ireland and the aim of phase I of the project is to develop a methodology for recording mass paths and pilot the methodology in two parishes in County Kilkenny. The Survey is being carried out by Pat Reid, Programme Manager of the Heritage Council's Heritagemaps.ie. Mass paths are important and an under-recorded part of our cultural heritage. They serve as reminders of the challenges faced by Catholics during the penal times and also reminders of a later era when they were still used by people in rural areas as pedestrian routes to mass and visiting neighbours. If they are not recorded soon, their presence and value will have faded from the public memory. We are currently seeking any information on mass paths in the parish of Conahy. If you have any information about mass paths in this Parish, please contact heritage@kilkennycoco.ie This project is co-funded by the Heritage Council and Kilkenny County Council.



Autumn Clean-up Awareness Campaign

The fifth campaign of the Kilkenny Heritage Awareness Programme took place in September on KCLR, CRKC and BEAT FM. The theme of this campaign is *Autumn Clean-up* and it encouraged members of the public to leave a corner of their

garden for nature and invites them to order a free copy of *Gardening for Biodiversity* from the Heritage Office. This campaign is co-funded by the Heritage Council and Kilkenny County Council.

ARTS

Culture Night 2023

Culture Night took place on Friday 22nd September from 4pm until late. Venues and groups in Kilkenny took part in these celebrations and hosted 21 events throughout the County. The evening was very successful overall with over 1,900 people taking part. For a full list of events please visit:

https://culturenight.ie/events/?_sft_location=kilkenny



Emerging Curator In Residence Programme

The Emerging Curator, Shannon Carrol, launched the exhibition "You Never Miss The Water Until It Runs Dry" as part of the Culture Night celebrations. The exhibition was a multidisciplinary exhibition featuring work by artists Mary Conroy, Bernadette Kiely, Laura Skehan and Claudia Breitschmid. Their work is a meditation on our relationship with water and ecological issues, exploring past, present and future considerations of this relationship.

As part of the launch an artist's discussion took place with artist Bernadette Kiely, Marie Hanlon and Curator Shannon Carroll where they reflected on local ecologies, changing landscapes and the future of our rivers and water sources. Their work explores and attempts to understand a new landscape as we approach unknown and perilous times. A total of 50 people attended and joined in the discussion.

Your Voice Matters – Taking Yourself Seriously as a Writer Webinar

As part of the Your Voice Matters programme of a series of in-person workshops and online group coaching sessions and seminars to support Kilkenny writers, 'Taking Yourself Seriously as a

Writer' webinar took place on Wednesday 30th September. Creative Coach Anne Tannam went through the five steps of a serious writer. Over 30 people attended the webinar with positive feedback from the attendees.

The final Your Voice Matters session for the year will take place in person as workshop 'Finding Your North Star' on Wednesday 25th October. The workshop will allow attendees to identify their purpose and values. Learn how to manage self-sabotaging behaviours, embracing the creative life and build resilience in their writing practice.

Haumea Ecoversity Bursary

Kilkenny based artists and cultural professionals are invited to apply for a bursary award to study with the Haumea Ecoversity. There are two separate courses to avail of; Essential Eco literacy or the Earth Charter vision and values course. The courses are online over 7 weeks. Both courses are for mid-career creatives and cultural Professionals, are self-paced and for all art forms. The Arts Office held an information session regarding the bursary with the founder, tutor and ecological artist Dr Cathy Fitzgerald on the Tuesday 26th September at 7pm. The session gave attendees an overview about the courses.

The Arts Show

The Arts Show, with support and funding from Kilkenny County Council Arts Office and Creative Ireland commenced this month on KCLR. The radio show profiles and highlights professional practitioners and experiences across art forms and community projects in Kilkenny.

In the first episode, presenter Una Ni Mhaoldhomhnaigh chatted to Kilkenny artist Pauline O' Connell, profiling writer Caoileann O' Mahony, and Arts Officer Mary Butler about Culture Night. The programme continues on Tuesday nights from 6 -7pm.



Artist in Residence- Youth Art

The residency is underway with the artist Carrie Lynam having completed the first of the workshops with the groups. Each group will

shape the focus and contents of their own workshop programme over the coming weeks. It will be interesting to see the approaches that the two different groups take.

The Sandwich Story Exhibition Part of Bookville Festival.

All the artworks have now been framed and are due to be delivered on 2nd October with the installation of the exhibition and window graphics on October 3rd. The exhibition is open to the public every day from 10-5pm from 5th - 18th October.

Arted TAP (Teacher Artist Partnership)

Kilkenny Education Centre and the Arts Office will work together on pairing trained artists with appropriate schools. A teacher and artist planning event is scheduled for 25th October with workshops due to commence the week of 6th November, 2023.

Artists Get-togethers

A pilot series of artist CPD's has been programmed in response to the findings from an evaluation session with artists at the end of ArtEd earlier this year. Artists whose practice involves working with children felt the need for more opportunities to meet similar artists and learn from each other. Four sessions for artists has been arranged running once a week through October. All TAP trained artists based in Kilkenny have been invited and there has been a healthy response from artists signing up to attend.

Creative Ireland

Creative Communities Engagement Officer

Majella Keating has been appointed the new Creative Communities Engagement Officer with Kilkenny County Council.

Cruinniú na nÓg 2024 consultation is taking place in an effort to ensure that young people's voices are central to the development of Cruinniú na nÓg and so their opinions can shape the artistic and creative activities for the coming year. Survey results from across the County are currently being submitted and collated.

Focused consultation groups were organised and local artists have been enlisted by Kilkenny Arts Office to facilitate the workshops. The focus groups work primarily with the travelling community, Ukrainian refugees, children and young people in the Kilkenny City and rural areas.

Biodiversity

National Hedgerow Week

Kilkenny County Council's Heritage Office supported National Hedgerow Week which ran from the 1st - 8th of September, 2023. Organised by Teagasc and the Heritage Council it highlighted the importance of hedgerows. While providing shelter and food for a myriad of species, hedgerows act as wildlife corridors permitting the movement of wildlife, they also capture and store carbon dioxide making them invaluable allies in the fight against climate change. From a farming perspective, they act as windbreaks, protect crops and livestock and prevent soil erosion.

Autumn Fruits of the Dunmore Mass Path



Photo Credit; Vicky's Photography

Kilkenny County Council's Biodiversity Officer organised a foraging walk led by Monica Fleming that incorporated the Dunmore Mass Path which will be a pedestrian link between Dunmore Church to the new Dunmore Countryside Park. Due to the popularity of this event the walk was ran twice over the same evening to accommodate all those who expressed an interest in attending.



Coill na nÓg

Coill na nÓg was launched in September to coincide with National Hedgerow Week and is

being coordinated by "Biodiversity in Schools". The Council created an opportunity for 41 schools to participate through the Local Biodiversity Action Fund to enable discussion in schools on why hedgerows are so important to our countryside. Participating schools will receive native trees or a hedgerow kit with planting instructions along with curriculum links support.

Biodiversity Action Plans

Through the Local Biodiversity Action Fund, three communities are undertaking a biodiversity survey of their local area. Community representatives from Johnstown met with the lead ecologist in September and the findings of the recent habitat survey was explained and a discussion took place to determine possible community actions which could be undertaken to boost biodiversity locally. Having a Biodiversity Action Plan will provide guidance and highlight opportunities for community action. Piltown and Ballyragget will be undergoing a similar process in October.

LEO

Summary of 2023 Awards to Businesses

- €267,417 in direct financial assistance was approved for 14 manufacture /export service businesses in located throughout the County. This includes €64,834 in Business Expansion Grant assistance, €148,190 in Priming assistance and €54,393 awarded in feasibility study grant assistance.
- 10 Technical Assistance for Micro Exporter grant awarded to support businesses in exploring new export market opportunities.
- 11 Businesses have commenced LEAN one to one consultancy programmes to investigate possible resource efficiencies and process improvements their businesses.
- 2 Business is availing of the Digital Start programme to prepare and implement a plan for the adoption of digital tools and techniques across the enterprise.
- 33 business have been approved a Trading Online Voucher totalling €67,425 to support the enhancement of their online trading capacity.
- 2 Intellectual Property (IP) Start Grant has been approved to support a client company in obtaining expert IP advisory and support services in relation to Trademarks.

- 1 Agile Digital Process Innovation Grant award of €138,782.
- 7 Green for Micro Grant awarded. This scheme supports businesses to becoming greener and environmentally friendly.
- 10 applicants have been supported to make loan applications to the Micro Finance Ireland loan fund.
- 746 people participated on focused small business training, including 72 people participating on the Starting Your Business Programme.
- 442 businesses have availed of specialised business specific mentoring on a variety of topics including finance, marketing, social media marketing and HR.

Green for Business Showcase Event

Kilkenny County Council's Local Enterprise Office Climate Action Team and the South East Energy Agency hosted an event to showcase Funding and Supports for Going Green. The event took place on Thursday 14th September and guest speaker for the event was Duncan Stewart, well known and respected environmentalist.

Representatives from a range of state agencies and funding organisations such as the Enterprise Ireland, Microfinance Ireland, South East Energy Agency, KCETB, Bank of Ireland, AIB, St Canice's CU, SEAI, Kilkenny Leader Partnership were showcased. A discussion panel with local entrepreneurs took place, hosted by Eimear Ní Bhraonáin. This focused on their own experiences in bringing green initiatives into their business.



Business Briefing 2023

A breakfast briefing to the business community and construction industry took place on September 19th in the Newpark Hotel. Speakers provided an update on key housing developments in the City and Environs, Kilkenny's credentials as a destination of choice,

the Abbey Quarter Regeneration Project and Abbott Group's ambitions for their Kilkenny site. Chief Executive Lar Power, Director of Services Sean McKeown, Abbey Quarter Development Director Tony Lauhoff and guest speaker Sam Kamali Abbott Group presented to the audience.

The event was also an opportunity to officially launch the new [belongkilkenny.ie](http://www.belongkilkenny.ie) website and social media platform, along with the upgraded investkilkenny.ie website.



Remote Working Hub – Promotional Campaign



September saw the launch of a radio, paper and digital marketing campaign to promote the number of community and privately-owned remote working hub spaces in Kilkenny. The Campaign not only promotes the available desks, it promotes the quality of life in Kilkenny as a location to work. <https://belongkilkenny.ie/careers-kilkenny/remote-working-hubs/>



Kilkenny Tourism and visitkilkenny.ie

Kilkenny Tourism hosted its 2023 AGM on 12th September at the Parade Tower in Kilkenny. The event saw partners in the Tourism and Hospitality Sector come together to both review the previous years activity and to also look towards the end of this year, the off season and further into next season for planning and activation measures.

Pat Crotty stepped down from the role of Chairperson of Kilkenny Tourism and the members thanked Pat for all his work throughout the year and wished him well in his new role as CE of the Vintners Association of Ireland. Kilkenny Tourism acknowledged the support of Kilkenny County Council towards its activities and in meeting its objectives and is looking forward to maintaining and growing this partnership into the future.

| Profile | Audience | Net Audience Growth | Published Posts | Impressions | Engagements | Engagement Rate (per Impression) | Video Views |
|--|---------------|---------------------|-----------------|------------------|----------------|----------------------------------|----------------|
| Reporting Period | 72,281 | 3,616 | 626 | 9,147,009 | 171,003 | 1.9% | 525,484 |
| Jan 1, 2023 – Aug 31, 2023 | ↗ 5.3% | ↗ 8.2% | ↘ 19.2% | ↗ 69.5% | ↗ 59.9% | ↘ 5.6% | ↗ 77% |
| Compare to | 68,657 | 3,341 | 775 | 5,397,839 | 106,925 | 2% | 296,910 |
| May 3, 2022 – Dec 31, 2022 | | | | | | | |
|  @LoveKilkenny | 7,887 | -64 | 161 | 102,473 | 3,080 | 3% | 8,967 |
|  Visit Kilkenny | 46,497 | 1,832 | 182 | 6,512,547 | 153,145 | 2.4% | 272,359 |
|  visitkilkenny | 17,897 | 1,848 | 283 | 2,531,989 | 14,778 | 0.6% | 244,158 |

The marketing report presented by O’Connell Marketing at the AGM, this showed a strong digital and social media performance for Kilkenny as a tourism destination for 2023. Year on year figures indicate growth in visitors to all platforms over the year with an impressive “click through” number to members own web-sites of 23,737.



Festivals and Events

Kilkenny County Council continues to support our year-round calendar of events with September hosting the fifth Kilkenny Animated programme. The festival is hosted by five-time Academy Award® nominated animation studio, Cartoon Saloon and award-winning Lighthouse Studios and is set against and inspired by the backdrop of Kilkenny’s medieval streets and slipways at the heart of Ireland’s Ancient East.

Failte Ireland Supports

Kilkenny County Councils Tourism Development Strategy 2023-2028

The draft Tourism Development Strategy was presented to SPC at its September meeting where it received approval to be uploaded to Consult.kilkenny.ie for the month of October for public consultation. Following receipt of all submissions the strategy will be finalised and brought to the full Council by year end for approval.

This strategy will map Kilkenny County Council’s vision and focus for tourism development throughout the City and County for the next 5 years and will align with Failte Irelands Destination Experience Development Plan for the County.



HOUSING

The Directorate of Housing incorporates a wide range of services for applicants and tenants to facilitate and support the provision of independent and supported accommodation.

The following information gives the up to date progress for 2023 under the various support services.

HOMELESS SERVICES

| HOMELESS SERVICES SUMMARY SEPTEMBER 2023 | |
|--|-----|
| Homeless Presentations | 47 |
| Homeless Assessment Outcomes | |
| Prevention & Interventions | 43 |
| Emergency Service | 3 |
| Not eligible / Did not avail of service | 1 |
| HAP Place Finder Service | |
| No of Homeless HAP tenancies @ 1 st day of month | 120 |
| No of Homeless HAP tenancies created during month | 1 |
| No of Homeless HAP tenancies in place @ last day of month | 121 |
| Number of Homeless HAP tenancy breakdowns | |
| Other Social Housing Tenancies supported / created during month | 6 |
| Households in Temporary Emergency Supported Accommodation at September 30th | 32 |
| Households in Temporary Emergency B&B accommodation | 6 |
| Households in Temporary Emergency B&B Accommodation that are families | 5 |
| Households (<i>singles/couples</i>) in Transition Emergency Accommodation (<i>Own Front Door</i>) | 31 |
| Households (Families) in Transition Emergency Accommodation (OFD) | 12 |

Homeless Prevention Measures

The Government have put in place a number of measures to prevent homelessness arising from the reactivation of notices of termination of tenancies in June 2023.

We are currently providing advice and directing Tenants to the appropriate services required to prevent homelessness. Where a household is in receipt of a valid notice to quit and requires assistance in establishing what options are available to them to avoid potential homelessness they are advised to contact the Housing Office at its dedicated email address NTQEnquiries@kilkennycoco.ie. Further details are available on www.kilkennycoco.ie.

Any tenants who may have received a notice of termination or a landlord who has issued a notice of termination to their tenants should direct any queries to the dedicated email provided and all queries will be responded to in a timely manner.

SOCIAL HOUSING ASSESSMENT

| SOCIAL HOUSING SUPPORT APPLICATION SUMMARY SEPTEMBER 2023 | |
|---|-------|
| Number awaiting Social Housing Support at September 30 th (Gross Need) | 1,628 |
| Number awaiting Social Housing Support at September 30 th (Net Need) | 820 |
| No. of Social Housing Applications received in September | 107 |
| No. of applications incomplete / awaiting further information / clarification | 53 |
| No. of applications validated and ready for assessment during the month | 16 |
| No. of applications assessed during September | 23 |
| No. of applications awaiting assessment as @ September 30 th | 71 |

| HAP Summary Year to date 2023 | |
|--------------------------------------|-------|
| Total active HAP tenancies | 624 |
| New HAP tenancies set up | 44 |
| HAP allocated Social Housing | 55 |
| Closed HAP tenancies | 112 |
| HAP Rent Reviews | 241 |
| Other tenancy amendments | 585 |
| HAP calls received | 2,700 |

RENT-A-ROOM SCHEME

Announcements have been made in the media that the Rent -a- Room scheme will be extended to local authority social housing tenancies. This action is included in Housing For All and seeks to secure additional accommodation due to growing pressures in the private rental sector.

The Rent -a- Room Scheme currently allows a householder to earn up to €14,000 per year tax-free by renting out a room (or rooms) in their home to “private tenants”.

Recent announcements indicate the Governments intention to extend this scheme to local authority tenants but no details are yet in place. The Council cannot process any applications to proceed under this scheme at present. There are many concerns around the implementation of this scheme which need to be addressed before it can proceed.

TENANCY MANAGEMENT

The Tenancy Management Team deal with allocations, maintenance and anti-social behaviour complaints in relation to our tenants. Below is a summary of activity in September and to-date this year:

| | |
|--|-------|
| LA/RAS/Leasing allocations in September (<i>offers made</i>):..... | 17 |
| LA/RAS/Leasing allocations to September (<i>offers made</i>):..... | 113 |
| Tenant Liaison Officer cases in September:..... | 32 |
| Maintenance Calls for September: | 693 |
| Maintenance Calls year to date | 4,709 |

The Tenancy Management Section has commenced legal proceedings in respect of a number of tenancies where repossession orders have been sought. Where anti-social behaviour is ongoing, tenancy notifications and warning notices continue to be served and monitored. Where tenants engage in anti-social behaviour relating to offences under the Misuse of Drugs Act or violence and intimidation resulting in criminal charges the local authority will take enforcement action to terminate the tenancy and alternative social housing supports will not be provided.

PRIVATE HOUSE GRANTS

The 2023 housing grants allocation has been received from the Department of Housing, in the amount of **€1,991,076**, comprised of €1,592,861 (80%) grant and €398,215 (20%) KCC contribution.

This allocation exceeds the amount included in the budget for 2023 and reflects the Department’s confidence in the Council to meet and exceed its targets for 2023. The funding approval also confirms that the local authority cannot exceed the maximum grant amounts under legislation and that these maximum amounts have not been revised.

| Grants Approved & Committed up to 30th September 2023 | | |
|---|------------|-------------------|
| Scheme | No. | Amount |
| HGD - Housing Adaptation Grant | 157 | €1,685,383 |
| MAG - Mobility Aid Grant | 17 | €65,784 |
| HOP - Housing Aid for Older Persons | 205 | €1,047,208 |
| Total | 379 | €2,798,375 |

| Grants Paid out up to 30 th September, 2023 | | |
|--|------------|-------------------|
| Scheme | No. | Amount |
| HGD - Housing Adaptation Grant | 60 | €652,794 |
| MAG - Mobility Aid Grant | 7 | €31,117 |
| HOP - Housing Aid for Older Persons | 118 | €597,761 |
| Total | 185 | €1,281,672 |

HOUSING LOANS

| Housing Loan Activity 1 st January - 30 th September, 2023 | | | | | |
|--|-----------|----------|-----------------|-------------|-------------------|
| Loan Type | Received | Approved | Amount Approved | Number Paid | Amount Paid |
| Rebuilding Ireland Home Loan | 0 | 0 | €0 | 1 | €62,500 |
| Local Authority Home Loan | 36 | 7 | €785,400 | 9 | €1,013,900 |
| Caravan Loan | 1 | 1 | €40,000 | 1 | €40,000 |
| Total | 37 | 8 | €825,400 | 11 | €1,116,400 |

VACANT HOMES

The Vacant Properties Refurbishment Grant, Croí Cónaithe is one of the measures to address vacancy and efficient use of existing stock in Housing for All. The grant is aimed at bringing vacant and derelict properties back into residential use. The scheme was originally for people who were refurbishing vacant properties for use as their principal private residence. The Government has recently announced that as of 1st May 2023, there will be a number of changes to this scheme including that the scheme will be expanded to property owners who wish to refurbish their vacant property for rental purposes. The detail and guidance regarding the modified scheme have not yet been issued by the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage. There has been a substantial increase in the number of calls to the Housing Department regarding this scheme and a register of all inquiries to the Council will be kept for follow up when further details of the revised scheme are available.

All queries in relation to this grant should be submitted by email to Vacanthomes@Kilkennycoco.ie and will be responded to in a timely manner.

| Vacant Homes Refurbishment Grant as at 31 st September 2023 | |
|--|-----|
| No. of Applications Submitted to date | 94 |
| No. of Approvals/ Approvals in Principle to date | 34 |
| No. of Queries during the month of September | 109 |

VOIDS

At the end of September 2023 there were **52 vacant units** of local authority accommodation awaiting refurbishment or remediation works.

Under the 2023 Voids Maintenance Programme Kilkenny County Council have recently received Department funding in the amount of €528,000 for renovations to 48 units.

Works are ongoing on this Voids Maintenance Programme and its envisaged that a minimum of 75 units will be completed under this programme during 2023.

HOUSING CAPITAL

Build Units Delivered By Year

| Scheme Type | 2022 | 2023 | Total |
|--------------------------------|------|------|-------|
| Four Stage | 20 | 43 | 63 |
| CAS CONSTRUCTION | 20 | 12 | 32 |
| SHIP CONSTRUCTION | | 31 | 31 |
| Single Stage | 95 | 27 | 122 |
| CAS CONSTRUCTION TURNKEY | 6 | | 6 |
| SHIP CONSTRUCTION SINGLE STAGE | 8 | 1 | 9 |
| SHIP CONSTRUCTION TURNKEY | 81 | 25 | 106 |
| SHIP SINGLE STAGE RENEWAL | | 1 | 1 |
| CALF | 23 | | 23 |
| AHB CALF Turnkey | 21 | | 21 |
| CALF Part V | 2 | | 2 |
| LA Part V | 6 | 5 | 11 |
| LA Part V | 6 | 5 | 11 |
| Total | 144 | 75 | 219 |

Build Units Projected by Year

| Proposed Units | 2023 | 2024 | 2025 | Total |
|--------------------------------|------|------|------|-------|
| Four Stage | | 97 | 97 | 194 |
| CAS CONSTRUCTION | | 3 | 36 | 39 |
| SHIP CONSTRUCTION | | 94 | 61 | 155 |
| Single Stage | 2 | 29 | 35 | 66 |
| CAS CONSTRUCTION TURNKEY | | 4 | | 4 |
| SHIP CONSTRUCTION SINGLE STAGE | 1 | 2 | | 3 |
| SHIP CONSTRUCTION TURNKEY | | 22 | 35 | 57 |
| SHIP SINGLE STAGE RENEWAL | 1 | 1 | | 2 |
| CALF | 99 | 12 | | 111 |
| AHB CALF | 88 | 4 | | 92 |
| CALF Part V | 11 | 8 | | 19 |
| LA Part V | 1 | 26 | 5 | 32 |
| LA Part V | 1 | 26 | 5 | 32 |
| Total | 102 | 164 | 137 | 403 |



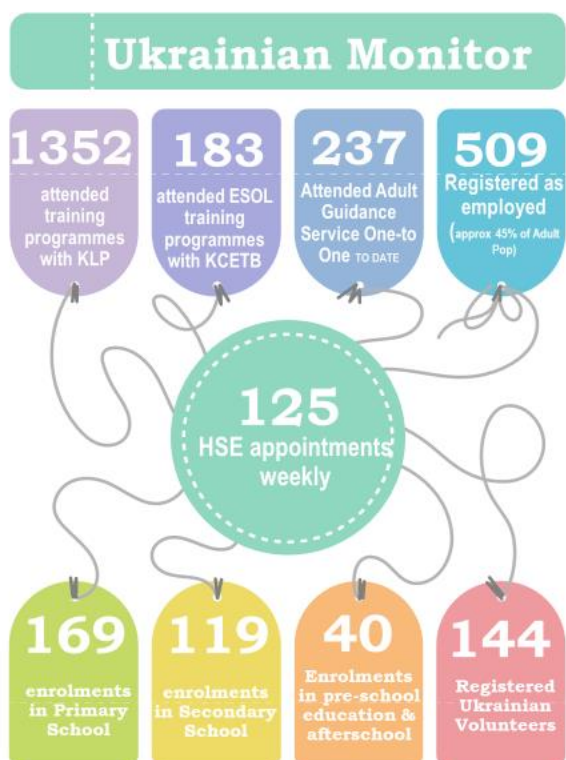
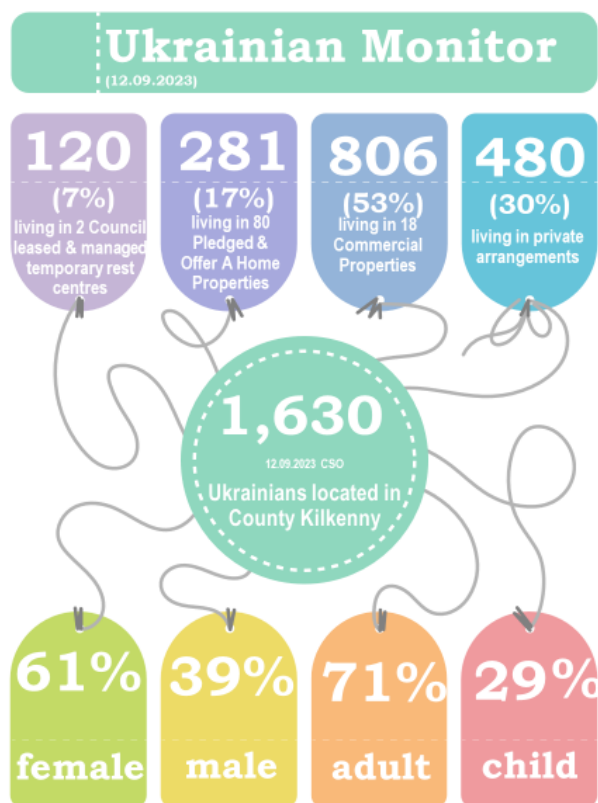
"Legan Grange and Legan Court, Thomastown – 25 units completed in September 2023"



Nyne Park, Kilkenny City – Units due for completion by year end, in partnership with Cluid Housing



UKRAINIAN RESPONSE UNIT



Offer A Home

The 'Offer a Home' programme is seeking property owners who have a house, apartment or holiday home that is not currently being used to offer it to people and families from Ukraine who need a safe place to stay for short-term accommodation.

The 'Offer a Home' programme is being managed by Local Authorities on behalf of Government.

A Government tax-free recognition payment of €800 per month is available to property owners offering accommodation to those fleeing the Ukraine.

Further details are available on the 'Offer a Home' programme on www.offerahome.ie or contact the Kilkenny County Council Ukrainian Response Team.

| | |
|--|-----|
| Properties Offered..... | 72 |
| Properties Assessed as suitable | 48 |
| Allocated Properties | 43 |
| Registered Ukrainians in | |
| Occupied Properties | 148 |
| Properties that require Minor Works | 11 |
| Properties – unsuitable/ require Major Works ... | 4 |
| Properties Withdrawn | 13 |

Ukrainian Independence Day in Kilkenny on 24th August, 2023

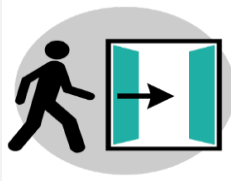
Ukrainians living in Kilkenny gathered to mark Ukrainian Independence Day on Wednesday, 24th August. The national holiday celebrates Ukrainian's independence from the former Soviet Union in 1991, but this year it also marked 18 months since Russia's invasion plunged the country into a war for survival. Many Irish people attended this event. The idea of celebration was to bring the Ukrainian community together to give them hope and to say thank you to the Irish people for supporting Ukraine. For Ukrainians now living in Kilkenny, it was very important to be able to celebrate their culture with beautiful songs, dances and traditional music.



LIBRARY



30,244 Items borrowed



16,693 Visitors



2,014 Members

Activator Poles

Kilkenny Recreation and Sports Partnership (KRSP) and Library Service have joined forces to provide members of the public with a new and exciting physical activity opportunity by providing training and access to activator poles. Activator poles have been developed to allow those with balance or mobility issues to keep fit by providing stability and support when walking. Activator poles can now be borrowed from four of our library branches: Loughboy, Castlecomer, Ferrybank and Graiguenamanagh. This fantastic initiative was launched with a 4-week taster session in Ferrybank Library.



Energy Efficiency Audits

Energy efficiency audits have been carried out across the branch network and mitigation measures with regards to more efficient lighting and heating have been applied to 7 of the 8 library branches.



Library Activities

| Events | In Branch | Online |
|---------|-----------|---------|
| 203 | 199 | 0 |
| Offsite | Live | Numbers |
| 11 | 191 | 2368 |

This month we had lots of activities and events across our libraries. These events included denim upcycling workshops in City Library, a seed-saving course in Loughboy Library, an introduction to felt toy-making workshop in Castlecomer Library, a lino printing course in Thomastown Library, a zero food waste workshop in Graiguenamanagh Library, a patchwork class in Urlingford Library, a sensory friendly storytime in Ferrybank Library and a number of community book clubs which were facilitated by Mobile Library staff.



To celebrate Sustainable Development Goals [SDG] week, we held a number of talks and events in our library branches including a clothes swap in Loughboy Library, a Climate Change and Sustainable Living Exhibition in Ferrybank Library, a sustainable art workshop in Graig Library and a winter bee-keeping talk in City Library.

| SDG WEEK AT KILKENNY LIBRARY | | | |
|--------------------------------------|--|---|--|
| SEPTEMBER 27TH |  | ZERO FOOD WASTE DEMO WITH DENISE WALSH | LOCATION: CASTLECOMER TIME: 12.30 P.M. - 2 P.M. |
| SEPTEMBER 27TH |  | OUR CLIMATE JOURNEY (WORKSHOP FOR ADULTS) WITH SLI WATERFORD | LOCATION: FERRYBANK TIME: 7 P.M. - 8 P.M. |
| SEPTEMBER 28TH & 29TH |  | SUSTAINABLE ART - PAPER FABRIC WITH JAN MORASH | LOCATION: GRAIGUENAMANAGH TIME: 10.30 P.M. - 12.30 P.M. |
| SEPTEMBER 28TH |  | TALK - HOW TO PREPARE YOUR BEES FOR WINTER WITH BEA FLAVIN | LOCATION: CITY LIBRARY TIME: 11.30 A.M. |
| SEPTEMBER 29TH |  | CLOTHES SWAP | LOCATION: LOUGHBOY TIME: 6 P.M. |
| SEPTEMBER ONGOING FOR SDG WEEK |  | EXHIBITION ON CLIMATE CHANGE AND SUSTAINABLE LIVING - SLI WATERFORD | LOCATION: FERRYBANK |

Loughboy Library hosted a kid's vocal workshop and a performance by Cairdeas Kilkenny Parkinson's Choir as part of Culture Night on September 22nd.

Throughout the month of September, our library branches hosted 195 events with a total of 2,257 attendees both in our branches and on visits to local creches, schools and community groups.

Mayfair Library Update



- Painting of internal areas
- Electrical works
- Installation of flooring internally
- Laying of paving roadway/ entrance



2,940 eAudiobooks borrowed



1,342 eBooks borrowed



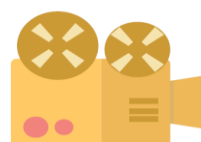
118 Class sessions



1,042 Online Courses sessions



786 eMagazines borrowed



Digital Engagement

Our staff prepared, recorded, edited and published 317 posts and videos on our social media platforms in September. Our engagements for the month were 2,699 and our videos had 13,142 views.

FINANCE

The expenditure by service division to the end of September is set out in table 1. Total Expenditure for the period was €79m compared with the annual budget of €98.75m

| Table 1 | Actual YTD August 2023 | Budget Full Year 2023 |
|---|------------------------|-----------------------|
| | €'000's | €'000's |
| Housing & Building | 19,361 | 22,698 |
| Road Transport & Safety | 23,246 | 27,560 |
| Water Services | 5,779 | 7,736 |
| Development Management | 8,637 | 11,754 |
| Environmental Services | 9,271 | 13,520 |
| Recreation & Amenity | 5,833 | 8,091 |
| Agriculture, Education, Health, Welfare | 453 | 692 |
| Miscellaneous Services | 6,461 | 6,698 |
| OVERALL TOTAL | 79,041 | 98,749 |

Finance Update

The bank overdraft facility was not utilised in the nine-month period to the end of September 2023. Members approval for Overdraft Facility in the amount of €20m for the year 2024 is listed on the Agenda for the October Meeting.

Audit complete and report issued.

Budget 2024.

Work has commenced on the preparation of the Council budget for 2024. A number of workshops will be held with Elected Members over the coming weeks to discuss the issues arising. The proposed date for the Statutory Budget Meeting is Friday November 24th, 2023.

Rates

Reminders have been sent to all rate customers that have a balance outstanding on their account as at the end of September.

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

| | |
|--|-----------|
| Decrease in Revaluation on Appeal | 149 cases |
| Appeal Withdrawn | 33 cases |
| Increase in Revaluation on Appeal..... | 1 case |
| No change to Revaluation on Appeal | 9 cases |
| Appeals Outstanding..... | 5 cases |

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