

COMHAIRLE CHONTAE CHILL CHAINNIGH
KILKENNY COUNTY COUNCIL



ANNUAL REPORT 2023

ADOPTED BY KILKENNY COUNTY COUNCIL ON 2024

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Statement of An Cathaoirleach	1
Chief Executive's Statement	2
Highlights For 2022	3
Electoral Representations	5
Meetings of the Council	7
Meeting of Committees	9
Committees & Subsidiary Bodies	16
Kilkenny Joint Policing Committee	19
Members Training & Expenses	20
Civic Occasions & Events 2022	28
Management Structure	34
Directorate of Corporate & Infrastructure	35
<i>Director of Services: Mr. Tim Butler</i>	
Corporate Services	36
Freedom of Information	39
Communications & Social Media 2022	40
Human Resources	44
Internal Audit	47
Roads & Transportation	49
Water Services	56
Directorate Of Housing, Social, Community & Cultural Services	62
<i>Director of Services: Ms. Mary J. Mulholland</i>	
Housing	63
Age Friendly	70
Community	75
Library Services	99
Arts	104
Heritage	108
Civil Defence	112
Directorate of Ukrainian Response Unit	114
<i>Acting Director of Services: Ms. Fiona Deegan</i>	
Ukrainian Response Unit	115
Fire Services & Major Emergency	116
Directorate of Planning, Economic & Environmental Services	121
<i>Acting Director of Services: Mr. Denis Malone</i>	
Planning & Development	122
Environment	128
Veterinary Services	137
LAWPRO	138
Parks & Amenity	141
Local Enterprise Office	148
Tourism including Festival Support	151
Broadband	154
Directorate Of Finance, Information Technology, Facilities Management	155
<i>Head of Finance: Mr. Martin Prendiville</i>	
Finance	156
Financial Table	158
Information Technology	159
Procurement	160
Special Projects	161
Performance Indicators for Kilkenny – Years 2021 & 2022	165

STATEMENT OF AN CATHAOIRLEACH



It is a great privilege for me to introduce the Annual Report for 2023. This Annual Report details the wide variety of services provided by Kilkenny County Council to the people of Kilkenny City and County. We, the Council play a key role in providing essential core services such as housing, roads, water, fire and emergency services and in supporting local communities through the arts, heritage, conservation, libraries and community and enterprise functions.

The Council has responded to many challenges in providing much needed services to the public over the years. The staff have responded to these challenges and have embraced blended working. The Elected Members also have changed to respond to their constituents needs for a wide variety of services. We have continued with a mixture of hybrid meetings to facilitate those who are unable to be physically present in the Chamber and offices.

The Council continues to source much needed grant allocations to enable us to fund the many projects planned for the enjoyment of all our citizens. The allocation of funding under various schemes greatly assists in the development of our towns and villages. Schemes such as CLAR, Town & Village Renewal, URDF, RRDF and local funding from Kilkenny County Council gives communities a much needed boost and improves their quality of life.

During 2023, inflation, rising energy costs and cost of materials continued to impact on the operations and delivery of all our services. We also welcomed the occupation of the Brewhouse in the Abbey Quarter. We look forward to the completion of the new City Library in early 2024 in the repurposed Mayfair building. The decision by Abbott to locate a manufacturing plant in Kilkenny City was great news in August 2022 and we look forward to the opening of this plant in 2024 and the employment of hundreds of highly skilled people. These new developments have stimulated housing developments across the City which is much welcomed.

In 2023, the provision of additional housing remained a priority for Kilkenny County Council to meet the growing demand for social housing. We will continue in 2024 to meet the targets set out by Government to deliver as many units as possible. All options will be explored to source much needed accommodation in the City and County. We will continue to encourage the provision of private housing.

I would like to sincerely thank all the Council's staff for their work for the people of Kilkenny. I commend their commitment and dedication and we look forward to continued progress, working with all of the people of Kilkenny in making our City and County a better place. Kilkenny must look forward in hope to 2024 when we will see many important projects completed and new ones commence.

Finally, it has been my privilege as Cathaoirleach to lead my fellow Elected Members in meeting the challenges presented in 2023 as we work together with the Executive and staff for the betterment of Kilkenny and the communities that we all live in.



Cllr. Michael Doyle
Cathaoirleach

CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S STATEMENT



I am pleased to present this Annual Report for 2023, which outlines the extensive range of services provided directly or indirectly by this Council. Within the main body of this Report the various activities and delivery of services and infrastructure projects being progressed by Kilkenny County Council are outlined.

There was a high level of commitment across all Departments to deliver the 2023 Service Delivery Plan and achieve the Objectives of our Corporate Plan. Most areas met all of their stated objectives within the limitations placed on us by ever-rising costs of energy and materials and where the level of achievement was less than 100% it will not have any impact on the Council achieving the objectives of its Corporate Plan. We continued to deliver our ambitious programme of place-making and public realm projects across the City and County, which help make Kilkenny the best place in the country to live, work, invest, visit and do business. In 2023, we exceeding targets set by Government in the delivery of much needed social housing.

I wish to pay tribute to the work being done at Municipal District level and at SPC level. These committees are invaluable in assisting the Council in pursuing its objectives and getting through its business. The commitment of the Councillors and external members is evident from the activities outlined in the report. I express my appreciation for the dedication and hard work of all the Elected Members, my colleagues on the Management Team and the staff of the Council. I am confident, given the abilities and spirit of co-operation that is consistently shown by the Elected Members and staff that we will be in a position to meet the challenges that lie ahead. We can look forward to a positive 2024.

I would like to particularly thank the Cathaoirleach Cllr. Michael Doyle and his predecessor Cllr Pat Fitzpatrick, the Municipal District Cathaoirligh Cllr's Michael Delaney and his predecessor Cllr Mary Hilda Cavanagh, Cllr Deirdre Cullen and her predecessor Cllr Matt Doran, Cllr Joe Malone Mayor and his predecessor Cllr David Fitzgerald and Cllr Ger Frisby and his predecessor Cllr Fidelis Doherty who have distinguished themselves in their respective roles. Finally, I want to take this opportunity to pay tribute to the Deputy Chief Executive, Sean McKeown for his outstanding leadership of the Council during the year and the strong pipeline of projects and initiatives that we continue to build on.

I commend this Annual Report for adoption by the Elected Members.

It will give an overview to the people of Kilkenny and beyond of the broad range of activities undertaken and of the Council's achievements in 2023.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading 'Lar Power'. The signature is written in a cursive style with a horizontal line underneath the name.

Lar Power
Chief Executive

HIGHLIGHTS FOR 2023

- Revenue expenditure was €107 million in 2023.
- Surplus of €19,152 achieved in the Revenue Budget in 2023.
- €5.1m collected in development levies.
- Focused on improving collection rate across all of our income sources and reducing the arrears.
- Capital Expenditure was €93 million in 2023.
- Eighth successful Yulefest festival celebrate with many outdoor events.
- St. Patrick's Festival celebrated over 6 days – in excess of 50,000 attended the Parade and other festival events.
- 182 new housing units completed by Kilkenny County Council and Voluntary Bodies.
- 14 housing loans paid out to a value of €1,402,240.
- 454 housing grants approved and committed for adaptation to houses to the value of €3.337m
- 824 Private Rented Inspections carried out.
- 1,748 Ukrainians living in Kilkenny.
- €34.5m spent on improving and maintaining our entire road network.
- Advanced design work and Planning for the 2 Flood Relief Schemes.
- Supplied 9.59 billion litres of water to 67,500 customers through the public water schemes.
- 186 grants paid out totalling €470,133 in well grants for private water supply.
- 2 Year review of City and County Development Plan completed.
- Adopted Masterplans for the Abbey Quarter and Loughmacask areas.
- 880 planning applications received during 2023.
- 23 sites on the Vacant Sites Register at 31/12/2023.
- €266,435 in conservation grant funding awarded in 2023 to 16 projects.
- 12 Housing Developments taken in charge.
- €514,124 paid in grants to 20 businesses.

- 33 public playgrounds are now open and maintained by the Council.
- Fire Brigades responded to 892 incidents in 2023.
- Civil Defence provided 2,398 hours of assistance in response to 86 Events mainly First Aid, Community Assistance and Medical Assistance.
- 1,786 tonnes of solid waste and 973 tonnes of dry waste were received at the Dunmore Civic Amenity Site.
- 2,036 tonnes of glass, aluminium and steel were collected across the 46 Bring Centres.
- 82 Farm inspections and 51 Septic Tank inspections were carried out in 2023.
- 4,795 Dogs were licenced.
- €143,160 spent on community projects with funding from Creative Ireland.
- Funding of €304,200 under Town and Village Renewal Scheme allocated for projects in 5 towns and villages.
- Progressed 12 projects with funding of €420,207 for under the CLAR Programme 2023.
- Allocated €304,200 to 5 Projects under Town & Village Renewal Scheme.
- Allocated €250,000 to 9 projects under the Community & Cultural Facilities Capital Scheme.
- Allocated €290,749 to 85 projects under the Community Enhancement Programme.
- Allocated €63,379 to undertake biodiversity projects and awareness initiatives.
- Allocated €140,000 to 180 Groups under Amenity Grants Scheme.
- MacDonagh train station in Kilkenny became the first age friendly train station in Ireland and received a national Age Friendly Award.
- 19,409 membership in libraries.
- 335,188 books, eBooks and eAudiobooks borrowed in 2023.
- 197,652 library users visited libraries across the County in 2023.
- 30,781 attended library programmes, workshops and events in 2023.
- 60 Projects organised for National Heritage week.
- 6 projects received a total of €340,134 from the Community Monuments Fund.
- Diverse range of projects received funding totalling €45,872 under Decade of Centenaries Programme 2023.
- Over 47,900 people engaged with Arts Office programmes.
- Bookville Festival engaged with over 18,000 children and families in 2023.
- Over 13,000 books distributed for Bookville Festival to all Primary schools.
- 62 grants/ bursaries awarded by the Arts Office.

ELECTORAL REPRESENTATIONS

Kilkenny County Council's membership consists of twenty-four Members, elected for a five-year term of office. The current Council was elected in May 2019 and membership at 31st December, 2023 is as follows:

CALLAN - THOMASTOWN		CASTLECOMER	
	Peter Cleere (FF) <i>Aughiletuan, Skeoughvosteen, Co. Kilkenny.</i>		John Brennan (FG) <i>Crutt, Clogh, Castlecomer, Co. Kilkenny</i>
	Deirdre Cullen (FF) <i>Kilree, Bennettsbridge, Co. Kilkenny.</i>		Mary Hilda Cavanagh (FG) <i>Whiteswall, Crosspatrick, Via Thurles, Co Kilkenny</i>
	Matt Doran (FF) <i>Shrughawadda, Kilmoganny, Co. Kilkenny</i>		Michael Delaney (FF) <i>The Village Shop, Tullaroan, Co. Kilkenny</i>
	Michael Doyle (FG) <i>Ballinbarna, The Rower, Co. Kilkenny.</i>		Pat Fitzpatrick (FF), <i>Cloghpook, Ballyfoyle, Co. Kilkenny.</i>
	Joe Lyons (FG) <i>Bauntha, Callan, Co. Kilkenny</i>		Denis Hynes (SF) <i>Ballyellen, Goresbridge, Co. Kilkenny.</i>
	Patrick O'Neill (FG) <i>Ballyreddin, Bennettsbridge, Co. Kilkenny.</i>		Michael McCarthy (FF) <i>Buncrusha Street, Freshford, Co. Kilkenny.</i>

KILKENNY CITY



Martin Brett (FF)
Callan Road,
Kilkenny City



John Coonan (FF)
17 Willow Close,
Ardnore,
Kilkenny



Maria Dollard (GP)
Vianore,
Greenshill,
Kilkenny



David Fitzgerald (FG)
24 Patrick Street,
Kilkenny.



Joe Malone (FF)
11 Maiden Hill
Kells Road,
Kilkenny.



Andrew McGuinness (FF) Constituency Office,
O' Loughlin Road,
Kilkenny.



Eugene McGuinness (NP)
40 Bishop Birch Place,
Kilkenny

PILTOWN



Eamon Aylward (FF)
Ballynooney,
Mullinavat,
Co. Kilkenny.



Tomás Breathnach, (Lab)
Forge Road,
Narabane,
Kilmacow,
Co. Kilkenny.



Fidelis Doherty (FG)
Ballyfacey,
Glenmore,
Co. Kilkenny.



Pat Dunphy (FG),
Ballygorey,
Mooncoin,
Co Kilkenny



Ger Frisby (FF)
Treanaree,
Slieverue,
Co. Kilkenny.

MEETINGS OF THE COUNCIL

The Council holds Ordinary meetings on a monthly basis. It also holds special meetings to consider and adopt its annual budget. The Council may hold as many meetings as it considers necessary to discharge its functions.

PLENARY MEETINGS OF KILKENNY COUNTY COUNCIL

Number of Meetings held in 2023: 30

Ordinary Monthly Meetings - 14, Workshops - 10 & Special Meetings - 6

- Adoption of Budget
- Abbey Quarter Conservation Plan and St. Francis Abbey Park
- Abbey Quarter Masterplan User Guide Review
- Affordable Housing Scheme of Letting Priorities
- Amenity Grants 2023
- Annual Financial Statement 2022
- Annual Report 2022
- Appointments of Chairs of SPC's
- Appointment of Elected Members to Outside Bodies
- Arts Grants 2023
- Audit Committee Annual Report 2022
- Audit Charter & Work Programme 2023
- Bank Overdraft Facility of €20m for 2024
- Borrowing approvals
- Breaghagh Valley Presentation
- Capital Programme 2023 - 2025
- Chief Executive's Monthly Report
- Choice Based Letting
- City & County Development Plan Variation
- City & County Development Plan - 2 Year Review
- Civic Festivals
- Civil Defence Presentation
- Civic Trust Presentation
- Climate Action Plan
- Community Event Grants 2023
- Community and Cultural Facilities Capital Grant Scheme 2023
- Community Projects Working Capital Facility
- Community Recognition Fund 2023
- Disability Strategy
- Election of Cathaoirleach & Leas Cathaoirleach
- Festival Grants & Events Grant Scheme 2023
- Festival Grants Evaluation Criteria
- Foreign Travel
- Graveyard Grant Scheme 2023
- Housing Applicants Presentation
- Housing Capital Development 2023/2024 Update
- Housing Policies - Right to Reside, Succession of Tenancy,
- Irish Water Leakage Reduction Plan 2023
- James Stephens Army Barracks Presentation
- Kilkenny Recreation & Sports Partnership Strategy

- LCDC Annual Report 2022
- Local Economic & Community Plan
- Litter Management Plan 2024 – 2027 Draft
- Local Property Tax
- Loughmacask Masterplan
- National Broadband update
- National Waste Management Draft Plan
- Part 8 Reports on Various Projects
- Performance Indicators 2022
- Road Safety Strategy Plan 2022 - 2030
- Road Works Scheme 2023
- Scheme of Letting Priorities
- Section 38 & 39 Road Improvement Projects
- Section 85 Agreement with other Local Authorities
- Section 183 Disposals
- Service Delivery Plan 2023
- South East Greenway Project
- South East Homeless Action Plan
- Southern Waste Region Presentation
- Speed Limit Review
- Statutory Audit Report
- Taking in Charge
- Tourism Strategy 2023 - 2028
- Ukrainian Displacement Updates
- Winter Services Maintenance Plan 2023-2024

MEETING OF COMMITTEES

MUNICIPAL DISTRICT OF CASTLECOMER MEETINGS

Number of Meetings held in 2023: 13 Number of Workshops: 1

- Active Travel Schemes
- Adoption of Road Works Programme 2023
- Age Friendly Initiatives
- Assumption Place & Community Creche, Urlingford – vehicular access
- B.1.2. Programme
- Bridge Rehabilitation Works
- Bring Banks
- Castlecomer Mobility Management Plan 2021 - 2026
- CLÁR Projects and criteria for inclusion in the Scheme
- Climate Change Adaptation Resilience Works
- Columbarium Walls – Installation in all cemeteries in the MD
- Community Involvement Scheme & need for additional Funding
- Constituency Boundary Change & Naming of the new North Tipperary Constituency
- Declaration of Road to be a Public Road – Grange Lower, Goresbridge
- Digital Hub – Urlingford
- Driver Feedback Signs
- Easy Go Eir Project
- Election of Cathaoirleach & Leas Cathaoirleach
- EV Charging Points for Villages & Towns
- Extinguishment of Public Right of Way – Grange Lower, Goresbridge
- Flooding Issues / Drainage Maintenance
- Freshford Mobility Management Plan
- Freshford Playground
- General Municipal Allocation / Adoption of Municipal Budget Plan
- Greenway – Kilkenny to Castlecomer
- HD15 Works
- Housing Capital – Demand / Current Projects / S179A – Planning & Development Act / Mains Water & Waste Water / Key Challenges / Tenure
- High speed Broadband delivery for Castlecomer & Urlingford
- Illegal Dumping & Anti-Dumping Initiatives
- Johnstown Public Realm Plan
- Johnstown Town Team
- Litter Management Plan 2024 - 2027
- Local Improvement Scheme
- Low Costs Safety Schemes
- Low hanging/dangerous Eir/NBI wires
- National Broadband Plan
- Pedestrian Crossings – Goresbridge, Castlecomer & Freshford
- Public Lighting Energy Efficiency Project
- Road Works Programme Updates & Roads Related Issues
- Safety Improvement Works
- Signage & Road Markings
- Smart Travel Policy
- Speeding Issues in Towns & Villages
- Speed Limit Bye Laws Review
- Street Cleaning and Roadside Bins

- Taking in Charge
- Town Regeneration – Vacant / Derelict Buildings & Sites
- Traffic Calming – Speed Ramps / Raised Platforms
- Transport Infrastructure Ireland
- Uisce Eireann Investment Programme 2025 – 2029 & National Review of the Rural Water Programme
- Upgrade – R693 to National Road Status
- Urlingford Town Centre Masterplan
- Water & Waste Water Schemes
- Winter Maintenance Plan 2023 – 2024 & Salting Operations



MUNICIPAL DISTRICT OF CALLAN - THOMASTOWN

Number of Meetings held in 2023: 13 [including Annual Meeting & Budget Meeting]

- Active Travel Projects
- Adoption of Roadworks Programme 2023
- Age Friendly Awards
- Appointment of Woodstock Gardens & Arboretum Committee
- Bridge Maintenance & Cleaning
- Bus shelters
- Callan By-Pass
- CLÁR Projects
- Climate Action Projects
- Commercial Premises Paint Scheme
- Community Amenities
- Community and Cultural Facilities Capital Grant Scheme
- Community Enhancement Grants
- Community Involvement in Roadworks Schemes
- Community Recognition Funded Roads Projects
- Creative Ireland Grant Scheme
- Croí Cónaithe (*Towns*) Fund Scheme
- Development of Rural Villages
- Directional and Road Signage
- Discretionary Works
- Drainage Works
- Driver Feedback Signs
- Election of Cathaoirleach & Leas Cathaoirleach
- Establishment of Joint Working Committee with New Ross Municipal District
- Fast Charging Electric Points
- Flooding Issues
- Footpaths
- Friary Complex, Callan
- General Municipal Allocation/Adoption of Municipal Budget Plan
- Graiguenamanagh Flood Relief Scheme
- Hedgecutting Illegal Dumping and Littering
- Housing Capital Delivery Update & Housing Demand
- Installation of Belisha Beacons
- Litter Management Plan 2024-2026
- Local Enhancement Programme
- Local Improvement Schemes
- Low Cost Safety Improvement Schemes Roadworks Programme Updates & Roads Related Issues
- Multi Annual Programme 2022 – 2024
- Old Supervalu Site, Thomastown
- Oris Projects
- Proposed RRDF Funded Thomastown Library Project
- Provision of Rural Water & Wastewater Facilities
- Public Lighting
- Restoration Improvements Works & Funding Allocation
- Restoration Maintenance Works
- Town & Village Renewal Schemes

- Rural Development Updates
- Rural Regeneration Development Fund & Outdoor Recreational Infrastructure Scheme Funded Projects
- Safe to Schools Programme
- South-East Greenway Updates
- Speed Limit Review
- Streetscape Paint Scheme
- Traffic Calming & Speeding
- Ukrainian Response Update
- Winter Maintenance Plan/Salting Operations



N10 surfacing works, Danesfort



Restoration Improvement works L1014, Callan



Wood Road, Graiguenamanagh ORIS footpath works

MUNICIPAL DISTRICT OF KILKENNY CITY MEETINGS

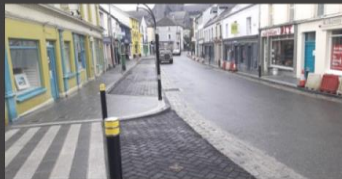
(including Annual Meeting & Budget Meeting)

Number of Meetings held in 2023: 12 Number of Workshops: 1

- Active Travel Update & Allocation
- Active Travel Cycling Presentation
- Adopted Municipal Budget for 2024
- Adoption of Schedule of Municipal Works for 2023
- Casual Trading Bye-laws - extension of hours for Bank Holiday Weekends
- Climate Action- Decarbonising Zone in Kilkenny City
- Culture of Cycling in Kilkenny - Presentation
- Draft Litter Management Plan 2024-2026
- Election of Mayor and Deputy Mayor
- Greensbridge Boardwalk Update
- Housing Delivery Plan Presentation
- Laneways Feasibility Study- Presentation
- Loughmacask Masterplan update
- Lousybush Lane to C.B.S Link Road Update
- O'Loughlin Road Railway Bridge Improvement Works
- Newpark Resource Centre Presentation
- Ossory Bridge -Safety Improvement Works
- Parking Control Bye-Laws
- Retention of City Centre One Way System
- Road Works Scheme & Monthly Updates
- Safe Route to School Programme- Update on Section 38 Granges Road & Freshford Road
- Speed Limit Review
- Taking in Charge Residential Development
- Upgrade of Festive Lighting

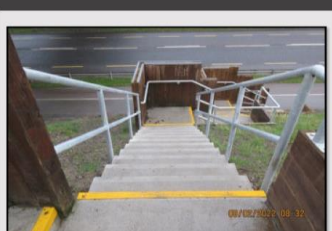
Footpaths New & Improved within Kilkenny City - 2019

Abbey Street Paving
Ballyfoyle Road link to Brooklawn
Medieval Mile Footpath at Irishtown
Bennettsbridge Footpath
Assumption Place footpath
Dominic Street realignment
Old New Park

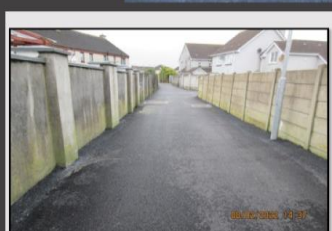


Miscellaneous Works – 2021/2022

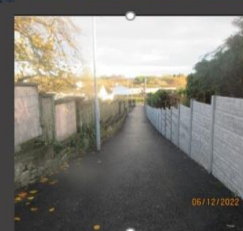
Car Road Rioch Street to Gaol Road
Steps from Ring Road to Ballyfoyle Road
Circular Road to Old Callan Road
Willow Close Laneway



RING RD TO BALLYFOYLE RD STEPS



CIRCULAR RD TO OLD CALLAN RD



WILLOW CLOSE

MUNICIPAL DISTRICT OF PILTOWN MEETINGS

Number of Meetings held in 2023: 13 [including Annual Meeting and Budget Meeting]

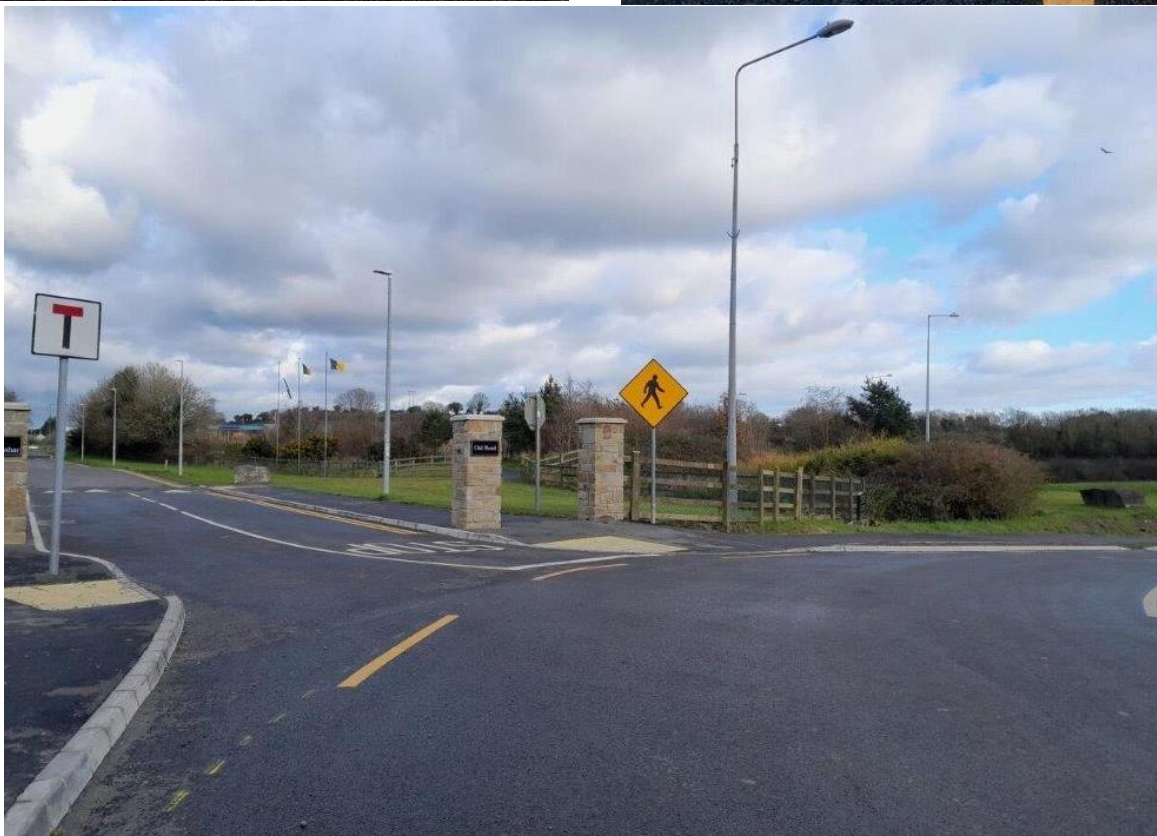
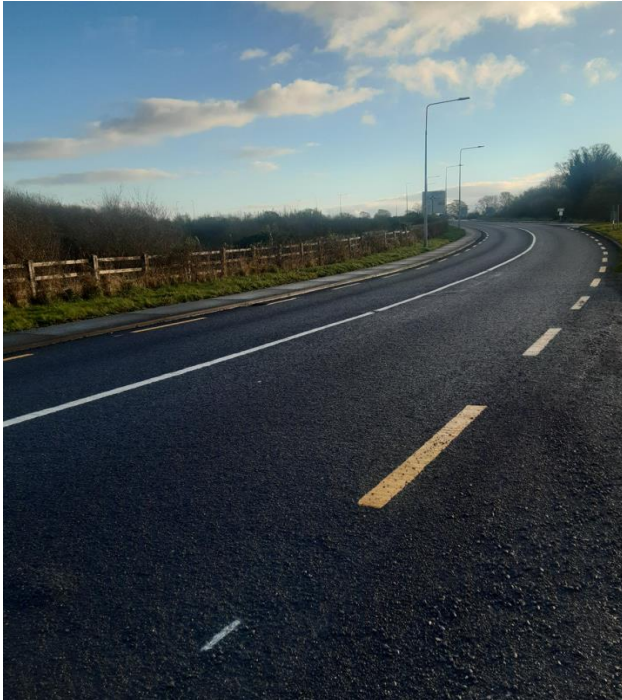
Joint Meeting with Waterford Metropolitan District: 1

Joint Meetings with Carrick-on-Suir Municipal District: 2

Meetings with Garda Representatives: 2

- Active Travel Schemes and Funding
- Adoption of Municipal Budget Plan
- Adoption of Road Works Scheme 2023
- Anti-Social Behaviour
- Casual Trading Bye Laws
- CLAR Scheme, Kilmogue Dolmen
- Climate Action Plan and Targets
- Clover Meats Social Club Facility, Ferrybank
- Community Policing / Policing Matters Piltown MD
- Draft Waterford Metropolitan Area Transport Strategy
- Election of Cathaoirleach & Leas Cathaoirleach
- Ferrybank-Belview Local Area Plan Review
- Ferrybank Shopping Centre
- Flooding Issues / Drainage Maintenance
- Glenmore Bus Stop N25
- Hedge Cutting – Section 70 Roads Act, Landowner Responsibility
- Illegal Dumping/Litter Piltown MD – Anti-Dumping Initiative
- Joint Retail Strategy & Review
- Link Road – Abbey Road and Belmont Road Improvement Scheme
- Litter Picking / Team Up to Clean Up Campaign
- Meetings with TII – Road Safety Issues
- Metropolitan Area Strategic Plan & Setting up of Regional Forum
- Mobility Management Plans – Ferrybank & Piltown
- Mooncoin WS – Leak Reduction Programme
- National Broadband Plan Rollout
- National Pride of Place Awards
- National Public Lighting Energy Efficiency Project
- N24 Tower Road Junction Improvement Scheme
- N24 Carrick Road Scheme
- N24 Waterford to Cahir Scheme
- N25 Glenmore to Waterford Scheme
- North Quays URDF and Strategic Development Zone
- Port of Waterford Facility – Future Developments
- Primary Health Care Centre Ferrybank
- Provision of Footpath – Mill Road, Mullinavat
- Public Lighting
- Road Markings and Signage
- Roadworks Programme Updates & Roads Related Issues
- Regional Economic and Spatial Strategy
- School Safety – Safe Routes to Schools Programme
- SEG – Links to Glenmore and Slieverue
- SEG – Feasibility Study for proposed link to Woodstock Estate
- SEG Interpretation, Wayfinding and Orientation Plan
- Slieverue Linear Park

- South East Greenway, incorporating Kilkenny Greenway
- Speed Limit Review
- Speeding Issues Piltown MD
- Taking in Charge Developments – Unfinished Estates
- Tidy Estates Competition
- Treatment of Ragwort
- Uisce Eireann – Water Outages and Disruption to Supply Piltown MD
- Waterford to Rosslare Railway / All Island Rail Review
- Winter Maintenance Programme / Salting Operations



COMMITTEES & SUBSIDIARY BODIES

Corporate Policy Group

The Corporate Policy Group (CPG) is a committee of the Council consisting of the Cathaoirleach of the Council and the Chairperson of each of the five Strategic Policy Committees (SPC's).

The CPG links the work of the different SPCs and provides a forum where proposed items for Council meeting agendas and policy matters are discussed. The CPG also monitors the performance of the local authority and plays a key role in the budgetary process. The CPG met on 11 occasions in 2023.

Committees & Subsidiary Bodies

There is a legal obligation on Local Authorities to establish certain Committees such as Strategic Policy Committees. Local Authorities have discretionary authority to establish other Committees to assist them in performing their roles as Elected Members.

Strategic Policy Committees

Kilkenny County Council adopted a Strategic Policy Committee Scheme on 16th September, 2019 for the newly Elected Council 2019 to 2024. The role of the Strategic Policy Committees (SPC's) is to assist the Council in the formulation, development and review of policy. Their composition reflect the major functions of the Council within the broader context, are tailored to the size, membership and administrative resources of the Council and have one third of their membership drawn from sectors relevant to the committees' work.

The SPC's bring together both Elected Members and people actively working with social, economic, cultural and environmental bodies to develop and review policies related to Council's services. The SPC's provide Elected Members with external views as they discharge their strategic role in the development of the local authority, including their policy development and oversight roles within the local authority.

The overall configuration and membership of the Kilkenny County Council's Strategic Policy Committees is as follows at the 31st December, 2023:

SPC 1: Economic Development, Enterprise Support & Tourism, Planning & Development Policy

Number of Meetings held 4 - & 1 Joint SPC/LCDC Meeting

Elected Members [8]	Members from External Sectors [7]
John Coonan	Agriculture/Farming: Bill O'Keeffe [IFA]
Michael Doyle	Development/Construction: Marion Acreman [Chambers Ireland]
Pat Fitzpatrick	Business/Commercial: Deirdre Shine [Chambers Ireland]
Ger Frisby	Trade Union: Eileen Moyles [ICTU]
Michael McCarthy	Social Inclusion: Fiona O'Neill [PPN]
Eugene McGuinness	Environment/Conservation: Brian Hamilton [PPN]
Maria Dollard	Community & Voluntary: Jimmy Duggan [PPN]
Patrick O'Neill	

Main Items Considered:

- Abbey Quarter Masterplan
- Consideration and Adoption of Kilkenny County Council Tourism Strategy 2023 to 2028
- Consideration and recommendation to adopt the LECP 2023 to 2028 Framework and 2023/2024 Implementation Plan
- IHF request to include no smoking on sect. 254 applications

- Kilkenny County Council Digital Strategy
- LEDP for 2023 on behalf of Kilkenny County Council per Service Level Agreement with Enterprise Ireland
- Monitoring of the delivery KPIs of the Local Enterprise Office (LEO) Local Enterprise Development
- Masterplan for Loughmacask
- Night Time Economy Pilot
- North Quays Strategic Development Zone (SDZ)
- Outdoor Recreation and Infrastructure Scheme (ORIS)
- South East Greenway
- SUMP Process update

SPC 2: Transportational Policy/Mobility Management & Water Services

Number of Meetings held 4

Elected Members [8]	Members from External Sectors [7]
Tomás Breathnach	Agriculture/Farming: Jim Mulhall [IFA]
Peter Cleere	Business/Commercial Ella Dunphy [Chambers Ireland]
Deirdre Cullen	Development/Construction Barry Lynch [Chambers Ireland]
Michael Delaney	Trade Union Ger Mooney [ICTU]
Fidelis Doherty	Community/Voluntary Seán Ó'hArgáin [PPN]
Matt Doran	Social Inclusion Eileen Ryan [PPN]
Pat Dunphy	Environment/Conservation Jim Kehoe [PPN]
Patrick O'Neill	

Main Items Considered:

- Loughmacask Local Area Plan
- Radial Routes
- Public Lighting Energy Efficiency Project (PLEEP)
- Braille Trail
- Broadband
- Flood Relief Schemes
- Irish Water Small Towns & Villages Growth Programme
- Northern Ring Road Extension & City Links
- Rural Transport
- Winter Maintenance Plan 2023/24
- Fleet Management
- Speed Limits
- Road Safety Plan 2022 – 2030
- Roads Overview 2023

SPC 3: Housing

Number of Meetings Held: 5

Elected Members [8]	Members from External Sectors [6]
Eamon Aylward	Development/Construction: Brian Dunlop [Chambers Ireland]
Martin Brett	Environment/Conservation Mags Morrissey [PPN]
Pat Fitzpatrick	Community/Voluntary John Bourke [PPN]
Denis Hynes	Social Inclusion: Lisa Morris [PPN]
Joe Lyons	Trade Union: Yvonne Moriarty [ICTU]
Andrew McGuinness	
Eugene McGuinness	
Joe Malone	

Main Items Considered:

- Affordable Housing
- Capital Delivery
- Choice Based Letting Scheme
- Right to Reside Policy
- Scheme of Letting Priorities
- South East Regional Homeless Action Plan
- Succession of Tenancy Policy

SPC 4: Environment Protection, Climate Action & Energy

Number of Meetings Held: 4

Elected Members [6]	Members from External Sectors [5]	
Mary Hilda Cavanagh	Agriculture/Farming	James Murphy [IFA]
Deirdre Cullen	Development/Construction	John Hurley [Chambers Ireland]
David Fitzgerald	Business/Commercial:	Laurence Conroy [Chambers Ireland]
Denis Hynes	Community/Voluntary:	Noel O'Donoghue [PPN]
Joe Lyons	Environment/Conservation:	Aidan Fitzpatrick [PPN]
Maria Dollard		

Main Items Considered

- Climate Action Plan
- Community Climate Action Fund
- Decarbonisation Zone
- Draft National Waste Management Plan
- EPA Local Authority Environmental Enforcement Performance Report
- Litter Management Plan
- St Kieran's Cemetery – Bye Laws

SPC 5: Community, Cultural & Fire Services

Number of Meetings Held: 5

Elected Members [6]	Members from External Sectors [5]	
Tomás Breathnach	Agriculture/Farming:	Michael Rice [IFA]
John Brennan	Business/Commercial:	Kathy Purcell [Chambers Ireland]
Martin Brett	Community/Voluntary:	Denis Brophy [PPN]
Peter Cleere	Community/Voluntary:	Julie Kavanagh [PPN]
John Coonan	Social Inclusion:	Martin Brennan [PPN]
Pat Dunphy	Trade Union:	Fergal Canton [ICTU]

Main Items Considered:

- Community Monuments Fund 2023
- Community Projects and Grant Schemes
- County Heritage Plan 2023
- Creative Ireland Programme 2023
- Decade of Centenaries 2023
- Disability Strategy
- Healthy Ireland Programme 2023
- Library Strategy
- UcanACT - Urban ACTION for Cancer Prevention – European Project

KILKENNY JOINT POLICING COMMITTEE



Kilkenny County Council has established a Joint Policing Committee in accordance with the Garda Síochána Act 2005.

Number of Meetings: 4 (*including 1 Public Meeting*)

Public Meeting: 1 in Gowran Parish Hall

Chairperson:

Cllr. Martin Brett

MEMBERS OF JOINT POLICING COMMITTEE

- | | |
|---------------------------|--|
| ▪ Cllr. Tomas Breathnach | ▪ Chief Superintendent Anthony Pettitt, <i>Kilkenny Garda Station</i> |
| ▪ Cllr. Deirdre Cullen | ▪ Superintendent Aidan Brennan, <i>Kilkenny/Thomastown Garda Station</i> |
| ▪ Cllr. Michael Delaney | ▪ Sergeant Peter McConnan, <i>Kilkenny Garda Station (retired 2023)</i> |
| ▪ Cllr. Fidelis Doherty | ▪ Deputy Jennifer Murnane |
| ▪ Cllr. Michael Doyle | ▪ Deputy Kathleen Funchion |
| ▪ Cllr. Pat Dunphy | ▪ Deputy John McGuinness |
| ▪ Cllr. Pat Fitzpatrick | ▪ Deputy John Paul Phelan |
| ▪ Cllr. Denis Hynes | ▪ Deputy Malcolm Noonan |
| ▪ Cllr. Joe Lyons | ▪ Samuel Morgan, <i>PPN</i> |
| ▪ Cllr. Andrew McGuinness | ▪ Helena Power, <i>PPN</i> |
| ▪ Cllr. Mick McCarthy | ▪ Gerard Ferris, <i>PPN</i> |
| ▪ Cllr. Joe Malone | ▪ Colette Murphy, <i>PPN</i> |
| ▪ Cllr. Patrick O'Neill | ▪ Marion Acreman, <i>Kilkenny Chamber</i> |
| | ▪ Anthony Morrisson, <i>Vintners Association</i> |

SUMMARY OF ISSUES DISCUSSED:

- Active Travel Initiatives.
- Anti-Social Behaviour – Kilkenny County Council Presentation.
- Annual Report 2022
- Community Drugs Initiatives in conjunction with Kilkenny G.A.A, Schools & Colleges
- Crime Statistics update- An Garda Síochána
- Draft Kilkenny Road Safety Plan 2022 - 2030
- Freshford to Tullaroan Road - Improvement Works update
- National Slow Down Day
- Operation City Safe.
- Operation Surround
- Project EDWARD – European Day Without A Road Death
- Property Marking Ireland- Submission.
- Public Submissions
- Work Programme 2023

MEMBERS TRAINING & EXPENSES

ELECTED MEMBER	DATE	CONFERENCE & LOCATION	ORGANISER LOCATION	FEES	EXPENSES	TOTAL
Eamon Aylward	22-23/02/2023	Electoral Reform Act 2022	AILG <i>Tullamore</i>	€80.00	€272.11	€352.11
	02-03/03/2023	LAMA Spring Conference	LAMA <i>Bantry, Cork</i>	€160.00	€529.39	€689.39
	24-25/03/2023	Climate Action Plan	AILG <i>Dundalk,</i>	€80.00	€381.97	€461.97
	20/04/2023	AILG Annual Conference	AILG <i>Hotel Kilkenny</i>	€165.00	€ -	€165.00
	19-20/07/2023	AILG Conference Uisce Eireann	AILG <i>Cork City</i>	€80.00	€206.87	€286.87
	13-15/09/2023	AILG Autumn Training	AILG <i>Cork City</i>	€165.00	€517.23	€682.23
	20-21/10/2023	Personal Security	AILG <i>Tralee, Kerry</i>	€80.00	€243.12	€323.12
	26-27/10/2023	Climate Action/ Sustainable Business	LAMA <i>Tuam, Galway</i>	€160.00	€301.27	€461.27
	24-26/11/2023	Modular Housing	Celtic Conferences <i>Carlingford</i>	€125.00	€483.02	€608.02
			Overall Total			€4,029.97
Tomás Breathnach						
John Brennan	02-04/03/2023	LAMA Spring Conference	LAMA <i>Bantry, Co. Cork</i>	€160.00	€519.06	€679.06
	20/04/2023	AILG Annual Conference	AILG <i>Kilkenny City</i>	€165.00	€ -	€165.00
	21-23/04/2023	Protecting your Mental Health as a Public Rep.	Celtic Conferences <i>Clonakilty, Co. Cork</i>	€100.00	€513.36	€613.36
	19-20/07/2023	AILG Uisce Eireann	AILG <i>Cork City</i>	€80.00	€406.16	€486.16
	20-21/10/2023	AILG Uisce Eireann	AILG <i>Tralee, Co. Kerry</i>	€80.00	€521.25	€601.25
			Overall Total			€2,544.83
Martin Brett	25/02/2023	Electoral Reform Act 2022	AILG <i>Limerick City</i>	€ 80.00	€118.92	€198.92
	02-04/03/2023	Spring Conference	LAMA <i>Bantry, Co. Cork</i>	€160.00	€460.23	€620.23
	24-25/03/2023	Climate Action Plan	AILG <i>Dundalk, Co. Louth</i>	€80.00	€184.88	€264.88
	05-06/04/2023	Inspiring Rural Creativity	Suck Valley Way <i>Roscommon</i>	€140.00	€ -	€140.00
	20/04/2023	AILG Annual Conference	AILG <i>Kilkenny City</i>	€165.00	€ -	€165.00
	13-15/09/2023	AILG Autumn Seminar	AILG <i>Sligo Town</i>	€165.00	€522.48	€687.48
	21-22/10/2023	Personal Security	AILG <i>Tralee, Co. Kerry</i>	€80.00	€438.31	€518.31
	24-26/10/2023	Winter Seminar	LAMA <i>Tuam, Co. Galway</i>	€160.00	€563.21	€723.21
	17-18/11/2023	Road Safety	<i>Galway City</i>	€80.00	€388.98	€468.98
			Overall Total			€4,371.19

Mary Hilda Cavanagh	24-25/02/2023	Electoral Reform Act 2022	AILG Limerick City	€80.00	€254.49	€334.49
	02-04/03/2023	Spring Conference	LAMA Bantry, Co. Cork	€160.00	€489.30	€649.30
	22-23/03/2023	Local Authority Climate Action Plan	AILG Wexford Town	€80.00	€262.78	€342.78
	19-20/04/2023	Annual Conference	AILG Kilkenny City	€165.00	€97.13	€262.13
	05/05/2023	Irish Public Bodies AGM	IPB Cork City	€ -	€146.13	€146.13
	21-22/07/2023	Irish Water Briefing	AILG Sligo Town	€80.00	€500.42	€580.42
	13-15/09/2023	AILG Autumn Seminar	AILG Sligo Town	€165.00	€630.29	€795.29
	05/10/2023	Irish Public Bodies Meeting	IPB Limerick City	€ -	€193.92	€193.92
	13-14/10/2023	Practical Guide to the Budget 2024	Celtic Conference Carlingford,	€100.00	€423.60	€523.60
	25-27/10/2023	Climate Action/Sustainable Business	LAMA Tuam, Co. Galway	€160.00	€383.13	€543.13
			Overall Total			€4,371.19
Peter 'Chap' Cleere	20-22/01/2023	Local Authority Procurement Process	Celtic Conference Clonakilty, Co. Cork	€100.00	€542.61	€642.61
	22-23/02/2023	Electoral Reform Act 2022	AILG Tullamore, Co. Offaly	€80.00	€137.02	€217.02
	02-04/03/2023	Spring Conference	LAMA Bantry, Co. Cork	€160.00	€515.21	€675.21
	23/03/2023	Local Authority Climate Action Plan	AILG Wexford Town	€80.00	€83.94	€163.94
	19-20/07/2023	Irish Water Briefing	AILG Cork City	€80.00	€300.62	€380.62
	13-15/09/2023	Autumn Seminar	AILG Sligo Town	€165.00	€717.29	€882.29
	13-15/10/2023	Practical Guide to the Budget 2024	Celtic Conference Carlingford, Co. Louth	€100.00	€257.39	€357.39
	20-21/10/2023	Elected Members Personal Security	AILG Tralee, Co. Kerry	€80.00	€541.19	€621.19
	25-27/10/2023	Climate Action/Sustainable Business	LAMA Tuam, Co. Galway	€160.00	€632.10	€792.10
	17-18/11/2023	Road Safety	AILG Galway City	€80.00	€392.92	€472.92
			Overall Total			€5,205.30

John Coonan	24-25/02/2023	Electoral Reform Act 2022	AILG <i>Limerick City</i>	€80.00	€298.40	€378.40
	02-04/03/2023	Spring Conference	LAMA <i>Bantry, Co. Cork</i>	€160.00	€503.81	€663.81
	24-25/03/2023	Local Authority Climate Action Plan	AILG <i>Dundalk</i>	€80.00	€353.99	€433.99
	20/04/2023	Annual Conference	AILG <i>Kilkenny City</i>	€165.00	€ -	€165.00
	21-22/07/2023	Uisce Eireann Briefing	AILG <i>Sligo Town</i>	€80.00	€567.48	€647.48
	13-15/09/2023	Autumn Seminar	AILG <i>Sligo Town</i>	€165.00	€712.74	€877.74
	25-27/10/2023	Climate Action/Sustainable Business	LAMA <i>Tuam, Co. Galway</i>	€160.00	€594.94	€754.94
			Overall Total			€3,921.36
Deirdre Cullen	24-25/02/2023	Electoral Reform Act 2022	AILG <i>Limerick City</i>	€ 80.00	€268.42	€348.42
	02-04/03/2023	Spring Conference	LAMA <i>Bantry, Co. Cork</i>	€160.00	€321.15	€481.15
	05-06/04/2023	Inspiring Rural Creativity	Suck Valley Way <i>Roscommon Town</i>	€140.00	€299.47	€439.47
	20/04/2023	Annual Conference	AILG <i>Kilkenny City</i>	€165.00	€ -	€165.00
	19-20/07/2023	Uisce Eireann Briefing	AILG <i>Cork City</i>	€80.00	€243.89	€323.89
	13-15/09/2023	Autumn Seminar	AILG <i>Sligo Town</i>	€165.00	€622.69	€787.69
	25-27/10/2023	Climate Action/Sustainable Business	LAMA <i>Tuam, Co. Galway</i>	€160.00	€542.63	€702.63
			Overall Total			€3,248.25
Michael Delaney	14-15/09/2022	Autumn Training Seminar	AILG <i>Trim, Co. Meath</i>	€ -	€298.02	€298.02
	06-08/01/2023	Finance Act	Celtic Conferences <i>Carlingford, Louth</i>	€100.00	€573.71	€673.71
	20-22/01/2023	LA Procurement Process	Celtic Conferences <i>Clonakilty, Cork</i>	€100.00	€86.31	€186.31
	24-25/02/2023	Electoral Reform Act 2022	AILG <i>Limerick City</i>	€80.00	€285.29	€365.29
	02-04/03/2023	Spring Conference	LAMA <i>Bantry, Co. Cork</i>	€160.00	€496.56	€656.56
	05-06/04/2023	Inspiring Rural Creativity	Suck Valley Way <i>Roscommon Town</i>	€140.00	€ -	€140.00
	20/04/2023	Annual Conference	AILG <i>Kilkenny City</i>	€165.00	€ -	€165.00
	19-20/07/2023	Uisce Eireann Briefing	AILG <i>Cork City</i>	€80.00	€368.74	€448.74
	13-15/09/2023	Autumn Conference	AILG <i>Sligo Town</i>	€165.00	€675.60	€840.60
	20-21/10/2023	Personal Secur.	AILG <i>Tralee</i>	€80.00	€480.48	€560.48
	25-27/10/2023	Climate Action/Sustainable Bus.	LAMA <i>Tuam,</i>	€160.00	€579.54	€739.54
			Overall Total			€5,074.25

Michael McCarthy	14-15/09/2022	Autumn Training Seminar	AILG <i>Trim, Co. Meath</i>	€ -	€298.02	€298.02
	06-08/01/2023	Finance Act	Celtic Conference <i>Carlingford, Co. Louth</i>	€100.00	€573.71	€673.71
	20-22/01/2023	LA Procurement Process	Celtic Conference <i>Clonakilty, Co. Cork</i>	€100.00	€26.31	€126.31
	24-25/02/2023	Electoral Reform Act 2022	AILG <i>Limerick City</i>	€80.00	€285.29	€365.29
	02-04/03/2023	Spring Conference	LAMA <i>Bantry, Co. Cork</i>	€160.00	€496.56	€656.56
	05-06/04/2023	Inspiring Rural Creativity	Suck Valley Way <i>Roscommon Town</i>	€140.00	€ -	€140.00
	20/04/2023	Annual Confer	AILG Kilkenny City	€165.00	€ -	€165.00
	19-20/07/2023	Uisce Eireann Briefing	AILG, Cork City	€80.00	€200.36	€280.36
	13-15/09/2023	Autumn Conf.	AILG, Sligo Town	€165.00	€675.60	€840.60
	20-21/10/2023	Personal Secur.	AILG, Tralee	€80.00	€480.48	€560.48
	25-27/10/2023	Climate Action/ Sustainable Business	LAMA <i>Tuam, Co. Galway</i>	€160.00	€579.54	€739.54
			Overall Total			€4,845.86
Fidelis Doherty	-	-	-	-	-	
Maria Dollard	25/03/2023	Climate Action Plan	AILG <i>Dundalk, Co. Louth</i>	€80.00	€199.86	€279.86
	03-04/03/2023	Spring Conference	LAMA <i>Bantry, Co. Cork</i>	€160.00	€359.36	€519.36
	26/04/2023	Climate Action Economic Opportunities	CARO <i>Tullamore, Co. Offaly</i>	€150.00	€96.57	€246.57
			Overall Total			€1,045.79
Matt Doran	24-25/02/2023	Electoral Reform Act 2022	AILG Limerick City	€80.00	€268.48	€348.48
	02-04/03/2023	Spring Conference	LAMA <i>Bantry, Co. Cork</i>	€160.00	€485.16	€645.16
	21-22/07/2023	Uisce Eireann Briefing	AILG <i>Sligo Town</i>	€80.00	€ -	€80.00
	13-15/09/2023	Autumn Train. Seminar	AILG <i>Sligo Town</i>	€165.00	€539.05	€704.05
	20-21/10/2023	Personal Security Conference	AILG <i>Tralee, Co. Kerry</i>	€ 80.00	€ -	€80.00
	25-27/10/2023	Climate Action	LAMA <i>Tuam, Co. Galway</i>	€160.00	€518.39	€678.39
			Overall Total			€2,536.07
Michael Doyle	24-25/02/2023	Electoral Reform Act 2022	AILG <i>Limerick City</i>	€80.00	€312.53	€392.53
	02-04/03/2023	Spring Conference	LAMA <i>Bantry, Co. Cork</i>	€160.00	€502.77	€662.77
	13-15/10/2023	Budget 2024	Celtic Conference <i>Carlingford, Co. Louth</i>	€100.00	€571.63	€671.63
			Overall Total			€1,726.93

Pat Dunphy	25/02/2023	Electoral Reform Act 2022	AILG <i>Limerick City</i>	€80.00	€135.77	€215.77
	02-04/03/2023	Spring Conference	LAMA <i>Bantry, Co. Cork</i>	€160.00	€486.19	€646.19
	24-25/03/2023	Climate Action Plan	AILG <i>Dundalk, Co. Louth</i>	€80.00	€383.00	€463.00
	20/04/2023	Annual Conference	AILG <i>Kilkenny City</i>	€165.00	€ -	€165.00
	17/06/2023	Training Programme-M3	AILG <i>Castlecomer</i>	€80.00	€139.57	€219.57
	21-22/07/2023	Uisce Eireann Briefing	AILG <i>Sligo Town</i>	€80.00	€661.74	€741.74
	13-15/09/2023	Autumn Train. Seminar	AILG <i>Sligo Town</i>	€165.00	€795.23	€960.23
	20-21/10/2023	Personal Security Conference	AILG <i>Tralee, Co. Kerry</i>	€80.00	€471.41	€551.41
	25-27/10/2023	Climate Action/Sustainable Bus.	LAMA <i>Tuam, Co. Galway</i>	€160.00	€677.08	€837.08
			Overall Total			€4,800.00
David Fitzgerald	-	-	-	-	-	-
Pat Fitzpatrick	22-23/02/2023	Electoral Reform Act 2022	AILG <i>Tullamore, Co. Offaly</i>	€80.00	€ -	€80.00
	23-24/03/2023	LA Climate Action Plan	AILG <i>Wexford Town</i>	€80.00	€ -	€80.00
	02-04/03/2023	Spring Conference	LAMA <i>Bantry, Co. Cork</i>	€160.00	€ -	€160.00
	05-06/04/2023	Inspiring Rural Creativity	Suck Valley Way <i>Roscommon Town</i>	€140.00	€ -	€140.00
	25-27/12/2023	Climate Action/Sustainable Bus.	LAMA <i>Tuam, Co. Galway</i>	€160.00	€ -	€160.00
	20-21/10/2023	EM Personal Security	AILG <i>Tralee, Co. Kerry</i>	€80.00	€ -	€80.00
			Overall Total			€700.00
Ger Frisby	22-23/02/2023	Electoral Reform Act 2022	AILG <i>Tullamore, Co. Offaly</i>	€80.00	€289.73	€369.73
	02-04/03/2023	Spring Conference	LAMA <i>Bantry, Co. Cork</i>	€160.00	€481.01	€641.01
	24-25/03/2023	Climate Action Plan	AILG <i>Dundalk, Co. Louth</i>	€80.00	€400.62	€480.62
	20/04/2023	Annual Conference	AILG <i>Hotel Kilkenny</i>	€165.00	€77.72	€242.72
	19-20/07/2023	Uisce Eireann Briefing	AILG <i>Cork City</i>	€80.00	€335.47	€415.47
	13-15/09/2023	Autumn Train. Seminar	AILG <i>Sligo Town</i>	€165.00	€798.86	€963.86
	13-15/10/2023	Budget 2024	Celtic Conference <i>Carlingford, Louth</i>	€100.00	€600.00	€700.00
	20-21/10/2023	EM Personal Security	AILG <i>Tralee, Co. Kerry</i>	€80.00	€501.32	€581.32
	25-27/10/2023	Climate Action/Sustainable Bus.	LAMA <i>Tuam, Co. Galway</i>	€160.00	€708.23	€868.23
	17-18/11/2023	Road Safety	AILG <i>Galway City</i>	€80.00	€157.04	€237.04
			Overall Total			€ 5,500.00

Denis Hynes	20/04/2023	Annual Conference	AILG <i>Hotel Kilkenny</i>	€165.00	€ -	€165.00
			Overall Total			€165.00
Joe Lyons	-	-	-	-	-	-
Joe Malone	07-09/02/2023	Regional Seminar & Training Event	Association of Irish Regions <i>Monaghan Town</i>	€160.00	€406.66	€566.66
	02-04/03/2023	Spring Conference	LAMA <i>Bantry, Co. Cork</i>	€160.00	€231.85	€391.85
	24-25/02/2023	Electoral Reform Act 2022	AILG Limerick City	€80.00	€230.30	€310.30
	20/04/2023	Annual Conference	AILG <i>Kilkenny City</i>	€165.00	€ -	€165.00
	19-20/07/2023	Uisce Eireann Briefing	AILG <i>Cork City</i>	€80.00	€ -	€80.00
			Overall Total			€1,513.81
Michael McCarthy	24-25/02/2023	Electoral Reform Act 2022	AILG <i>Limerick City</i>	€80.00	€270.04	€350.04
	02-04/03/2023	Spring Conference	LAMA <i>Bantry, Co. Cork</i>	€160.00	€494.48	€654.48
	24-25/03/2023	Climate Action Plan	AILG <i>Dundalk, Co. Louth</i>	€80.00	€353.99	€433.99
	20/04/2023	Annual Conference	AILG <i>Kilkenny City</i>	€165.00	€ -	€165.00
	19-20/07/2023	Uisce Eireann Briefing	AILG <i>Cork City</i>	€80.00	€259.68	€339.68
	13-15/09/2023	Autumn Training	AILG <i>Sligo Town</i>	€165.00	€670.17	€835.17
	13-15/10/2023	Budget 2024	Celtic Conference <i>Carlingford, Louth</i>	€100.00	€600.00	€700.00
	20-21/10/2023	EM Personal Security	AILG <i>Tralee, Co. Kerry</i>	€80.00	€485.16	€565.16
	25-27/10/2023	Climate Action/Sustainable Bus.	LAMA <i>Tuam, Co. Galway</i>	€160.00	€575.91	€735.91
	17-18/11/2023	Road Safety	AILG, Galway City	€80.00	€406.16	€486.16
			Overall Total			€5,265.59

Andrew McGuinness	07-08/01/2023	Finance Act 22	Celtic Conference <i>Carlingford, Louth</i>	€100.00	€441.48	€541.48
	20-22/01/2023	LA Procurement Process	Celtic Conference <i>Clonakilty, Co. Cork</i>	€100.00	€58.52	€158.52
	07-09/02/2023	AIR Regions in Focus Event	AIR Regions <i>Monaghan Town</i>		€ -	€ -
	24-25/02/2023	Electoral Reform Act 2022	AILG <i>Limerick City</i>	€80.00	€302.02	€382.02
	02-04/03/2023	Spring Confer.	LAMA, Bantry	€160.00	€684.67	€844.67
	24-25/03/2023	Climate Action Plan	AILG <i>Dundalk, Co. Louth</i>	€80.00	€497.83	€577.83
	05-06/04/2023	Inspiring Rural Creativity	Suck Valley Way <i>Roscommon Town</i>	€140.00	€160.00	€300.00
	19-19/07/2023	Uisce Eireann Briefing	AILG <i>Cork City</i>	€80.00	€380.78	€460.78
	20-21/10/2023	EM Personal Security	AILG <i>Tralee, Co. Kerry</i>	€80.00	€501.32	€581.32
	25-27/10/2023	Climate Action/ Sustainable Bus.	LAMA <i>Tuam, Co. Galway</i>	€160.00	€592.22	€752.22
	17-18/11/2023	Road Safety	AILG, Galway City	€80.00	€424.29	€504.29
			Overall Total			€5,103.13
Eugene McGuinness	02-04/03/2023	Spring Conference	LAMA <i>Bantry, Co. Cork</i>	€160.00	€467.18	€627.18
	20/04/2023	Annual Conference	AILG <i>Kilkenny City</i>	€165.00	€ -	€165.00
	21-22/07/2023	Uisce Eireann Briefing	AILG <i>Sligo Town</i>	€80.00	€335.90	€415.90
	13-15/09/2023	Autumn Training Conference	AILG <i>Sligo Town</i>	€165.00	€467.18	€632.18
			Overall Total			€1,840.26
Pat O'Neill	-	-	-	-	-	-

OVERSEAS EVENTS ATTENDED BY ELECED MEMBERS IN 2023

TITLE	DATE	MEMBERS ATTENDED
St. Patrick's Day, New York	March 2023	Cllr. Patrick O'Neill Cllr. Andrew McGuinness
Kilkenny City Twinning, Minnesota	September 2023	Cllr. Joe Malone

The total cost incurred in 2023 by Kilkenny County Council in respect of attendance by Councillors at overseas events is €6,513.84.

PAYMENTS TO ELECTED MEMBERS

Elected Member	Number of Meetings	Salaries [Taxable]	Annual Allowance	Local Representational Allowance	Cathaoirleachs / Leas Cathaoirleach Allowance	Municipal District Chair	SPC Chair Allowance	Total	Expenses Paid From Outside Bodies
Eamon Aylward	39	€ 27,771.75	€3,781.47	€3,411.74			€5,864.49	€40,829.45	€4,279.00
Tomás Breathnach	55	€ 27,771.79	€4,248.20	€2,070.66				€34,090.65	
John Brennan	40	€ 27,073.35	€2,964.67	€2,333.37				€32,371.39	
Martin Brett	51	€ 27,771.77	€2,230.37	€3,038.20			€2,874.75	€35,915.09	
Mary Hilda Cavanagh	48	€ 27,771.79	€3,781.47	€5,161.62		€2,759.74		€39,474.62	€3,541.06
Peter 'Chap' Cleere	32	€ 27,771.75	€2,576.14	€6,952.58				€37,300.47	€1,864.59
John Coonan	42	€ 27,771.77	€2,230.37	€1,960.51	€2,069.82			€34,032.47	€618.69
Deirdre Cullen	42	€ 27,771.79	€2,230.37	€5,034.17		€3,150.73		€38,187.06	
Michael Delaney	34	€ 27,771.79	€2,230.37	€5,159.13		€3,104.72		€38,266.01	
Fidelis Doherty	37	€ 27,771.77	€4,248.20	€2,964.25		€2,598.76		€37,582.98	€1,161.36
Maria Dollard	35	€ 27,771.79	€2,230.37	€4,306.81				€34,308.97	
Matt Doran	45	€ 27,771.79	€3,548.10	€3,535.44		€2,713.76	€5,864.49	€43,433.58	
Michael Doyle	44	€ 27,771.77	€3,431.41	€4,601.42	€10,349.10			€46,153.70	
Pat Dunphy	49	€ 27,771.79	€5,064.98	€2,641.27			€2,989.74	€38,467.78	€879.98
David Fitzgerald	37	€ 27,771.79	€2,230.37	€5,159.89		€4,599.60	€2,989.74	€42,751.39	
Pat Fitzpatrick	45	€ 27,771.79	€2,230.37	€1,953.01	€9,199.20			€41,154.37	
Ger Frisby	51	€ 27,771.79	€4,831.62	€1,535.38		€3,265.72	€5,864.49	€43,269.00	€1,664.84
Denis Hynbes	31	€ 27,771.79	€1,720.50	€6,540.81				€36,033.10	
Joe Lyons	46	€ 27,771.79	€2,371.44	€2,561.36			€2,874.75	€35,579.34	
Joe Malone	30	€ 27,771.79	€2,230.37	€4,610.95		€5,366.20		€39,979.31	
Michael McCarthy	46	€ 27,771.75	€2,230.37	€4,236.04				€34,238.16	€805.02
Andrew McGuinness	45	€ 27,771.79	€2,230.37	€5,030.21				€35,032.37	
Eugene McGuinness	42	€ 27,771.79	€2,230.37	€4,708.19				€34,710.35	
Patrick O'Neill	24	€ 27,771.77	€1,771.94	€3,115.45	€1,839.84			€34,499.00	
		€665,824.30	€68,874.17	€92,622.50	€23,457.96	€27,559.23	€29,322.45	€907,660.61	€14,814.54

CIVIC OCCASIONS & EVENTS 2023

JANUARY 2023



PRIDE OF PLACE AWARDS



SUMP DISCUSSION GROUP



FEBRUARY 2023



GRAND MARSHAL ANNOUNCEMENT



LAUNCH OF ST. PATRICKS DAY FESTIVAL AND TRADFEST



KILKENNY COUNTRYSIDE PARK SOD TURNING



N24 TOWER ROAD SOD TURNING

MARCH 2023



ST. PATRICK'S DAY FESTIVAL



TEAM UP TO CLEAN UP



PRESENTATION FOR JOHN CLEERE



RECEPTION FOR BISHOP NIALL COLL

APRIL 2023



PRESENTATION OF CIVIC RECOGNITION CERTIFICATES TO KILKENNY HURLING AND CAMOGIE TEAMS

MAY 2023



PRESENTATION OF AWARDS TO THE WINNERS OF THE ST. PATRICKS DAY PARADE



PRESENTATION TO THE CASTLECOMER WELLIE RACE COMMITTEE



OFFICIAL OPENING OF SESSIONS HOUSE, THOMASTOWN BY MINISTER HEATHER HUMPHREYS



LAUNCH OF NEW STREET SIGNS FOR KILKENNY CITY

JUNE 2023



ELECTION OF CATHAOIRLEACH CLLR. MICHAEL DOYLE AND LEAS-CATHAOIRLEACH CLLR. JOHN COONAN



JUNE 2023



ELECTION OF MAYOR CLLR. JOE MALONE AND DEPUTY MAYOR CLLR. MARTIN BRETT



JUNE 2023



PRESENTATION TO KILKENNY CITY HARRIERS



OFFICIAL OPENING OF THE FRESHFORD PARK



OFFICIAL OPENING OF SLIEVERUE LINEAR PARK

JULY 2023



REGIONAL CEREMONY FOR NATIONAL COMMEMORATION DAY 2023



HOMEcoming CEREMONY FOR THE KILKENNY SENIOR HURLING TEAM



OFFICIAL OPENING OF THE GREENWAY, NEW ROSS

SEPTEMBER/OCTOBER 2023

PRESENTATION TO GEMMA HAIRE AND MARGARET TURLEY



MAYOR'S CYCLE



LAUNCH OF FULL FORWARD KILKENNY 2030



DECEMBER 2023

YULEFEST CHRISTMAS FESTIVAL 2023



OFFICIAL OPENING OF THE MOONCOIN ROSE WALK



OFFICIAL OPENING OF THE COUNTRYSIDE PARK DUNMORE



MANAGEMENT STRUCTURE

Kilkenny County Council's Management Structure is:



Sean McKeown
Interim Chief Executive

☎ 056-7794075
✉ sean.mckeown@kilkennycoco.ie

**Interim Chief Executive of
Kilkenny County Council**



Mary J. Mulholland
Director of Services

☎ 056-7794900
✉ mary.mulholland@kilkennycoco.ie

**Director of Services with
responsibilities for:**

*Housing, Community, Library, Arts,
Heritage, Fire Service*

Municipal District of Callan/Thomastown



Tim Butler
Director of Services

☎ 056-7794070
✉ tim.butler@kilkennycoco.ie

**Director of Services with
responsibilities for:**

*Corporate, Human Resources, Roads &
Transportation, Water Services,
Communication, Health & Safety*

Municipal District of Kilkenny



Denis Malone
Acting Director of Services

☎ 056-7794010
✉ denis.malone@kilkennycoco.ie

**Director of Services with
responsibilities for:**

*Planning, Environment, Building Control,
Parks, LEO/Economic Development,
Tourism Marketing & Veterinary Services*

Municipal District of Piltown



Martin Prendiville
Head of Finance

☎ 056-7794214
✉ martin.prendiville@kilkennycoco.ie

**Director of Services for responsibilities
for:**

*Finance, Information Technology, Facilities
Management, Procurement & Special
Projects*

Municipal District of Castlecomer



Fiona Deegan
Acting Director of Services

☎ 056-7794196
✉ fiona.deegan@kilkennycoco.ie

**Director of Services for responsibilities
for:**

*Management of Displaced Ukrainian
Persons situation*



DIRECTORATE OF CORPORATE & INFRASTRUCTURE

**Director of Services:
Mr. Tim Butler**



CORPORATE SERVICES

REGISTER OF ELECTORS

checktheregister.ie

Electoral Rolling Register

Electoral Reform Act 2022 (*Commencement*) Order 2022 has resulted in a number of changes to the Register of Electors.

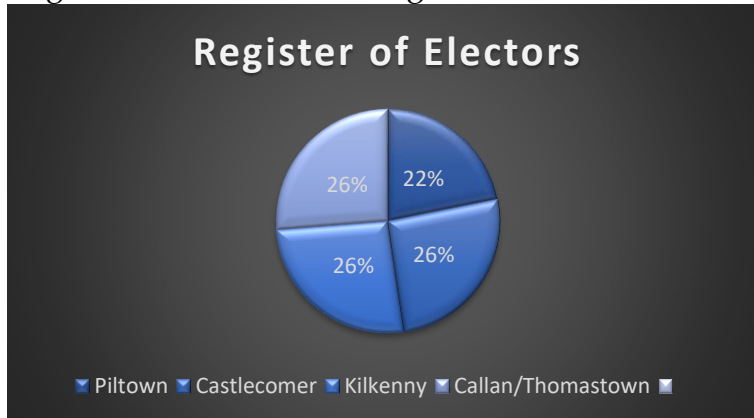
Since October 2022, the annual register cycle no longer applies and a rolling register process is now in place.

The new Electoral Rolling Register was rolled out in October, 2022. All electors are now being asked to visit www.checktheregister.ie to confirm or update their entry by adding their PPSN, Date of Birth and Eircode or register for the first time using a newly upgraded online form. This will help to ensure that entries are accurate and up to date as well as enabling the identification of entries on the register that require follow up. Checking, updating or registering has never been easier.

The Electoral Reform Act 2022 provides the legislation to underpin a range of significant electoral reforms set out in the Programme for Government – Our Shared Future.

A national communications campaign was launched to encourage people to visit checktheregister.ie and update their details. The Franchise Section have received in excess of 900 requests for update or new registrations via checktheregister.ie.

The total number on the Register on the 31st of December, 2023 is 74,678.



Any member of the public can check if they are on the register on the following website: www.checktheregister.ie or can contact the Corporate Services Department in the Council.

CUSTOMER CARE

The Council is committed to providing a quality service to all its customers. Kilkenny County Council's Customer Charter sets out the way in which the Council endeavours to deal with its customers. The document is available on our website at www.kilkennycoco.ie.

This Charter includes a commitment to equality in service provision and a recognition of the diverse nature of the community we serve. The Charter also includes a Customer Complaints Procedure which may be availed of by any person not satisfied with the quality of service received. The Senior Executive Officer in Corporate investigates all complaints/comments received. A person not satisfied with the response provided by the Senior Executive Officer can request to have their case reviewed again by the Director of Services, Corporate Services.

In 2023, Kilkenny County Council dealt with 19 formal complaints from customers.

PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

Section 126(c) of the Local Government Reform Act 2014 sets out the functions of the National Oversight and Audit Commission (NOAC) which includes examination of the performance of local government bodies against forty-two indicators.

The report in respect of 2022 was published by NOAC in September, 2023.

Kilkenny County Council's performance in each area in 2022 compared to other local authorities is available for viewing on www.noac.ie

OMBUDSMAN

The Office of the Ombudsman was established under the Ombudsman Act 1980. The role of the Office is to investigate complaints about administrative actions, delays or inactions adversely affecting persons or bodies in their dealings with state bodies including Local Authorities.

The Office of the Ombudsman dealt with 6 Customer complaints in 2023. Reports on each complaint was provided by Kilkenny County Council to the Office of the Ombudsman.

OMBUDSMAN FOR CHILDREN

In 2023, no complaint was made to the Ombudsman for Children.

IRISH LANGUAGE SCHEME

The Official Languages (*Amendment*) Act 2021 was signed by the President of Ireland, Michael D. Higgins into law in December, 2021.

This legislation is a strengthening of the Official Languages Act 2003 and it is widely recognised that it will make a significant contribution to the quality of services in Irish provided to the public by State bodies.

Kilkenny County Council's Irish Language Scheme 2019-2022 was confirmed by the Minister for Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht and came into effect on 8th April 2019. This Scheme remains in force until new language standards are prescribed by the Minister under the 2021 Act which will apply to public bodies in order to promote the use of the Irish language for official purposes. The current scheme is available to view on our website at: www.kilkennycoco.ie.

Kilkenny County Council recognises that our customers have the right to choose to do business with us in their preferred language and they are facilitated in their dealings with us as far as practicable, whether that is through Irish or through English.

The main changes of this amendment Act which affect Kilkenny County Council immediately are that 20% of new recruits to the public service will need to be competent in Irish by the end of 2030. It also requires that 20% of *any advertising placed* is through the medium of Irish and 5% of *any monies spent on advertising* by the Council in any year shall be in the Irish language in Irish language media outlets.

During 2023, Kilkenny County Council dealt with 7 formal Irish complaints.

If you wish to contact the Council in Irish, please send an e-mail to gaeilge@kilkennycoco.ie

Irish Advertising Compliance Achievements in 2023

Kilkenny County Council are committed to meeting its obligations in relation to advertising in the Irish Language.

At the close of 2023, Kilkenny County Council has demonstrated this commitment to promoting the Irish language through advertising. 34.5% of our published advertisements were in Irish, surpassing the national targeted goal of 20%. 7% of our advertisements were published in Irish media, exceeding the national targeted goal of 5%.

By exceeding the national advertising targets, we not only adhere to regulatory standards but also actively contribute to the promotion and sustainability of the Irish language.

PROTECTED DISCLOSURES

The Protected Disclosures Act 2014 became operational on 15th July 2014. The Act provided a statutory framework within which workers can raise concerns regarding a potential wrongdoing that has come to their attention in the workplace in the knowledge that they can avail of significant employment and other protections if they are penalised by their employer or suffer any detriment for doing so.

The 2014 Act has been substantially overhauled by the Protected Disclosures (*Amendment*) Act 2022, which was signed into law in July, 2022. This new legislation came into operation on 1st January, 2023.

In accordance with Section 22 of the 2014 Act, Kilkenny County Council has an obligation to report on the number of protected disclosures made to the Council in the preceding year. To 30th June, 2023, one disclosure was received by the Designated Officer for Protected Disclosures.

DATA PROTECTION (GDPR)

Kilkenny County Council processes all personal information in accordance with the General Data Protection Regulation 2016 and the Data Protection Acts, 1988 to 2018.

The General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) applies from 25th May 2018. It has general application to the processing of personal data in the EU, setting out more extensive obligations on data controllers and processors, and providing strengthened protections and rights for data subjects.

Privacy Statement

At Kilkenny County Council we are committed to protecting and respecting your privacy. The Privacy Statement lets you know how we look after your personal data. It also informs you as to our obligations and your rights under data protection law. Kilkenny County Council's privacy statement can be found at: www.kilkennycoco.ie/privacy-statement

In 2023, Kilkenny County Council dealt with 12 data subject access requests. The Data Protection Officer (DPO) was notified of 5 data breaches. None of these breaches required notification to the DPC. The DPO has actively engaged with Service Departments in carrying out Data Privacy Impact Assessments and addressing any risks identified. Training is provided to staff on all areas of data protection.

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION REQUESTS

The Freedom of Information Act 2014 was enacted on 14th October 2014. It introduced significant changes to the Freedom of Information regime repealing and replacing the Freedom of Information Acts 1997 and 2003 and expanding the scope of FOI to a number of further bodies. It also consolidated, modernised and updated the legislation generally.

It is the policy of Kilkenny County Council to give members of the public access to information held by the Authority in accordance with the provisions of the Freedom of Information Act 2014. Further information is available on the Council's website www.kilkennycoco.ie

The Freedom of Information Unit deals with requests for records held by Kilkenny County Council from members of the public, Journalists and Organisations. Kilkenny County Council is a public body which is subject to the provisions of the Freedom of Information Act, 2014, which allows for access to certain records held by the local authority subject to a number of exemptions.

Kilkenny County Council received 91 Freedom of Information requests in 2023.

2022	Journalists	Business/Interest Groups	Óireachtas/Public Reps	Staff	Clients	Others	TOTAL
TOTAL	32	9	1	0	8	41	91

A total of 95 decisions were made by the Freedom of Information Officer in 2023.

One application for an Internal Review was received following the decisions of the FOI Officer.

	FOI DECISIONS MADE 2022				
	Requests Granted	Requests Part-Granted	Requests Refused	Requests Withdrawn/Transferred	TOTAL
TOTAL	36	17	33	9	95

ACCESS TO INFORMATION ON THE ENVIRONMENT

You are entitled to request access to information on the environment that is held by Kilkenny County Council. This right comes from Directive 2003/4/EC of the European Parliament, the European Communities (Access to Information on the Environment) Regulations 2007 to 2014 (hereafter referred to as the AIE Regulations).

Under these Regulations, information relating to the environment held by, or for, a public authority must be made available on request, subject to certain exceptions. The AIE regulations also oblige public authorities to be

proactive in disseminating environmental information to the public.

In 2023, Kilkenny County Council received 19 requests. 14 requests were granted, 3 requests were part granted and 2 request was refused.

There is no initial fee for making an application under the AIE Regulations. However, the Regulations do allow a public authority to charge a reasonable fee for the cost of supplying environmental information, and Kilkenny County Council has set the following charges: -

Search, retrieval and copying of records: €20 per hour

- Photocopy: €0.04 per sheet
- CD Rom: €10.00
- Radiograph: €6.00

COMMUNICATIONS & SOCIAL MEDIA 2023

The Communications Team oversees corporate and internal communications for the Council. It is responsible for all internal and external communications, public relations, crisis management and marketing on behalf of the Council extending across all Council services.

The Team provides full support to An Cathaoirleach, the Mayor and Elected Members regarding:

- Advice on Protocol and Event Management.
- Organising of Civic Events.
- Circulation of Press Release post events.
- Photoshoots and videos for promotion.
- Preparation of Speaking Notes.
- Management of Civic Events.

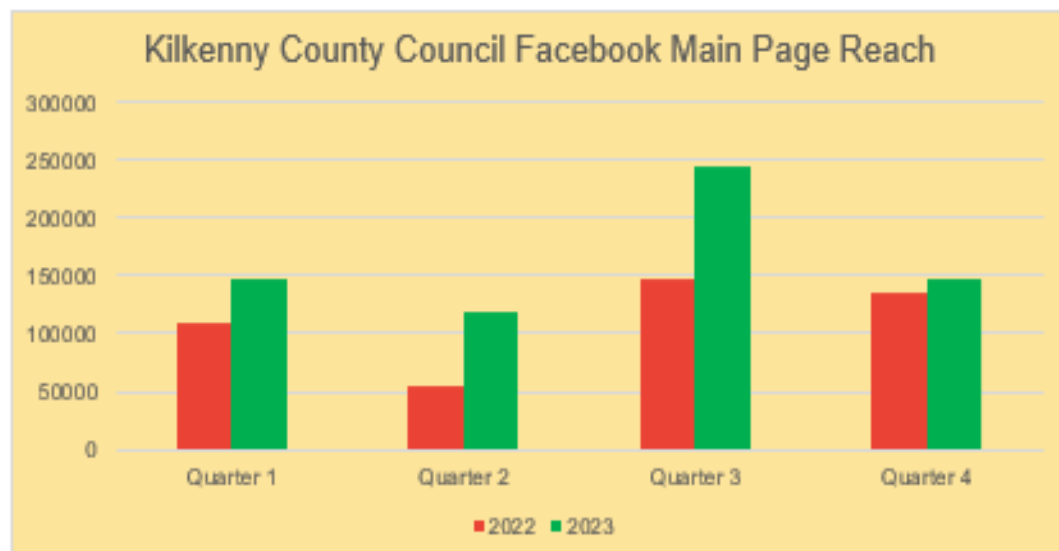
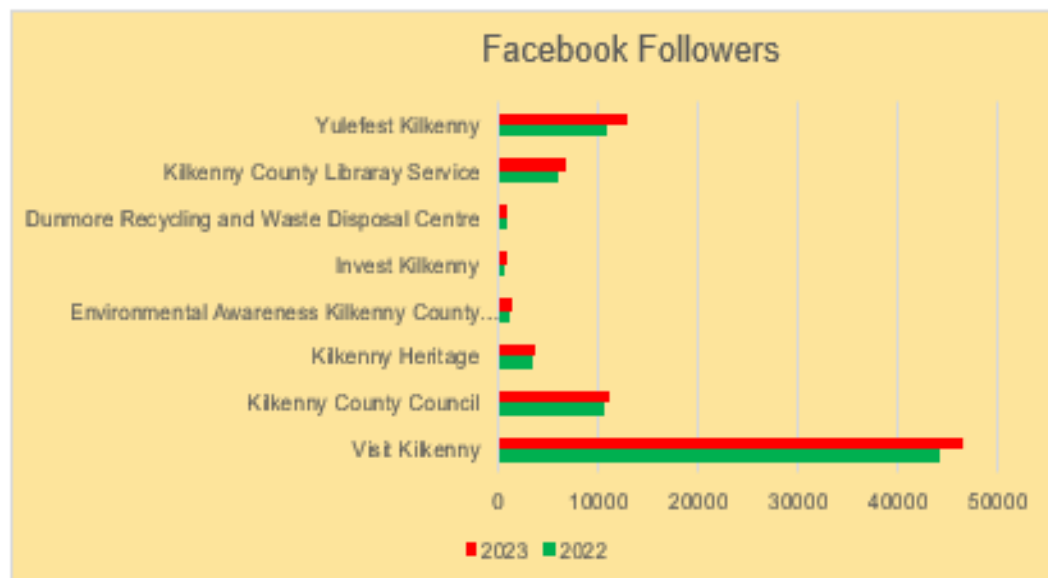
Achievements in 2023:

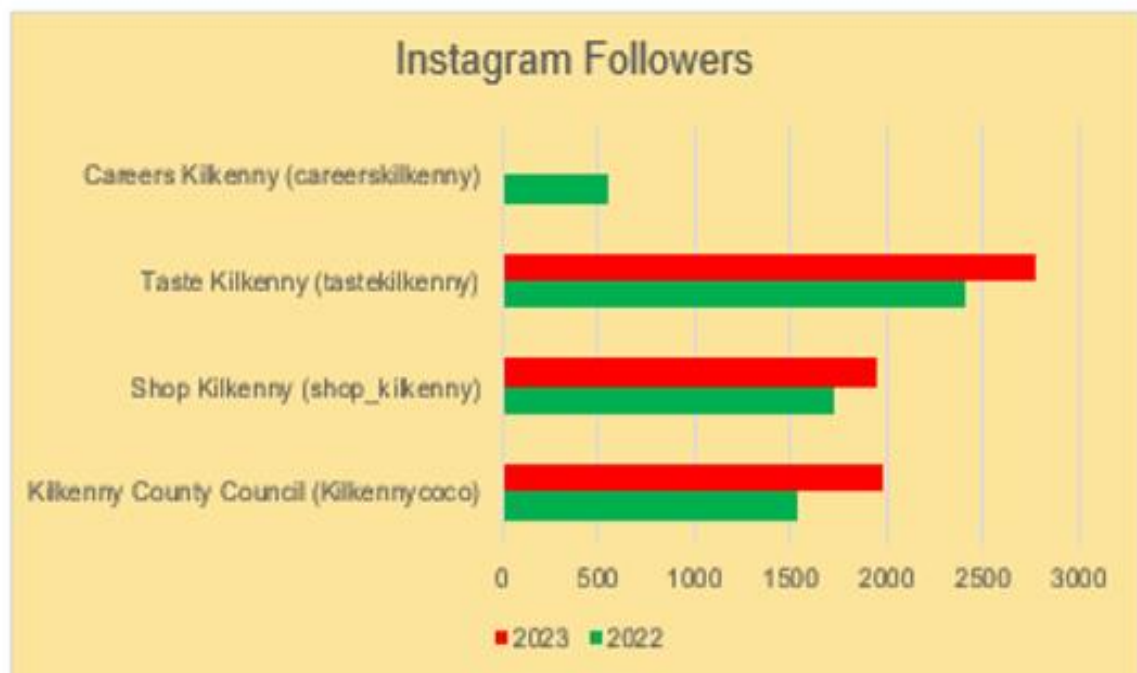
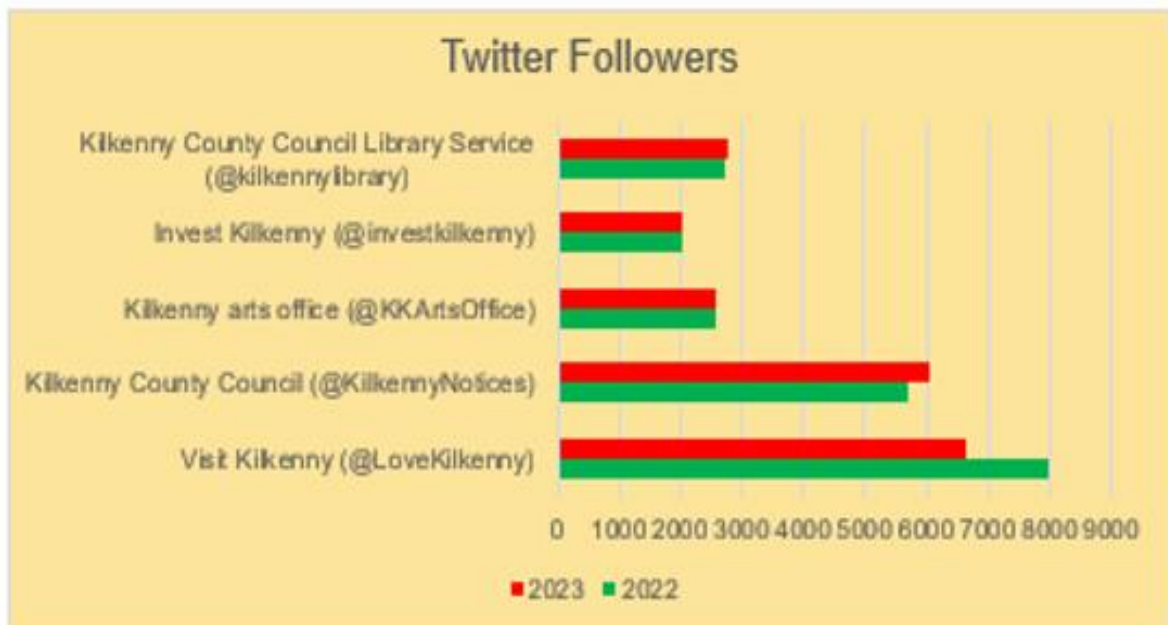
- 102 Press Releases issued in 2023
- Promotion and management of Council Events and activities.
- Publication of Annual Report 2022.
- Management of Council's social media accounts.
- Management of Kilkenny.ie social media accounts.
- Management of Council's website and Kilkenny.ie website.
- Support to Civic Events in 2023.

- Support to the promotion of the Council's Civic Festivals being St. Patrick's Festival and Yulefest Kilkenny.
- Co-Ordinated content for Kilkenny People Local Authority Page.
- Participated in Regional Network of Communications Officers in South East for regional campaigns.
- Promoting the County Brand kilkenny.ie.
- Promoted various national campaigns through social media campaigns which included:
 - Your Council Day.
 - Be Winter Ready.
 - Heritage Week.
 - Culture Night.
 - Seachtain na Gaeilge.
 - Energy Week.
 - ChecktheRegister
 - National Bike Week



Social Media Followers at 31/12/2023:





Website Page Views as at 31/12/2022



TOTAL SOCIAL MEDIA FOLLOWERS END OF 2023

- Facebook- 98295
- Twitter- 28000
- Instagram- 30590

HUMAN RESOURCES

The objective of the Human Resources Department is “to ensure that there is an appropriately resourced, skilled and motivated workforce to meet the priorities and objectives of the Organisation and to ensure as reasonably practical the safety, health and wellbeing of all our staff”.

The Human Resources Department vision is to provide effective strategic and operational support as a business partner to service delivery units of the Authority.

The Human Resources Department deals with the following areas:

- Human Resource Strategy
- Workforce Planning
- Recruitment and Selection
- Payroll & Superannuation
- Employee Training and Development
- Performance Management
- Leadership Development
- Equality
- Diversity Management
- Work-Life Balance – Including Blended Working
- Industrial Relations
- Data Analytics
- Employee Health, Safety and Welfare
- Employee Wellbeing

The Human Resource Service in 2023 continued to offer video interview format to anyone who requested it and provided online delivered training modules where suitable. 2023 saw the introduction of Blended Working and during the year there was 127 applications for remote working from staff.

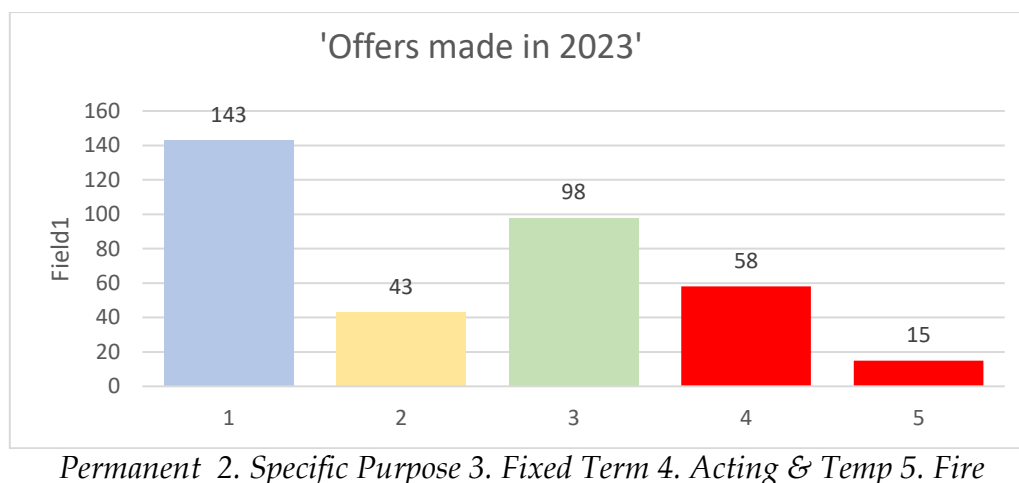
Work Force Planning / Staffing Levels

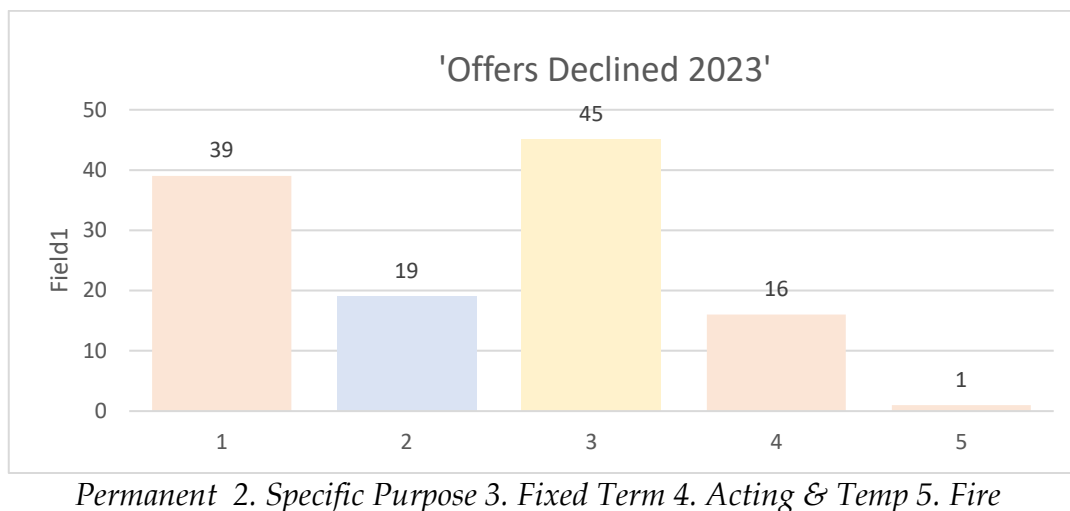
The number of staff employed at 31st December, 2023 was 625 (*Headcount*) or 596 (*Whole-Time-Equivalent*). The Human Resource Department coordinates the ongoing management of the Work Force Plans, managing new entrants, staff transfers and staff departures with line management colleagues.

Recruitment

The Human Resources Department is successfully implementing the e recruitment process with all competitions now being administered online via submit.com. All competitions are administered with online applications, online selection stages and a hybrid interview service where candidates are offered either face to face or video interviews.

There was a total of 54 competitions held during the year which resulted in 1,094 applications being received by the Council. 357 offers were made during 2023 resulting in 237 new appointments (*indoor & outdoor*). 130 of these new appointments were external candidates and 107 internal candidates.





Kilkenny County Council participated in a Careers Fair held in the Ormond Hotel in February 2023. This Careers Fair was used to highlight the jobs on offer by Kilkenny County Council with a view to expand the reach of the Authority to talent markets.

Summer Student & Lifeguard Programme

The Council employed 43 students during the summer months of 2023 to cover the area of Litter Cleaning, Gardening and other seasonal work under this programme. This was a large increase on the previous year. There were also 22 Lifeguards employed throughout the County during the summer period of 2023.

Shared Payroll & Superannuation Service

This service is delivered by My Pay the Local Government Shared Services Provider from its offices in Portlaoise Co Laois with support from Kilkenny Human Resources Department. Kilkenny County

Attendance Management

The Local Government Sectors Attendance Management Policy was revised in 2013 and revised sick pay schemes were introduced for the Sector. Absenteeism levels continue to be managed in accordance with these policies. The Authority has seen improved reduced levels of absences year on year.

Training & Development

Kilkenny County Council is committed to ensuring the professional and personal development of all employees. Training and development is aimed at helping employees to become more effective in their jobs and developing their potential as identified in their Performance Development Plans, while also meeting the goals and objectives of the Council. A comprehensive training programme was delivered in 2023 which incorporated mandatory training, work related and personal development programmes. This included Health & Safety training, Third Level Learning Programmes, Climate Change training and various other in-house training workshops. A sample of the training programmes provided in 2023 is as follows:

- Abrasive Wheels
- Banksman
- Climate Change Training
- Performance Management & Development System Training
- CSCS Signing, Lighting & Guarding Training
- CSCS Location of Underground Services
- Mobile Elevated Work Platform Training
- Manual Handling
- Safe pass
- Pre-retirement Course
- Literacy Awareness for Customer Service Training
- Driver CPC
- First Aid Responder Training
- Local Government Studies

Kilkenny County Council endeavours subject to available resources to facilitate and support staff personal development wishing to pursue Third Level Courses that are relevant to and contribute to their role and the business needs of the Council. We are dedicated to providing a library of courses/information which is easily accessible to staff online and to a new hybrid delivery of courses online and in house. 1,469 attended 164 various training courses organised by HR Training in 2023.

Employee Wellbeing

The Kilkenny County Council Employee Wellbeing Strategy 2023 - 2026 was launched Monday 23rd October. Kilkenny County Council, through the Employee Wellbeing Strategy, is endeavouring to create a safe and healthy work environment that fosters a culture of positive wellbeing, improving the general wellbeing of our diverse workforce and ensuring that wellbeing is seen as everyone's responsibility. We also wish to embed wellbeing as a central part of strategic priorities for Managers across all of Kilkenny County Council's functions. Funding was received from the LGMA & Healthy Ireland to help develop, deliver and improve wellbeing within Kilkenny County Council with the goal to embed wellbeing as part of our culture.



Equality and Supporting Diversity

Kilkenny County Council is an equal opportunity employer and is committed to a broad range of policies, practices and procedures which aim to recognise individual contribution and performance, develop each individual's capability and give everyone an equal opportunity to use his/her talent and realise his/her potential.

Kilkenny County Council promotes and supports the employment of people with disabilities and we exceed the public sector target as set out in the Disability Act i.e.3%.

INTERNAL AUDIT

The Internal Audit Unit function is to provide a critical and independent opinion on the adequacy and effectiveness of the control framework across the Local Authority. As part of the overall governance and control environment in Kilkenny County Council, it provides Audit Assurance that all significant operating risks are identified, managed and controlled effectively. The Internal Audit Unit is independent in the performance of its duties and in its reporting arrangements. It is a function of the Corporate Services Directorate.

Each year a new plan of work for Internal Audit is designed and prepared based on risk evaluation and in consultation with Council Management, Local Government Auditor and the Audit Committee. The list of Internal Audit Assignments carried out in 2023 included the following:

- Review of Travel & Expenses Payments
- Covid Rates Waiver Scheme
- Motor Tax End of Year Stock take
- NOAC Quality Assurance In Depth Checks
- Review of Risk Register
- Random Cashier Checks
- Ukrainian Response Unit
- Housing Capital Recoupments
- SICAP

The progress on the implementation of Audit Recommendations is monitored by Internal Audit and a quarterly report is prepared for review by the Audit Committee. This body of work was an integral part of the Audit Plan for 2023 and a total of 205 Audit Recommendations were closed out across the Directorates.

Internal Audit undertook a Tender Procurement process in 2023 for the provision of Cyber Security Audit Services for Kilkenny County Council. It is envisaged that this contract for an external Audit on Cyber Security for Kilkenny County Council will begin in Q1 2024.

The Internal Auditor attended the National Local Government Internal Audit Network (LGIAN) and Internal Auditors Southern Region Meetings during 2023. These meetings contribute to the professional development and enhancement of the Internal Audit Function as part of the governance and assurance arrangements within the Local Government Sector.

Kilkenny County Council's Internal Audit Section hosted the AGM of the LGIAN on 20th April 2023, with Auditors in attendance from 23 Local Authorities. Presentations on the day included:

- Risk Management
- Procurement
- European Local Energy Assistance Project
- MyPay Payroll and Superannuation Local Government Shared Services Centre
- Active Travel

The Audit Committee is made up of three external members and two Elected Members. The current Audit Committee was established by resolution of the Council upon nomination by the Corporate Policy Group and following consultation with the Chief Executive. The term of the committee is concurrent with that of the current Council which commenced in June 2019 and will terminate in June 2024. Its role is:

- To review the Council's financial reporting practices and procedures
- To foster the development of best practice in the Local Authority Internal Audit function
- To review the Council's financial reports and to report on its findings
- To assess and promote efficiency and value for money
- To review systems that are operated by the Local Authority for the management of risks.

There were quarterly Audit Committee meetings held in March, June, September and December 2023. The four meetings were in person meetings with the option of remote access. Three of the meetings were held in County Hall and one in the Municipal District Office in Callan. During the year, the Committee met with the Chief Executive, Local Government Auditor, all Directors of Services and Head of Finance to discuss a broad range of issues.

Areas of priority included:

- Local Government Audit Service Statutory Report 2022
- Annual Financial Statement 2022
- Annual Budget 2023
- Housing
- Roads, Transportation & Water Services
- Internal Audit Reports
- Key Capital Projects
- NOAC Reports
- Planning, Tourism and Economic Development

Tipperary County Council hosted the Annual Audit Committee Forum for the Southern Region in Cashel in September. Kilkenny County Council was represented at this meeting by Dr Sean Brady (*Audit Committee Chair*) and Ms. Brigid Webster, Internal Auditor. Presentations on the day included:

- Digital Transformation in Audit – Dr Deirdre Bane, Senior Finance & Governance Specialist IPA
- Local Property Tax Baseline Review – Deirdre McCarthy, APO, Local Government Finance
- The Impact of Culture on Governance – Dr Tom Ward, Senior Governance Specialist, IPA



Audit Committee Forum Southern Network Attendees
Ms. Brigid Webster, Internal Auditor, Kilkenny County Council,
Ms. Gillian McNamara, Internal Auditor, Clare County Council,
Dr. Deirdre Bane, Senior Finance & Governance Specialist, IPA.

ROADS & TRANSPORTATION

The Elected Members adopted the 2023 Roadwork's Scheme for County Kilkenny in March 2023. The total value of Maintenance and Improvement Schemes amounted to €34,594,143

Kilkenny County Council successfully secured €600,000 (*B12 Maintenance, HD28 Skid Resistance*) in additional funding from Transport Infrastructure Ireland [TII] during the course of the year which allowed for additional design, improvement and maintenance works on the National Road Network.

Kilkenny County Council was also successful in 2023 in securing funding of €633,522 under the Local Improvement Scheme (LIS) scheme for works on 11 non-public roads.

Roads Capital Projects & Improvements

The past decade has seen continued significant capital expenditure invested in road schemes in County Kilkenny.

MAJOR PROJECTS

N24 Waterford to Cahir Major Scheme.

An allocation of €2m was provided to advance Phase 2 (*Option Selection*) during 2023.

MINOR WORKS PROGRAMME

Under the Minor Works Programme, financed by TII, Kilkenny County Council has made significant progress with respect to the following:

N24 Tower Road Junction Improvement Scheme

Wills Bros Ltd commenced construction of the scheme on the 16th January 2023 with a 12-month construction time period envisaged. An initial allocation of €5m was provided in early Q1 2023 but this was increased significantly as construction proceeded through 2023.

The compact grade separated junction and link road are in use under traffic management. Substantial completion is expected by early Q1 2024.



N24 Tower Road Interchange under Construction



N24 Tower Road Interchange at night

(b) N77 Ballyragget to Ballynaslee Improvement Scheme

An allocation of €750,000 was provided in 2023 to further advance the scheme and in particular to facilitate the completion of archaeological services during 2023. Site archaeological services were substantially completed by Q3 2023 and an open day held in Q2 2023. The tender documentation was finalised by Q2 2023 and issued on etenders in Q3 2023. The contract to construct the scheme was awarded to Fox Building & Engineering Ltd in December 2023 and construction is scheduled to commence in early February 2024 with a 12-month construction time period envisaged. Notice to enter will be served on all affected landowners in early January 2024 and land acquisition procedures are on-going.

(c) N24 Carrick Road Minor Improvement Scheme

An allocation of €100,000 was provided in 2023 in expectation of a potential oral hearing and/or decision by An Bord Pleanála on the scheme which had been submitted for approval in November 2022. Kilkenny County Council responded to a formal request for addition information by An Bord Pleanála in respect of both the applications for 177AE Planning Approval and Compulsory Purchase Order Confirmation in December 2023. A decision on the scheme is now expected during Q1 or early Q2 2024.

OTHER MINOR CAPITAL PROJECTS

N10 Ossory Bridge. Improvement works in respect of the N10 Ossory Bridge commenced in late Q2 2023 and are expected to be completed by Q1 2024. All lanes reopened to traffic in late December 2023. Complex watermain installation requirements and adverse weather impacted progress. The overall outturn cost for the project is expected to be just under €2m.

National Pavement Improvement Programme

Under the Pavement Improvement and Minor Works Programme, financed by TII, Kilkenny County Council has made significant progress with respect to the following:

N77 Knockroe to Littlefield Pavement Scheme

This project was completed by Lagan Asphalt Ltd for a contract value of just under €1.7m during 2023 and consisted of approximately 2.9 km pavement improvement overlay and other associated works.



N77 Near Clinstown National School

N77 Suttonsrath Pavement Scheme

This project was completed by Priority Construction Ltd for a contract value of €930,000 during 2023 and consisted of approximately 1.6 km pavement improvement overlay and other associated works.



New N77 Pavement at Suttonsrath

N10 Danesfort Pavement Scheme

The N10 Danesfort Pavement Improvement Scheme commenced construction during November 2022 and was completed by Q2 2023. The project was a joint pavement and HD15 junction safety improvement project covering a distance of 1.24km and had an overall value of €1m.

N76 Callan By Pass Pavement Scheme

The design work in respect of this proposed scheme progressed during 2023 by Tramore House Regional Design Office and successfully secured from TII Gateway 1 approval for the Project Appraisal Report in December 2023. The preparation of tender documentation can now proceed during 2024 with a view to issuing tender documentation during 2024. 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.

National Road B12 Maintenance Works

Kilkenny County Council received €87,100 in 2023 to address a number of specific issues identified by the Municipal District Engineers on the national road network.

National Road HD28 Skid Resistance Maintenance Works

Expenditure in excess of €550,000 was spent in 2023 to address skid resistance issues on the N10, N24 and N77. This included pavement replacement and mechanical abrasion works.

Fencing Retrofit on the National Road Network

Works to the value of €76,000 were completed during 2023 on this scheme. This scheme provides for the replacement of old concrete post and rail fencing with passively safe fencing. The funding provided for the completion of works on the N10, N77 & N78 network.



Typical Fencing Retrofit completed works on the N10 Dundaryark

NON- NATIONAL ROAD NETWORK

Restoration Improvement and Restoration Maintenance Programme 2023

The main road improvements on the Non-National road network are funded from the Road Restoration Improvement and Maintenance Grant Scheme. The Council received a grant allocation of €13,136,386 in 2023. Works under this funding Scheme are prioritised on a basis of providing for enhancements to the road condition rating, skid resistance and impermeability. Significant progress has been made on the Non-National road network over the years since the Restoration Grant was introduced and the condition rating of the roads in County Kilkenny compares favourably with that of other Counties.

Non- National Low-Cost Safety Programme

The Non- National Low-Cost Safety Programme is targeted at locations along the non-national road network which have been identified as collision prone zones. The works carried out under this programme include improved junction delineation and visibility splays, traffic calming, enhanced roadside delineation and pedestrian crossing facilities within urban areas. 16 schemes were completed under this programme at a cost of €361,500 in 2023.

Public Lighting

Kilkenny County Council maintains approximately 12,000 public lights throughout the County. Enverve are presently contracted to maintain the public lighting stock of Kilkenny County Council. This contract was a joint tender by Kilkenny and Carlow County Councils. A new tender is expected to be issued in Q3 2024.

Kilkenny LED Replacement Programme Non-National Roads

The replacement of the existing lanterns with new LED lanterns is being carried out as part of the Public Lighting Energy Enhancement Project (PLEEP). The Works contract for the PLEEP project was awarded to Killaree Lighting Services - ASD Joint Venture and the management contract to Arup Consulting Engineers. The survey (12,000 units) and lighting design works (5,200 units) were completed for County Kilkenny in 2023 and the installation works commenced in Q4 of 2023. The installation of the 5,200 new LED lanterns will be completed by Q2 2024. This will result in a substantial reduction in energy consumption and greenhouse gas emissions.

The PLEEP project, led by Kilkenny County Council is responsible for the upgrade of approximately 75,000 lanterns in the Eastern Region.



Flood Relief Capital Projects

Kilkenny County Council was allocated €29.6million investment for Flood Risk Management measures across 6 schemes in the County, funded by the Governments Ten Year Programme of Investment (2018-2028) and administrated by the OPW.

In 2023, Two Tranche 1 Schemes progressed:

- Ballyhale FRS Section 177 AE and CPO applications were submitted for approval to An Bord Pleanala in May of 2023. A decision from An Bord Pleanala is still awaited.
- Graiguenamanagh is due to advance to Stage 2 Planning Phase in 2024. Site Investigation works will be completed in Q1 2024.

These Flood Relief Schemes will provide a standard of protection when complete to approximately 92 properties and will have a significant social and economic benefit to the effected communities of both Graiguenamanagh and Ballyhale.

Minor Works Programme

Kilkenny County Council sought funding from the OPW under the Minor Works Programme for 2 Minor Works project in Kilkenny in 2023, Callan, for Phase 2, infrastructure works, and Rathcurby.

Survey works and report preparation works for Ardaloo, for which funding for reports were received in 2022 was completed in December 2023 with application to be made Q1 2024.

Road Safety Working Together Group (RSWTG)

During 2023 Kilkenny County Council established a Road Safety Working Together Group (RSWTG), chaired by Cllr. Matt Doran and comprising representatives from the RSA, Ambulance Service, TII, Elected Representatives, Fire Service, An Garda Síochána, Director of Roads & Transportation, Cycling Officer, Road Safety Officer and Roads Engineering Staff.

The group had their inaugural meeting on 16th November, 2023 and agreed the adoption of Kilkenny's Road Safety Plan 2022 – 2030 which sets out Kilkenny's aims and objectives for road safety in line with the Government's Road Safety Strategy – Vision Zero.

The adopted Road Safety Plan was presented to SPC2 – Road Transportation and Mobility on 7th December, 2023 and was launched at the Council Meeting on 18th December, 2023.



Kilkenny's Road Safety Working Together Group

Street Name New Signage

Canal Walk Well Repair

Belly Bing Wrapping



Patrick St. Upgrade

Dama & Radestown Lanes



R695 DAMA



RADESTOWN LANE

New Christmas Lighting 2023

St. John's Street Upper & Lower

Rose Inn Street

Parade Junction



New Christmas Lighting 2023 contd...

6m Tree on Canal Square

10m Tree on the Parade

Patrick Street & Ormonde Street.



WATER SERVICES

Operation & Maintenance

Under Service Level Agreement with Uisce Éireann, Kilkenny County Council's staff operates:

- 19 public drinking water supplies
- 35 public waste water treatment schemes
- 9.59 billion litres of water (*average 26.28 million litres/day*) provided to approximately 67,500 customers.

Kilkenny City Regional Water Supply Scheme

Significant works were completed on the upgrade to the Kilkenny City Regional Water Supply Scheme (RWSS) during 2023 with the works due for completion in Q2 2024. The works to the existing Troyswood Water Treatment Plant will increase the daily production capacity from 8MLD (*mega litres per day or 8,000m³*) to 19MLD. Project ancillary works include the decommissioning of the existing water treatment plant in Radestown and to address any shortcomings in water quality produced at the existing Troyswood Plant.

Construction on the upgrade of the Kilkenny City RWSS continued throughout the year with approximately 80% of the overall construction works completed by the end of 2023.

Elements of work completed during 2023 include:

- Completion of the new building comprising of chemical storage tanks and bunds, dosing kiosks & pumps, high lift pump station, Control room, ESB substation & sludge processing.



Kilkenny City RWSS – New High Lift Pump Room

- Commissioning of new wash water treatment facilities including sludge tanks and settlement tanks.
- Construction of the raw water rising main from the new intake to the Troyswood Water Treatment Plant.
- Process upgrades to the existing plant including upgrades to the existing flocculation system, settlement tanks, rapid gravity filters and enhanced coagulation treatment process.
- New UV disinfection system.
- New chlorination system using Sodium Hypochlorite.
- Wash Water settlements tanks, PFT and Sludge Balancing Tank, Sludge dewatering.

- Completion of new clarification & filter tanks and refurbishment of existing clarifiers and filters.



Kilkenny City RWSS – New Clarifier & Rapid Sand Filt

- Completion of the River Nore water abstraction point. New intake works comprising of sediment settlement sump, fine screen chamber, pump sump, and control building.



Kilkenny City RWSS - New Intake Works & Control building

- Reinstatement works to the 2.8km rising main which will supply treated water from the upgraded Troyswood WTP to the existing reservoirs at the Radestown WTP.



Kilkenny City RWSS – Reinstatement Works to new Rising Main

Kilkenny Main Drainage - Satellite Dewatering Centre

Construction works on this project were completed in June 2023. The following items were incorporated into the existing wastewater treatment plant and now accept and treat the wastewater sludge for all other wastewater treatment plants located in County Kilkenny:

- Sludge acceptance area including new inlet screen and wash press.
- Sludge Import Reception Tank, sludge transfer pumps and associated pipework.
- Sludge Blending Tank including sludge transfer pumps, tank mixing and tank cleaning system, access stairs & permanent lifting equipment.
- Sludge Liquor Return Sump.
- Sludge Liquor Return Balancing Tank including transfer pumps, tank mixing and tank cleaning system, access stairs & permanent lifting equipment.
- Odour control plant for sludge imports.
- Refurbish Picket Fence Thickener.
- New Sludge Dewatering Press including polyelectrolyte dosing pumps.



*Kilkenny City & Environs Wastewater Treatment Plant Purcellsinch
Completed Sludge Import & Tank Installation Works*



*Kilkenny City & Environs Wastewater Treatment Plant Purcellsinch
Completed Sludge Import Screen & Wash Press*

National Certificate of Authorisation Programme (NCAP)

The wastewater treatment plant in Kilmoganny has been selected by Uisce Éireann for upgrade works under the National Certificate of Authorisation Programme (NCAP)

The primary objectives of the NCAP are as follows:

- Ensure compliance with the requirements of the Waste Water Discharge Authorisation (WWDA) Certificate of Authorisation.
- Identify appropriate improvements to the waste water treatment plant, which are necessary to ensure all discharge(s) from the agglomeration contribute towards achieving at least good status in accordance with the European Communities Environmental Objectives (*Surface Waters*) Regulations 2009 and/or the European Communities Environmental Objectives (*Groundwater*) Regulations 2010.
- Assess all secondary discharge points, storm water overflows and emergency overflows within the agglomeration using the Irish Water Stormwater Overflow Assessment Template to identify and determine the integrity, effectiveness of operation and improvements necessary to ensure compliance with the requirements of the relevant Certificate of Authorisation.
- Replace existing infrastructure where economically feasible having carried out a detailed assessment of alternatives and following the completion of a cost benefit analysis.

Following comprehensive reviews of the existing wastewater treatment plant and agglomeration during 2023 a planning application for the upgrade of this wastewater treatment plant was submitted to Kilkenny County Council's Planning Department in December 2023. Subject to statutory approvals, including successful planning, works will continue in 2024.

Small Towns and Villages Growth Programme

The Bennettsbridge Wastewater Treatment Plant (WWTP) upgrade project, part of the Small Towns & Villages Growth Programme (STVGP) is currently in the concept design phase. Data collection for the design has been collated and a number of ecological and other surveys have been completed. The site and route selection report is expected to be completed in early 2024.

Data collection and analysis (*UÉ Project Stages 1 and 2*) for the Paulstown wastewater treatment plant commenced during 2023 and will continue to be undertaken during 2024.

Leakage Reduction Programme

- A budget of approximately €14.2 million was allocated by Irish Water to assist in achieving the leakage target in Kilkenny for 2023 in addition to improving the overall below ground assets.
- In relation to mains replacement, approximately 10.5km was constructed in 2023 with a further 7km at design stage.

Mains Rehabilitation Works

Works undertaken in 2023 include:

- Rathduff Reservoir – Norelands WTP - replacement of 2.8km of asbestos rising main with Ductile Iron and 4.2 km of asbestos distribution main with HDPE. Completed Q2 2023



*Construction of Ductile
Iron Rising Main to Rathduff Reservoir*

- *Dublin Rd, Thomastown* – installation of 1,220m of 180 HDPE to replace ageing asbestos water main. Completed Q3 2023.



Construction of new HDPE watermain at Dublin Rd, Thomastown

- *Annamult, Bennettsbridge* - installation of 2,560m of 125mm HDPE water main. Completed Q3 2023
- *R700 Bennettesbridge – Killarney Cross* – installation of 2,435m of 250 HDPE to replace ageing asbestos water main. Commenced Q4 2023.

Backyard Services

- *St Fiacres Place, Kilkenny* - Construction of 607m HDPE watermain and 99 backyard services. Completed Q2 2023. Improved pressure and reduction in leakage for residents of St. Fiacres Place.
- *Leggatsrath Cottages, Kilkenny* – Construction commenced in Q4 2023 for mains rehab (210m) and backyard services (22 homes).

Pressure Management

- The generation of more stable pressures within network allowed for increased pressure management applications and have a direct effect on levels of leakage.
- These hydraulically actuated Pressure Reducing Valves replaced throttled valves which reduced pressures in the network in proportion to the flow through the valves, resulting in a reduction in burst frequencies recorded.



PRV installation at Kiltown Cross, Inistioge

Find & Fix

- Planned and structured program where find crews use network information to streamline efficiencies with finding leakage.
- In Q1 2023, rollout of a trial leak acoustic listening system. This entailed the installation of 1,000 smart listening devices into the water network in the Kilkenny City and Callan Town areas. The smart listening system has assisted in the locating of 32 leaks to date.
- Reduced leakage within the Bennettsbridge, Goresbridge, Castlecomer, Thomastown, Inistioge, South Kilkenny, Piltown and Kilkenny City water supply zones.



Find & Fix Leak repair at Kilcross, Inistioge

First Fix

- Each Customer is entitled to one initial fix on the private side once consent is provided to Irish Water (IW)/Regional Contractor (RC) to undertake the repair
- Repair must be outside the footprint of the house
- These works help to improve supplies for all customers on the scheme and reduce wastage of water.

Disinfection and Source Protection Programme

- Upgrade of works at Water Treatment Plants and reservoirs has delivered a standardisation of disinfection across the County.
- The programme has improved drinking water quality by improving the disinfection system and standards, while ensuring compliance with all regulations.
- Source protection projects completed at the following sites in 2023:
- Gorteen, Jamestown & Callan WTP



Disinfection Programme works at Gorteen WTP



**DIRECTORATE OF
HOUSING, SOCIAL, COMMUNITY
& CULTURAL SERVICES**

**Director of Services:
Ms. Mary J. Mulholland**



HOUSING

Housing & Accommodation

Kilkenny County Council provides social housing supports to persons who are unable to meet their housing needs from their own resources. The Housing Department aims to meet the delivery targets set out in the Governments 'Housing for All' program. The Housing Department aids households through the Local Authority Home Loan Scheme and provides grants to private households. A high-quality maintenance service is provided as well as energy upgrades to its housing stock through the Energy Retrofit Programme.

HOUSING CAPITAL

Social Housing Delivery

- Working with our AHB partners a total of 182 social homes were delivered in 2023.
- Legan Grange / Legan Court, Thomastown – A 25-unit housing scheme on a challenging town centre site. CJ Falconer & Associates Architects were the Design Team leads and John Somers Construction Ltd constructed the project. Project managed by the Housing Capital Team of Kilkenny County Council
- 6 homes were completed at Golf Links Court, Kilkenny City – utilising a brownfield site to provide age friendly accessible homes in an existing community.
- 105 turnkey units were delivered in 2023 by Approved Housing Bodies.
- Construction commenced on an 88 unit social housing scheme at Crokers Hill, the most significant housing project by Kilkenny County Council to date. This scheme contains 21 fully accessible units and is expected to be completed in 2024.
- 38 houses were retrofitted by Kilkenny County Council under the Energy Efficiency Retrofit Programme.
- A further 176 social homes were under construction at the end of 2023.
- The first “Design and Build” Housing Construction Project was tendered – 42 units at Abbeyhill, Thomastown

2023 Social Housing Delivery

SCHEME	PROJECT NAME	NUMBER UNITS
KCC Turnkey & Part V	The Crescent Belmont Ferrybank	12
KCC Turnkey & Part V	Creamery Site, Kilmacow, Co. Kilkenny	9
KCC Turnkey & Part V	Village Gardens Waterford Road. Kilkenny City	5
KCC Turnkey	Main Street, Piltown, Co. Kilkenny	4
KCC Direct Build	Golf Links Close and Golf Links Road, Kilkenny	6
KCC Direct Build	Legan Grange & Legan Court, Ladywell, Thomastown	25
KCC Direct Build	Haggardsgreen, Callan	1
KCC Renewal	18 Wolfe Tone Street, KK	1
KCC Renewal	4 Loughboy Park Kilkenny City	1
KCC Renewal	Oldtown, Ballyragget	1
AHB Turnkey & Part V	Nyne Park, Callan Road, Kilkenny City	40
AHB Turnkey & Part V	Cluian Glasson, Granges Road, Kilkenny City	43
AHB Turnkey	Nuncio Road, Kilkenny Phase 3	22
AHB Direct Build	19/21 Blackmill Street, Kilkenny	12
		182

NEW DEVELOPMENTS IN 2023

Affordable Housing

Kilkenny County Council received confirmation of funding under the Affordable Housing fund for 3 schemes in 2023 – 2 in Kilkenny City and 1 in Ferrybank. It is intended that these will be advertised for sale in 2024.



Handover of keys at Legan Grange Thomastown 15th November 2023



Official Opening Legan Grange Thomastown 15th November 2023



View of Completed Scheme Legan Grange Thomastown



Completed Age Friendly Units at Golf Links Road Kilkenny – 4 x 1 bed bungalows



Completed Units at Golf Links Road - 2 x 2 bed town houses



Official Opening of Old Creamery Kilmacow - 9 units - 13th June 2023



Construction at Crokers Hill, Kilkenny – 88 units



Energy Retrofit 2023

Homeless Services

There has been a further increase in the number of homeless presentations in 2023. We also experienced an increase in the complexity of the presentations. The lack of private rental properties greatly reduces the Council's options in providing an exit strategy for households in emergency accommodation.

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

The Government put in place a number of measures to prevent homelessness arising from the reactivation of notices of termination of tenancies in June 2023. We provided advice and directed Tenants to the appropriate services required to prevent homelessness. In total, 120 households receiving social housing supports were issued with valid Notices of Termination in 2023. We provided housing solutions to 98 households through LA / AHB housing, RAS/HAP accommodation and Tenant-in-Situ scheme. 22 active Notices of Termination remain active at year end with an expiry date in 2024.

The Tenant-in-Situ scheme allowed Kilkenny County Council to buy RAS/HAP properties from private landlords who are selling, so the Council can continue to rent these properties to the tenants who are living there. 15 houses have been purchased under this scheme in 2023 with a further 5 sales in progress at year end.

HOMELESS SERVICES SUMMARY	2021	2022	2023
Homeless Presentations	370	478	540
Homeless Assessment Outcomes			
Prevention & Interventions	193	246	393
Emergency Service	84	77	68
Not eligible / Did not avail of service	96	155	79

Housing List

The gross Housing Demand at 31st December 2023 was 1,554 and a comparative analysis with previous years is outlined below:

Year	Number on Housing List	Year	Number on Housing List
December 2023	1,554	December 2017	2,180
December 2022	1,588	December 2016	2,059
December 2021	1,619	December 2015	2,744
December 2020	1,899	December 2014	2,456
December 2019	1,988	December 2013	2,144
December 2018	2,070	December 2012	3,688

Housing Allocations

370 tenancies were offered to approved Social Housing Applicants in 2023. Choice Based Letting system was introduced in 2023 providing a more fair and transparent process of allocating properties.

	Kilkenny County Council	%	Approved Housing Body	%
Allocations Offered	201		169	
Offers Accepted	164	82%	148	88%
Offers Refused	37	18%	21	12%
Decisions Pending	0	0	0	0

Voids

Under the 2023 Voids Maintenance Programme Kilkenny County Council have completed 75 units to make available for re-let at a cost of €1.1million.

Housing Loans & Tenant Purchase Scheme

Housing Loan Activity 1 st January - 31 st December, 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	43	13	€1,746,240	11	€1,259,740
Caravan Loan	2	2	€80,000	2	€80,000
Total	45	15	€1,826,240	14	€1,402,240

Housing Private Grants

Kilkenny County Council administers a number of grant options to assist older people and people with a disability in carrying out works which are necessary for the purposes of rendering a house more suitable for their accommodation needs.

Grants Approved & Committed up to 31st December 2023		
Scheme	Number	Amount
HGD - Housing Adaptation Grant	190	€2,029,306
MAG - Mobility Aid Grant	17	€64,934
HOP - Housing Aid for Older Persons	247	€1,243,162
Total	454	€3,337,402

Vacant Homes

The Vacant Properties Refurbishment Grant, Croí Cónaithe is one of the measures in order 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.

Vacant Homes Refurbishment Grant as at December 31 st 2023	
Number of Applications Submitted to date	118
Number of Approvals / Approvals in Principle to date	56
Grant Drawdown to date	3

Private Rented Accommodation

Kilkenny County Council is dedicated to improving the living standards of tenants in private rented housing. This is done through the inspection of private rented properties to determine whether a property meets the standards for rental accommodation and where the property does not for ensuring compliance through the use of improvement and prohibition notices and legal proceedings. Landlords and tenants are required to allow the Housing Authority access to the property to undertake inspections.

Private Rented Inspections	2021	2022	2023
Total Number of Inspections carried out in year	437	436	824
Total number of First Inspections	162	365	745
Total number of Second Inspections	275	71	79
Number of final Inspections achieving compliance	219	93	65
Number of Improvement Notices issued	6	1	3
Number of Prohibition Notices issued	1	0	0

AGE FRIENDLY

The Kilkenny Age Friendly Alliance is a multiagency voluntary partnership that works closely with older people in Kilkenny to ensure that policies and plans reflect their needs. Meeting regularly throughout the year the Alliance holds the responsibility for the development and implementation of Kilkenny's Age Friendly Strategy.

The Alliance is chaired by the Chief Executive of Kilkenny County Council, Mr. Lar Power. Membership of the Alliance represents a number of organisations such as the HSE, An Garda Síochána, KLP, Chamber of Commerce, Kilkenny Sports Partnership and Kilkenny Older People's Council.

Kilkenny County Council:

MacDonagh Train Station recognised as Ireland's First Age Friendly Train Station at National Awards

MacDonagh Train Station in Kilkenny City was honoured with the prestigious Age Friendly Transport Award at the National Age Friendly Awards ceremony held on November 30, 2023. Developed through a collaborative effort between Kilkenny County Council, Iarnród Éireann, Age Friendly Ireland and MacDonagh Shopping Centre, this achievement marks a significant milestone in making public transport more accessible and suitable for users across the course of life.

The Age Friendly Recognition and Achievement Awards, a showcase of initiatives contributing to Ireland's commitment to creating an age-friendly environment, highlighted MacDonagh Train Station as the pioneer in age-friendly transportation. The station underwent a comprehensive World Health Organisation four-stage process to secure its Age Friendly status.



From left, Cllr Michael Doyle Cathoirleach, Kilkenny County Council, Kieran Kelly Iarnroid Eireann, Emmett Cotter Iarnroid Eireann, Annette Fitzpatrick Town Regeneration Officer, Kilkenny County Council, Garret Doocey Assistant Secretary General, Department of Transport, Mary Butler TD Minister for Mental Health & Older People, Anne Marie Shortall Age Friendly Programme Manager, Kilkenny County Council, Alison McGrath, Kilkenny County Council, Mary O'Hanlon, Chair of OPC Kilkenny, Lar Power, Chief Executive Kilkenny County Council.

A pivotal aspect of this initiative involved a Walkability Study, examining station areas, roadways, and bridge access. The subsequent Action Plan, devised by a dedicated working group, emphasised the importance of age-friendly considerations to enhance the experience for older customers.

A key feature of this initiative was the introduction of a new walkway connecting the station to the nearby MacDonagh Junction Shopping Centre. This not only significantly reduces walking distances but also improves accessibility to shops, Local Government services and medical facilities for all users.

The Strategic Oversight Committee for this Age Friendly project included representatives from Kilkenny County Council, Age Friendly Ireland, Kilkenny Chamber, Iarnród Éireann, the National Transport Authority, the Department of Transport, Kilkenny's Older Persons Council, and MacDonagh Shopping Centre.

The improvements at MacDonagh Train Station outlined in a case study publication by Age Friendly Ireland, include:

- New Pedestrian Walkway at MacDonagh Junction linking train station to adjacent Shopping Centre.
- Two Age Friendly car parking spaces.
- Tactile paving for customers with visual impairment.
- Newly installed tactile paving pedestrian crossing points.
- Enhanced wayfinding with painted steps.
- "Just A Minute" (JAM) signage and staff training.
- Increased font size on ticket machines.
- Safety decals on glass doors.
- Widening of the door to the disability bathroom.
- Repainting the station interior with a calmer colour.
- Alterations to kerbs and landscaping for improved access.



New Pedestrian Walkway at MacDonagh Junction linking train station to adjacent Shopping Centre

Minister Malcolm Noonan awarded a Charter to MacDonagh Train Station on November 21, 2022, recognising it as the first Age Friendly Station in Ireland. The station is now acknowledged internationally by the World Health Organisation as a model of good practice for Age Friendly stations.

Kilkenny County Council

- Promoted MacDonagh train station as Ireland's First Age Friendly Train Station.
- There was 47 Community Fire Safety-Home Fire Safety Checks (HFSV's) took place during 2023. People are encouraged to engage with a community group to request a HPSV.
- Housing Grants committed €1.6m to housing adaptation, mobility grants and housing aid for older people.
- Kilkenny City Municipal District completed works at Dominic Street, Ormonde Street and Irishtown giving higher priority to pedestrians when crossing vehicular access points.
- Piltown Municipal District have installed new public seating in Piltown, Mooncoin and Kilmacow.
- The Age Friendly Programme Manager and Staff Officer attended the Older Persons Convention in Kerry. The 2024 Convention will be held in Kilkenny in May.
- Review of the existing Age Friendly Strategy and the commencement of the next Strategy is being progressed.
- Thomastown has completed the four-stage process to become Age Friendly and will submit a report to Age Friendly Ireland to complete the application.
- The Age Friendly Business Recognition Programme is ongoing, over 30 businesses completed training in 2023 to become a member of the programme.
- Age Friendly Healthy Homes Officer has been recruited. Age Friendly Ireland, the Healthy Age Friendly Homes (HAFH) programme was established as an innovative, new support co-ordination service designed to support older people to age in place.

Kilkenny County Library Service

- Kilkenny County Council Library Service have been awarded Age Friendly status for all 8 branches throughout the County and the Mobile Library.
- Reader Pens purchased for each library in Kilkenny. These pens read words and full lines of text aloud for independent reading.
- Continued to provide Age Friendly programming in 2023, highlights included:
 - Genealogy Workshops.
 - Biodiversity Workshops.
 - Craft Workshops.
 - Language Classes.
 - Libraries as spaces for life-long.
 - With funding from KCETB our libraries provided classes on Sewing, Felt-toy making, Irish language classes and Patchwork

In the autumn, the Library Services launched the Activator Pole programme in conjunction with KRSP. Following a 4-week taster programme in 4 libraries, participants were taken on guided walks and given tips and advice on how best to use the poles. These activator poles are now available to borrow from Graiguenamanagh Library, Castlecomer Library, Ferrybank Library and Loughboy Library.

Mobile Library staff have continued their outreach programmes with Tinnypark, Archersrath & Crosspatrick Nursing Homes in facilitating Halloween crafts, bingo and stories. Door-to-door delivery service is available for those over 65 years of age who can't get to their local library. Phone Library HQ 056 7794160 for further details.

Kilkenny Recreation and Sports Partnership (KRSP) – Age Friendly Activities

- Delivered a number of chair-based yoga during 2023 in Callan and Ferrybank.
- Delivered taster programmes in Activator Walking Poles to groups including members of Danesfort Going Strong group.
- Delivered a number of 8-week programmes including to the members of Mullinavat Active Retirement Group.

An Garda Siochána

- Gardai supported Alone at an event in MacDonagh Junction, Kilkenny. Gardai were available to answer questions from those attending.
- Attended an Age Friday morning in MacDonagh Junction, Kilkenny. The attendance was very good and people were very engaged and eager to return to activities.
- The Community Engagement Team arranged a number of day outings including to Tramore.
- Kilkenny Garda Station are considering the provision of an Age Friendly car space adjacent to the station.
- Updated version of the ‘door sign’ for the ‘message in a bottle’ Scheme now includes Eircode’s.

Kilkenny Older Persons Council (OPC)

- A sub group has been established to identify groups within the City and County to encourage membership onto the OPC by providing information on the Age Friendly Programme and the role of the OPC. There has been engagement with the PPN office and there will be ongoing engagement with local County Councillors.
- Training has been provided to the new OPC Executive (*elected June 2023*) by Alice Corbett, Regional Age Friendly Programme Manager.
- Members of the OPC Executive participate on the following groups: Older Persons reference group National Clinical Programme for Older People. Positive Ageing Group, St. Luke’s Age Friendly Hospital, Steering Group, SPC Transport, National Transport Group, Kilkenny Access group, ICPOP, Community Resilience Group. PPN, National Network of OPC Chairs, Regional Literacy Group Adult Literacy for Life and Kilkenny City Night Time Economy Stakeholder Forum.
- Newsletters are prepared by the OPC PRO and circulated to the membership. An Age Friendly update is also provided to the Kilkenny People to keep older people updated on Age Friendly matters.
- The OPC Executive put together 100 Care Packs targeting older people living alone or isolated. A pilot project was also initiated with the GEMS ward at St Luke’s Hospital. This was very successful with very positive feedback. The project was extended to cover patients with early onset dementia and older intellectual disability/brain injury patients. Other older people living alone or isolated were identified by members of the Executive and older people in receipt of meals on wheels were also targeted.
- Funding was secured from the Community Foundation of Ireland by the OPC Executive that allowed seven Community Gatherings/Consultation to take place throughout the City and County, in Urlingford, Castlecomer, Mullinavat, Ferrybank, Graiguenamanagh, Kilkenny City Eastern and Western Environs. These community gathering were held in 2021 and 2022. These were organised by the OPC and the feedback was analysed by Dr. Debra O’Neill and presented in a report entitled ‘Having Your Say’. This document may be a valuable document to support the development of the new Age Friendly Strategy.

Kilkenny Chamber of Commerce

- Continued to engage with the Age Friendly Business Initiative during 2023. Kilkenny is acknowledged nationally as one of the most successful locations for rolling out the concept.
- Supported and helped to promote the Chambers Ireland Excellence in Local Government Awards 2023 which included an Age Friendly category.
- The 'Kilkenny App' was launched in 2023 and is working well.

Kilkenny Carlow Education Training Board (KCETB)

- Community Education Carlow and Kilkenny ETB conducted a number of courses in Kilkenny in 2023 to groups who either have or are predominately comprised of older people. Over 2,000 older people attended the events.
- Reach Grant 2023- This funding was available to groups to purchase a bank of laptops for their service uses. Groups have received up to €30,000 in this funding stream.

Kilkenny Public Participation Network (PPN)

- Kilkenny PPN is continuing to manage the age friendly tablets on behalf of Kilkenny OPC and has helped the OPC with regard to reaching and increasing engagement from older people in the County. Kilkenny PPN also supported the OPC with the distribution of care packages to vulnerable older people around Christmas time.
- The PPN continued to work with Kilkenny Access Group in respect of capacity building, providing support and access to information.
- Every week the PPN send out a newsletter to members with information on public consultations, local events, news, training and funding opportunities of which relevant to older people. Any organisation looking to advertise relevant community events or information can avail of this opportunity.
- Kilkenny PPN hosted their Plenary in the Ormonde Hotel, Kilkenny on the 31st May, 2023. There was good attendance from both older and younger people and positive feedback by members on the night with presentations by the Chair of Kilkenny LCDC and the County Council Administrator on the LECP 2023-2028, by the new Climate Action Team on the Climate Action Plan and the new Climate Action Fund and by the new Biodiversity Officer.

COMMUNITY

Creative Ireland

Underpinned by the *Kilkenny Culture and Creativity Strategy 2023-2027*, the Creative Ireland programme aims to increase participation in cultural and creative activities across the County of Kilkenny. The Creative Ireland team have overseen the significant impacts of programmes, which have been influential in increasing social engagement and the overall well-being of its citizens. Projects delivered to date have sustained a legacy of high quality, inclusive and diverse programmes that have helped to promote the intrinsic value and awareness of culture and creativity in County Kilkenny. The projects funded during 2023 demonstrate collaboration between a number of external agencies and internal strategic goals. For example, Biodiversity, Arts Office, Keep Kilkenny Beautiful, Heritage office, Healthy Kilkenny, Climate Action, Libraries, KCETB, Youth or Community groups and key stakeholders for example KLP, that work with marginalised groups in Kilkenny.



Leave the long grass grow project in collaboration with the Biodiversity Section

CRUINNÍÚ NA NÓG 2023		
<i>Artists Employed:</i> 27	<i>Young People Participated:</i> 1,186	<i>Total Allocated:</i> €22,142
Genre	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Music/Spoken Word ▪ Design, Science, Technology, Engineering or Maths ▪ Visual art (<i>painting, photographs, sculpture, etc</i>) ▪ Literature and/or Poetry ▪ Theatre, Drama and/or Comedy ▪ Crafts/artisan/gastronomy ▪ Design, Science, Technology, Engineering or Maths ▪ Biodiversity/Natural Heritage 	
12 Projects Examples included	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Workshops, Exhibitions, Projects which promoted Diversity ▪ Masterclasses in Traditional Irish Music, Song, and Dance ▪ Podcasting ▪ Song Trail and Pop-Up Performances ▪ STEM Lego Workshops ▪ Toddler Music Workshops 	

CREATIVE IRELAND 2023		
<i>Artists Employed: 106</i>	<i>Young People Participated: 30,164</i>	<i>Total Allocated: €143,160</i>
Genre	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Music/Spoken Word ▪ Design, Science, Technology, Engineering or Maths ▪ Visual Art (<i>painting, photographs, sculpture, etc</i>) ▪ Literature and/or Poetry ▪ Theatre, Drama and/or Comedy ▪ Crafts ▪ Design, Science, Technology, Engineering or Maths ▪ Biodiversity/Natural Heritage ▪ Architecture/ Architectural Heritage 	
24 Projects were Funded which included:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>Leave the Long Grass Grow Project</i> was a collaboration with the Biodiversity Officer, local artists, Arts Office. Creative Ireland Kilkenny and KCETB. ▪ <i>The Bookville Project</i>: 2023 is the 7th Consecutive Bookville Festival reaching 21,062 people participating. ▪ <i>Dunmore Kilkenny Countryside Park</i> a biodiversity themed mural funded by the Creative Ireland Scheme. 	

Town & Village Renewal Scheme 2020 & 2021

In 2023, the following projects were completed/partially completed. These projects were approved under the Town & Village Scheme 2021 and 2020.

Name	Amount	Description	Status
Graigenamanagh	€92,243	Barrow Valley Community Development Activity Hub	Completed
Kilmanagh	€43,542	Community Hall Refurbishment	Completed
Freshford	€175,500	Playground & Community Park	Completed
Johnstown	€42,075	Masterplan for Public Realm in Johnstown	Partially completed. Due to be completed by end January 2024
Piltown	€500,000	Remote Working Hub	Commenced in Q4 2023 for completion by 31 st August, 2024
Urlingford	€250,000	Remote Working Hub	Building purchased and fit out partially complete. Due to be completed by end January 2024
Gowran	€250,000	Intergenerational Outdoor Activity Hub	Partially completed, due to be completed by end Q1 2024



Gowran Outdoor Activity Hub



Barrow Valley Community Activity Hub

Town & Village Renewal Scheme 2022

In 2022, applications were made to the Department of Rural & Community Development for the following projects which were successful in receiving funding announced in March 2023 for completion by 31st August 2024 as follows: -

NAME	AMOUNT	DESCRIPTION	STATUS
Thomastown	€56,000	To further develop existing outdoor park/amenity in the centre of Thomastown	Complete
Glenmore	€49,950	Project Development Measure - consultation, design brief, tender, planning for building purchased under Building Acquisition Measure to turn into community shop and cafe	In progress
Thomastown	€49,950	Project Development Measure - consultation, design brief, tender, planning for building	In progress
Callan	€100,000	Streetscape Enhancement Measure in Callan	Complete
Remote Working Hubs Marketing Campaign	€48,330	Marketing Campaign for the Remote Working Hubs throughout County Kilkenny	Complete
TOTAL	€304,200		



Streetscape Enhancement Measure in Callan



Thomastown Recreational Amenity



Urlingford Remote Working Hub



Freshford Playground



Gowran Multi-Use Games Area

CLÁR

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

The CLÁR 2022 programme was delivered through 3 separate Measures. Measure One is administered through Kilkenny County Council and applied for by Kilkenny County Council in conjunction with groups in Local Communities. The following applicants were approved funding under the 2022 Department of Rural and Community Development CLÁR Grant Scheme and mostly delivered in 2023. The total grant funding is €420,207.

Project Description	Funding Approved
Listerlin Public Lighting	€21,375
St. Martin's GAA Club	€50,000
Muckalee Community Centre	€26,932
Windgap Community Development Ltd	€50,000
Kilmoganny GAA Club Walkway	€40,663
Naomh Aodhan Handball Alley	€44,550
Galmoy Community Hall	€42,000
Skeoughvosteen Community Centre & GAA Club	€50,000
Kilmogue Dolmen Access Road Improvement	€50,000
Tullahought Community Development Ltd	€16,200
Muckalee Public Lighting	€22,186
Windgap Tidy Towns	€6,300



Pre-works at St. Martin's GAA Club



Post works at St. Martin's GAA Club



In June 2023, Kilkenny County Council submitted 8 applications for funding under the CLAR 2023 programme.

The successful projects under Measure 1 were announced in December 2023 and the fund for Kilkenny in the amount of €295,469 are listed below:

Project Description	Funding Approved
Tullogher Rosbercon GAA Club	€50,000
Muckalee Football Club	€50,000
Kilmoganny GAA	€30,150
St Martins GAA	€44,766
Kilkenny County Council Supported by Coolagh Community Group	€45,000
Kilkenny County Council Muckalee Public Lighting (<i>Phase 2</i>)	€24,750
Kilkenny Galmoy Community Hall Provision of a MUGA	€30,015
Kilkenny Windgap Tidy Towns-tarmac surface at Windgap Lake Car Park	€20,788

Kilkenny County Council's Community Awards Night

Kilkenny County Council's Community Awards Night was held in the Parade Tower in Kilkenny Castle on Monday 27th February 2023. This award ceremony appreciates and acknowledged the contribution of local communities from across the County for their endless dedication to projects and to their towns and villages.

Awards on the night were made to the following:

Pride of Place 2023

Kilkenny County Council proudly announces the nominated three exceptional community groups for the prestigious IPB Pride of Place Awards 2023, Ireland's largest community awards event which took place in Armagh City Hotel, in November 2023. These nominations celebrate the outstanding contributions made by local groups in enhancing the quality of life within their communities and fostering a spirit of unity and pride.

The three nominated groups and their respective award categories are as follows:

- *St. Canice's Community Action* were nominated for the Community category.
- *Freshford.ie* – Nominated in the Population category (*population 500-1500*).
- *Callan Community Energy Company* Nominated in the Climate & Biodiversity category.



Freshford.ie receiving the 'Runners Up' prize.

Tidy Estates Awards 2023

Kilkenny County Council Tidy Estates Competition aims to encourage residents to take an active role in improving the physical appearance of their housing estate.

Large Estates: Lakeside Hebron Road, Kilkenny, Rose Hill, Kells Road, Kilkenny, Glenvale, Ballyragget, Co. Kilkenny.

Medium Estates: Assumption Place, Urlingford, St. Marys Avenue, Urlingford, De la Salle Place, Kilkenny.

Small Estates: Fr. Raftice Place, Moneenroe, Shamrock Grove, Kilmacow and St. Patricks Close, Mullinavat.



Attendees at the Community Awards Night in the Parade Tower, on 27th February 2023

Community Grants Booklet

The sixth Community Grants booklet was produced and launched at the Parade Tower, Kilkenny Castle on Monday 27th February 2023. This booklet is a one stop shop of all funding available to the community from Kilkenny County Council. This booklet is available online on www.kilkennycoco.ie



Cathaoirleach Pat Fitzpatrick, Annette Fitzpatrick, Interim Chief Executive Sean McKeown and Mayor David Fitzgerald at the launch of the Community Grants Booklet

Estate Management Grants

The Estate Management Grant is available to resident's groups/community committees who represent Kilkenny County Council's Social Housing Estates. These grants support resident association/community groups to maintain and manage the upkeep of their estates throughout the year. In 2023, Kilkenny County Council supported 47 estates, totalling €36,380.



Community Events Grants Scheme

The closing date for the 2023 Community Events Grants Scheme was the 24th February, 2023. The total budget allocated for the 2023 scheme was €21,000. A total of 55 applications were received and 47 applications were approved under the 2023 Community Events Grant Scheme. The 2023 applications increased by 60% in comparison to 2022.



Callan Town Team

Kilkenny County Council continued to support the Callan Town Team in 2023. Four meetings were held in 2023. Kilkenny County Council supported the Callan Town Team with an application for Town & Village funding which was submitted in November 2023. The application was submitted for remedial works to the Kingsriver.

Kilkenny County Council's Disability Plan

The Kilkenny County Council Disability Plan was developed in consultation with all Departments of the Council and the Kilkenny Access Group through the PPN. The Plan was adopted by the full Council on the 20th November, 2023.

Community and Cultural Facilities Capital Scheme (CCFCS)

CCFCS Grants were awarded to nine groups across the County in 2023.

COMMUNITY & CULTURAL FACILITIES CAPITAL GRANT SCHEME 2023		
Name of Applicant	Project Details	Amount Approved
Urlingford Town Team	Community facility/remote working hub	€45,000
Gowran on the Move	Completion of MUGA & Playground Project	€45,000
The Rock Youth Centre (Kilkenny Christian Centre)	Upgrade of Centre Facilities	€35,000
Ferrybank AFC	Installation of tarmac & concrete surface for disability access for pedestrians	€30,000
Dunnamaggin GAA Club	Lighting of the Dunnamaggin Walkway	€30,000
Kilfane Handball Club	Construction of Gym	€25,000
Mooncoin Celtic AFC	LED Floodlighting for extra training area	€20,000
John Lockes GAA Club	Walkway improvements, CCTV, Sensory activity outdoor wall panels/litter bins/walkway benches & security gate	€11,000
Graiguenamanagh Hall	Installation of new stage lighting/screen & projector	€9,000
Total		€250,000

Kilkenny Migrant Integration Strategy/Kilkenny Integration Forum

Kilkenny County Council continues to support the implementation of actions as outlined in the Kilkenny Migrant Integration Strategy for 2021-2023. The plan was updated early in 2023 and as a result a useful information section for new Migrants was added to the Kilkenny County Council Website. The Migrant Integration Committee successfully applied to Irish Aid for Funding to Celebrate Africa Day 2023. The celebration took place in the Kilkenny Home Rule Club in May. This work is undertaken in partnership with the Kilkenny PPN and Kilkenny LEADER Partnership Company as well as with migrants engaged in the process. A new plan will be developed in 2024 for 2024-2027.



Africa Day Celebrations, Kilkenny Home Rule Club, May, 2023

Kilkenny County Council Migrant-Councillor Forum

Kilkenny County Council were successful in receiving funding from the LGMA to support the establishment of a Migrant-Councillor Forum in 2021. Workshops for engagement, education and empowerment aimed at increasing diversity took place in 2022. Engagement in the process was low and in 2023 the idea evolved into engaging Migrant women to participate in Local and National election processes through a workshop. This work will continue into 2024.

Kilkenny Local Community Development Committee (LCDC)

Kilkenny County Council continues to support the LCDC. The LCDC continued to meet in person with the option of joining virtually. 6 meetings took place in 2023. The LCDC successfully administered the Community Enhancement Programme Grants, The Healthy Ireland Programme and maintained its oversight role of the Kilkenny SICAP Programme. The LCDC oversaw the tendering process for the new SICAP programme 2024-2028. The new SICAP programme was awarded to Kilkenny Leader Partnership for implementation in December 2023.

The LCDC administers and monitors a variety of funding streams for communities that experience social exclusion or disadvantage including the Kilkenny Traveller Community Movement KTCM.

Local Economic & Community Plan (LECP)

Kilkenny LCDC commenced the process of developing the LECP 2023-2028 in Quarter 1 of 2022, the plan was finalised and adopted by the full Council in May 2023. An Implementation Plan for the first 2 years was developed in tandem with the overall Plan. The LECP was officially launched in June 2023. The Plan includes 10 high level goals with supporting high level objectives. This was achieved following rigorous public consultation events and engagement with stakeholders, reviewed by the Advisory Steering Group and 4 joint meetings of SPC 1 and the LCDC. An LECP monitoring group was established in 2023 with the first round of reporting on action progress will take place in early 2024.



The Chairperson of the LCDC, Declan Gibbons officially launching the LECP 2023-2028

Community Enhancement Programme Funding (CEP)

This Scheme is funded by the Department of Rural and Community Development and administered by the Local Community Development Committee. It provides funding to communities across Ireland to enhance facilities targeted towards disadvantaged areas as identified in the Local Economic and Community Plan (LECP). Kilkenny received a total of €290,749 in funding under the grant scheme. The scheme received 102 applications with 85 community groups receiving funding ranging from €1,000-€20,000 contributing towards utility costs, upgrading of facilities and the purchase of equipment.

Healthy Ireland

Healthy Ireland is a government-led initiative aimed at improving the health and wellbeing of everyone living in Ireland “*Healthy Ireland, A Framework for Improved Health and Wellbeing 2013-2025*”. In 2023, The Minister for Public Health, Wellbeing and the National Drugs Strategy, Hildegard Naughton announced the allocation of Healthy Ireland funding to each of the 31 Local Authorities for a three-year period 2023 – 2025. In County Kilkenny, an extensive consultation was undertaken to support the Healthy Ireland Application. In collaboration with Kilkenny Local Community Development Committee (LCDC), the consultation process also informed the selection of two of the Health Outcomes from the Healthy Ireland Framework. Following this, two key areas were agreed by Kilkenny LCDC as a priority for County Kilkenny; increase in physical activity levels and increased incidence self-perceived health that is rated ‘good’ or ‘very good’.

The funding will support initiatives targeted at a diverse range of groups and populations including:

- Adolescents and Young People,
- One-Parent Families,
- People living with a Disability,
- Travellers and
- Key Target Areas.

HEALTHY KILKENNY HEALTH OUTCOMES

Physical Activity

The Healthy Ireland funding will support key target groups and communities to increase their physical activity levels and aim to achieve physical activity guidelines. Regular physical activity promotes positive health benefits and plays a key role in prevention and severity of disease.

Some areas of Healthy Ireland initiatives in 2023 included:

- Kilkenny Recreation & Sports Partnership implemented programmes for children, young people and adults with additional needs including swimming, community walks, yoga handcycling, pitch & putt and football for All.
- Social Farming Placements were also provided for 14 people with additional needs. Farm Placements were provided in Freshford, Castlewarren, Windgap & Thomastown
- Active Travel in Kilkenny County Council implemented cycling programmes with young people and adults including the first cycle to school bus with St. Johns Primary School in Kilkenny
- Foroige provided physical activity programmes in Castlecomer for adolescents and young people.

Self-Perceived Health

Self-perceived health is defined as the perception of an individual's health in general. It is a subjective perception of how healthy an individual feels. Health is defined as not only the absence of injury or disease, but as a function of physical, mental, and social well-being. It is useful in evaluating the general health status of the population, as well as uncovering health inequalities and highlighting health needs at the population level. The measurement of self-perceived health is measured in the census, the Healthy Ireland Survey and the European Health Survey. Respondents indicate how they perceive their health on a Likert scale, ranging from 'Very Good' to 'Very Bad'.

The Healthy Kilkenny programme will aim to improve perceived health in target groups that are more likely to perceive their health as 'fair', 'bad' or 'very bad'.

Some examples of initiatives that were implemented in 2023 and will continue into 2024 includes:

- In collaboration with Kilkenny Leader Partnership and the Social Inclusion Programme there was a series of community engagement events, programmes and social activities for One-Parent Families. This initiative also aims to build the capacity of '*Kilkenny-One Parent Community*', a network & advisory group of One-Parent Families in Kilkenny.
- Health and wellbeing programmes and health literacy campaigns were rolled-out with the Travelling Community through partnership with Kilkenny Traveller Community Movement.
- Newpark Family Resource Centre are undertaking a health analysis in the wider community to explore the Health Needs and will implement community projects that will aim to improve the wellbeing of Newpark and the surrounding areas.
- Social Health Education Project (SHEP) are delivering an Experiential 60-Hour Continuing Personal & Professional Development Training for volunteers and community workers to enhance their ability to facilitate groupwork and receive peer and professional support.

Other Projects the Healthy Kilkenny Programme Supported Included:

- Kilkenny County Council also delivered on work packages for the *UcanACT Project*, funded by the European Commission which aims to promote physical activity and cancer prevention in public urban green spaces in Kilkenny targeting citizens over the age of 50 years. Healthy Kilkenny developed a Citizen Engagement Strategy for Physical Activity and Cancer Prevention with the project partners in Bologna, Italy and Munich, Germany. In 2024, physiotherapists will deliver physical activity programmes in Public Urban Green Space's in Kilkenny with people living with cancer, in survivorship or people living without cancer over 50 years.
- Two *Dementia Awareness and Information Sessions* were delivered to Kilkenny County Council Staff and the General Public with approximately 130 individuals in attendance between the two sessions.
- The *2023 Period Dignity Initiative* was implemented by Kilkenny County Council. The provision of free period products was made available in Kilkenny County Council Public Buildings/Toilet Facilities, Kilkenny County Council Library Service, Ossory Youth, Foroige, Amber Women's Refuge and the four Family Resource Centres in Kilkenny.
- *GAA Mental Health Campaign*, 'ways to wellbeing MH campaign' was launched in November. This was a Collaboration project with the GAA, MH Ireland, Connecting for Life and Healthy Ireland. The signage was supported by the HSE national lottery funding.

- The *Domestic Abuse Leaflet* developed by CYPSC Healthy Kilkenney & the Kilkenney Domestic Abuse Network during COVID was officially launch by the Network in November.



Members of the Healthy Kilkenney Committee

Kilkenny Traveller Interagency Group (KTIG)

Kilkenny County Council continued to support the KTIG in 2023, with 6 meetings being held. Two subgroups were formed around Education and Animal Welfare, with an additional 8 meetings. The group successfully worked together through the latter half of 2023 to secure the immediate future of the Traveller Childcare Afterschool programme. In 2022, KTIG were awarded funding under the new 3-year pilot Community Development Programme and the Kilkenny Traveller Community Movement (KTCM) was developed. It has just completed its second year of the pilot and is established as the main traveller representative group for Kilkenny. The project is represented on 5 different local fora, it employs 17 staff, 8 of whom are from the Travelling Community. In 2023, over 300 people engaged with outreach, one to one family supports and health programmes. The project currently has a Local Training Initiative in operation. The successful 2023 Traveller Pride event was organised by KTCM and held in the grounds of Butler Gallery.



Traveller Pride, Butler Gallery, 2023

Kilkenny Recreation & Sports Partnership (KRSP)

An initiative of Sport Ireland, Kilkenny Recreation and Sports Partnership (KRSP) plans, leads, and co-ordinates the development of sport and physical activity in County Kilkenny. Our aim is to make sport inclusive and appealing to people of all ages, abilities, and social backgrounds across every corner of the County.

Our work as a Local Sports Partnership is categorised into three main functions – the provision of information, the facilitation of education and training opportunities and the development and implementation of programmes and events that encourage increased levels of participation.

KRSP strives to achieve this through close working with sporting bodies, community and voluntary groups and statutory agencies such as Kilkenny County Council.

Kilkenny County Council has been and continues to be a significant supporter of the work of the Partnership from representation and active membership on the KRSP Board and committees, the provision of reduced rate office accommodation, provision of financial support in addition to working on partner projects, programmes and events which achieve shared goals and objectives.

Older Adults

Our fundamental mission is to promote lifelong activity, with a specific focus on empowering older adults to stay active. Through our tailored programmes designed for older adults, we not only prioritise physical well-being but also emphasise the crucial social aspect, fostering a supportive community for active and fulfilling aging experiences. Adult programmes that were held during 2023 include Chair Based Exercise, Activator Poles, Boccia, Bowls & Craic and Stretch & Move.

Women & Girls

Empowering women and girls through targeted initiatives is a cornerstone of our approach, ensuring accessible and appealing opportunities that integrate with their lifestyles. Our focus extends beyond mere participation, also emphasising the social benefits of being active.

Programmes held during 2023 include Women in Sport, Ladies Let's Move, HER Outdoors and Buggy Buddies.

Men

Exercise for men over 40 is very important for both physical and mental health. KRSP recognise the unique challenges this demographic faces in initiating or reengaging with physical activity. Our tailored initiatives are designed to overcome barriers, fostering a supportive environment where like-minded men can seamlessly integrate into an active lifestyle through programmes such as Men On the Move and Walking The Talk.

People with a Disability

Inclusivity is at the heart of our approach, recognising that an active lifestyle is equally essential for individuals with disabilities. Our adaptive programmes cater to the diverse needs of participants, providing opportunities for engaging in group activities. By tailoring our initiatives, we ensure that everyone, including people with disabilities, can reap the full spectrum of social and physical benefits from our inclusive programmes held during 2023 such as Supported Swim Lessons, Multi-Sport Club, Football for All, Learn to Cycle and an Inclusive Summer Programme.

Young People

Fostering lifelong health through early engagement in physical activity is a priority for us at KRSP. Our dedicated programmes cater to both primary and secondary school-aged children, aiming to instil positive habits from a young age. Collaborating with schools across the County, we are committed to actively shaping the well-being of young people through engaging and purposeful initiatives such as Learn to Cycle, Teen Programmes, Primary School Supports and Secondary School Supports.

Clubs

KRSP plays a pivotal role in assisting clubs and organisations to secure funding for the development of sports and physical activity initiatives in Kilkenny. Beyond financial support, we provide essential guidance in coaching, disability training, and club governance. Supports offered in 2023 include Club Development Grants, Safeguarding, Coaching Children and Disability Awareness Training.

Community

As an integral part of the Kilkenny community, uniting our diverse target markets through community projects is a significant achievement for KRSP. From dynamic sports hubs to inclusive activities like Couch to 3k, we actively bring people together through programmes held in 2023 for example Community Sports Hubs, Walking Programmes, Couch to 3k and Orienteering.

Some notable achievements for KRSP in 2023 include:

Equality in the Field

Kilkenny Recreation & Sports Partnership (KRSP) published a report on a study which explored the lived experiences of LGBTQ+ students in Kilkenny and Carlow in relation to sport and physical activity. The findings from the study will help to inform planning and policy development for KRSP.

The study was conducted between November and December 2022 and focused on two LGBTQ+ groups of students: secondary school students and university students. Having investigated the current literature in the area, an independent quantitative and qualitative enquiry was conducted. In total 42 LGBTQ+ students attended focus groups and 41 completed the survey.

While infrastructure and the built environment were deemed to be a major barrier to participation, other findings were the need for non-discriminatory policies, inclusive language and staff and volunteer training. Finally, the need for an overall respectful, inclusive culture was identified, i.e. one where bullying and harassment are not tolerated and where diverse gender expression and sexual identity is acceptable.

KRSP Grants & Support Programmes 2023

Kilkenny Recreation & Sports Partnership has provided grants, funding and support of €31,181 across four areas, with the overall aim to support sports clubs, community groups and organisations to provide quality sporting and physical activity opportunities for people in County Kilkenny.

COVID-19 Small Grant Scheme

The COVID-19 Small Grant Scheme aims to support clubs and organisations to continue to rebuild and re-engage participants post the impact of COVID-19 on their organisations, focusing on programmes to increase participation or support volunteer recruitment, engagement and training. A total of 11 initiatives were supported under this scheme.

Women in Sport Support Programme

The Women in Sport Support Programme aims to support local clubs, groups and community organisations that promote increased participation in recreational sport or physical activity for women and girls in Kilkenny. There were 8 initiatives supported under this programme in 2023.

Club Development Grant Scheme

The Club Development Grant Scheme aims to encourage the set-up of new clubs and assist existing clubs in their development to increase participation in their sport. Priority is given to minority sports and low participation groups/target groups identified by KRSP. 11 local sports clubs were supported under this scheme.

Volunteer Support Scheme

The Volunteer Support Scheme aims to support local clubs and organisations to train and upskill their volunteers by means of providing funds for volunteer coaches, leaders and committee members to attend training and education courses that will benefit the club or organisation to increase participation. 8 local sports clubs and organisations were supported under this scheme.

HER OUTDOORS 2023

Throughout HEROutdoors Week 2023, women and girls developed confidence in their capacity to participate in outdoor activities by participating in new activities and developing skills and knowledge of these activities. These programmes aim to show women and girls the potential to be more active in the outdoors in Kilkenny even if they are not “sporty”.

Reaching New Heights - Hill Walking Programme

Working in partnership with Mountaineering Ireland, KRSP delivered Reaching New Heights, a course aimed at introducing women to the hillwalking over a 4-week period. 12 women from around Kilkenny learned navigation skills, map reading and were guided on walks of increasing difficulty by experienced hillwalkers starting in Castlemorris Woods with a final session on Mount Leinster.



Rock Up & Climb - Rock Climbing Taster Session

Rock up & Climb is a partnership programme delivered by KRSP with Mountaineering Ireland. Aimed at beginners, this programme is a 2.5 hour introductory to rock climbing course delivered by a qualified instructor. The instructor guided participants through the techniques, the use of the ropes and safety skills to successfully scale the rock face in Ballykeeffe. Courses were delivered over two days with 12 women and 12 teens participating in the programme.

HEROutdoors Castlecomer

KRSP once again partnered with Castlecomer Discovery Park to deliver two outdoor adventure programmes for teenage girls aged 13-15 years. Thirty teenage girls participated in the four-week programme and they got to try several different activities including axe throwing, archery, raft building, zip lining, orienteering and team building activities. This is a fun-filled programme where the girls had the opportunity to make new friends and be adventurous in the outdoors.

Get Her Kayaking

KRSP held a two-day kayaking and canoe skills course, run in conjunction with Kilkenny Aqua Canoe Club instructors and members. Twelve teenage girls were introduced to a mix of paddle sports including Kayaking, Canoeing and Stand Up Paddleboarding. They got to experience short river trips, learn about paddle fitness, water safety skills as well as the “Leave No Trace” principles. All participants received a Paddle Pass Certificate provided on completion of the course and were provided with an opportunity to join Kilkenny Aqua Canoe Club.

KRSP Volunteer Programme Overview

KRSP ensures inclusive and accessible sports for all demographics across the region. Volunteers play a crucial role in implementing the following key programmes:

Supported Swim Programme for Children with Additional Needs

The Supported Swim Programme addresses the unique requirements of children with additional needs. To ensure individualised attention, KRSP collaborates with Transition Year Coordinators in local schools, making volunteering an integral part of their curriculum. Volunteers undergo a Sport Inclusion & Disability Awareness session before the programme, fostering understanding and comfort.

Volunteers, mostly Transition Year students, act as Swim Buddies for children, providing one-to-one support for 10 weeks. This bond helps children progress at their own pace, with volunteers reinforcing swim teacher instructions. The programme, totalling nearly 800 volunteer hours, not only benefits the participants but also aids volunteers in achieving their Gaisce Award and building early-stage CVs.

Inclusive Summer Programme for Children with Additional Needs

KRSP's Inclusive Summer Programme offers a diverse range of activities for children with additional needs. The comprehensive schedule includes weeklong camps, GAA programmes, and swim camps, attracting 34 youth and 6 adult volunteers through a careful recruitment process. The programme logged over 1,900 volunteer hours, showcasing the dedication of the volunteers to creating a positive experience for the participants.

Volunteers, irrespective of their sporting background, contribute willingly to help children derive maximum enjoyment from the summer camp.

The total volunteer time for both programmes exceeded 2,700 hours in 2023. Additionally, volunteers undergo Sport Inclusion & Disability Awareness training, enhancing their ability to support children with additional needs in a wide range of sports activities.

Secondary School Weightlifting Programme

Kilkenny Recreation and Sport Partnership have initiated a new partnership with Weightlifting Ireland to deliver an Introduction to Weightlifting programme through secondary school settings.

An initial pilot programme was delivered to teenage girls in Presentation Secondary School in Kilkenny City in March 2023. Delivered over 6 weeks by qualified personnel from Weightlifting Ireland, the programme provided instruction on how to lift weights correctly and safely. The techniques learned through this programme can be applied in other settings e.g. gyms, leisure centres, at home and provide the young people with the confidence and knowledge to start this activity safely. The programme proved hugely popular resulting in 118 students signing up to be a member with Weightlifting Ireland.

Under our Community Sports Hub programme, this programme was delivered in Colaiste Mhuire, Johnstown for 6th year students within a mixed class setting. 18 young people completed the programme and became members of Weightlifting Ireland.

Following the success of these programmes, KRSP intends to expand this programme to other secondary schools in County Kilkenny.

Me, My Child and the Water

Swim Ireland and Kilkenny Recreation and Sports Partnership (KRSP) have formally launched the Me, My Child, and The Water resource at the Swim Ireland Swimming Teachers Conference 2023. The resource is aimed at parents and carers of children with disabilities. It will also help swimming teachers to support children in their lessons.



Comhairle na nÓg

In 2023, Comhairle na nÓg prioritised diversity and inclusion as the key issues facing young people in Kilkenny. Comhairle focused on increased awareness and promotion of safe spaces for diversity including self-expression, gender, sexual orientation, ethnicity, disability and neurodiversity in schools and the broader community in Kilkenny City and County.



*Comhairle Members at
Young Social Innovators Event*

During 2023, Comhairle members participated in many events and consultations. These included the Kilkenny Leader Partnership Community Consultation, Young Social Innovators Speak Out event and the Sustainable Mobility Urban Plan. Comhairle joined the Public Participation Network and attended a plenary session. They put forward nominations for international opportunities, action panels and the National Youth Assembly.

Comhairle also prepared and presented the work done on the topics of Mental Health and Climate Justice for the Comhairle na nÓg National Showcase. Over 500 young people involved in the 31 Comhairle na nÓg groups across the country gathered at Croke Park stadium on Tuesday April 4 2023 to showcase and celebrate their wide range of achievements and be inspired by a host of speakers and entertainers. Taoiseach Leo Varadkar visited Kilkenny Comhairle na nÓg stand where members presented their work on Mental Health and Climate Justice. Kilkenny Comhairle members also collaborated with Identify group for Cruinniú na nÓg 2023.



*Taoiseach Leo Varadkar at
Kilkenny Comhairle na nÓg stand*



Members of Kilkenny Comhairle na nÓg

The Annual Youth Conference of Kilkenny Comhairle na nÓg was held on 24th October 2023 in Langton's Hotel. Over 100 young people from secondary schools across the County gathered to identify issues that affect them and their peers. The young people participated and identified issues affecting them.

Children and Young Peoples Services Committee (CYPSC)



CYPSC Committees are local interagency structures responsible for improving the lives of children, young people and families throughout the County at local and community level. The Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth provides strategic and policy direction for Children and Young People's Services Committees (CYPSC). National and local level operational leadership of CYPSC is provided by TUSLA – Child and Family Agency.

Children and Young People's Services Committees follow local authority (*City and County Council*) boundaries and plan and co-ordinate services for children and young people aged between 0 – 24 years in their geographic area. They are the strategic interagency structure that bring together the main statutory, community and voluntary providers of services for children, young people and families in the County/local authority area. Their role is to enhance interagency co-operation and to realise the five National Outcomes for children and young people, as set out in *Young Ireland: National Policy Framework for Children and Young People 2023-2028*.

The five national outcomes for children and young people include: *active and healthy, achieving in learning and development, safe and protected from harm, economic security and opportunity, connected, respected and contributing to their world*.

The inter-agency committee drew up its first 3-year Children and Young People's Plan for County Kilkenny in 2020. This strategy targets children and young people 0-24 years and is being implemented by sub-groups of staff in front line service. In 2023, Kilkenny CYPSC continued to work on its Children and Young People's Plan.

Actions which were progressed in 2023:

- Supporting training in Talk Boost, an Oral Language programme in Early Years and Primary school settings.
- Awareness raising of Domestic Abuse through its subgroup Kilkenny Domestic Abuse Network.
- Funding Domestic Abuse training for frontline professionals by Amber Refuge.
- Development and launch of information leaflet for families experiencing domestic violence.
- Supporting and funding Youth programmes in school transitions, resilience and disability.

CYPSC received funding from Healthy Ireland and has rolled out a family-based healthy nutrition and physical exercise programme (*Healthy Streets*) in collaboration family resources centers in Kilkenny. CYPSC also provided Healthy Ireland funding to schools and youth clubs to ensure children's and young people's health and wellbeing needs are addressed.

Capital Play & Recreation Grants

Funding of €16,026 was awarded by Department of Children and Youth Affairs towards the Rising Stars Playground, Mooncoin Refurbishment Project in 2023.



Rising Stars Playground Refurbishment 2023

BikeWeek

Bike Week 2023 for Kilkenny was coordinated by the Active Travel and Community sections of Kilkenny County Council. The flagship event, Bike Fest, was run in conjunction with Cycling Ireland. Bike Week events were supported by Cycling Ireland, Kilkenny Recreation and Sports Partnership, Kilkenny Leader Partnership, local cycling groups, On Your Rothar and Kilkenny Walking and Cycling Campaign Group, the Community Bike Ride leaders, local clubs, Callan, Marble City Cyclers, Kilkenny Pedallers and Kilkenny Collective Mountain Bikers, schools and community groups throughout the County.

2,033 participants of all ages and abilities took part in 37 events in Kilkenny during National Bike Week 2023. Events ranged from family cycles to toddler events, to mountain biking and cycling conversations and documentaries. 21 schools took part and over 1,000 children participated in specific Bike Week events, with many more participating in whole school initiatives.

Bike Fest became a weekend event in Kilkenny and a pop-up mountain biking course was set up in County Hall, Kilkenny, providing exciting cycling events for hundreds of school children and adults!



The focus of Bike Week in Kilkenny was to provide people of all ages and abilities with a variety of cycling events and to create awareness of cycling as an enjoyable form of transport and physical activity.

In total, 22 organisations, clubs and groups organised over 30 events for Bike Week in Kilkenny in 2023, with over 3,000 participants. A pop-up mountain biking course was created in Kilkenny City. Bike Fest turned into a full weekend of celebrations and many new groups came on board for the first time. All the special schools in Kilkenny City hosted events, a recently formed Women's Shed ran family cycles, pre-schools had some great cycling fun and a newly opened bike shop provided bike maintenance courses and refreshment stops for one of the many community bike rides that took place over Bike Week.



Five secondary schools (*CBS, St Kieran's, Presentation, Loreto and Scoil Aireagail*) and nine primary schools (*Johns Seniors, Gaelscoil, John of Gods, St. Patricks De La Salle, Gowran N. S., Kilkenny School Project, Mother of Fair Love, Saplings, and School of the Holy Spirit*) organised events for Bike Week in Kilkenny. Events ranged from obstacle courses, bikeathons, cycle to school days to mountain biking. The highlight for many schools was the pop-up mountain bike track in Kilkenny City.

Organisation/Groups Participation

The following clubs ran events for Bike Week: Callan Cycling Club; a beginners sportive, Kilkenny collective: mountain bike taster sessions, Marble City Cyclists and Kilkenny Pedalers; introductory spins, the Men's Shed Kilkenny; bike maintenance classes, Kilkenny LEADER Partnership; cycling workshops for migrants, Fr McGrath Centre; cycle to after school club week, Rower Inistioge Baby & Toddler Group and Johnstown community childcare; fun cycling morning, Relay for life Kilkenny; cycle parade; Paulstown Development Association; bike maintenance classes, Kilnaspic Women's Shed; family cycles.

Bike Fest

Bike Fest returned to Kilkenny to launch Bike Week. Saturday 13th kicked off with "leisure rides" exploring the Kilkenny countryside, all departing from the Parade throughout the day (*age group: 18+*). That night, "Cycling the Change" took place in Billy Byrne's. Mary Reynolds, a gold medal winner at Chelsea Flower Show and founder of the global movement: *We Are The ARK* talked about her experiences of rewilding and re-establishing biodiversity in gardens and public spaces. Ireland's great travel writer, the late Dervla Murphy, was celebrated with a screening of the documentary about her worldwide travels by bike (*age group: 18+*).

The grounds of County Hall on Sunday the 14th and the sun shone down on a day of biking activities and a celebration of all things sustainable.

The gentle hills and hollows of the grounds lends itself to being explored by bike and it was a hive of activity with mountain bikes and stunt bikes available for all ages. The Learn to Cycle and grass tracks were in use throughout the day and the trike and cargo bikes were well tested! There were thought provoking conversations throughout the day in the Brighter Future Tent. Boula Bus and Olivia's Yummy Raw Treats were on hand with delicious edibles, whilst others foraged their own with some knowledgeable guides! The rhythm of the drums was in the background throughout the day and the afternoon finished up with some tunes from local musicians. Great excitement is added to the day by the enthusiasm of the coaches and volunteers sharing their skills and passion and the children really enjoy the freedom of the venue.

County Hall was transformed into a pop-up mountain biking track for the week. Schools were thrilled to experience mountain biking in Kilkenny City. The course was prepared in conjunction with local mountain bikers and Cycling Ireland and was a huge hit with hundreds of students. There was great feedback on the alternative use of space and the possibilities that exist in City Centre green spaces



Sapling Special School, Goresbridge

A cycling tutor visited the school for the day. Twelve children attend the school and it caters for children with complex needs. All of the children had a ball and one of them conquered his fear of cycling after 10 years of trying! The tutor was absolutely amazing with the children and they trusted her from the start, a really big deal when working with children with autism.



School of the Holy Spirit Bikeathon

School of the Holy Spirit is a school that caters for students who are diagnosed with ASD, Aspergers Syndrome, Emotional and Behavioural difficulties and other special needs. The school organised a 4hr bike relay around the front yard. Each student cycled for 20 mins, with approximately 40 students involved throughout the day. Teachers and students had a super day!

School City Cycles

Many of the schools encourage students to cycle to school for the week and also put in a programme of fun cycling activities. Volunteers came on board to escort groups of students on City cycles.



Community Bike Rides

Six community bike rides were held over the course of Bike Week, ranging from shorter cycles exploring the streets and bridges of Kilkenny, longer cycles incorporating a visit to the new bike shop and taking in quiet country roads and rural villages like Bennettsbridge, Gowran, Paulstown, Goresbridge and Kells.



Pre-school Events

Johnstown Community Childcare had great fun in playschool for bike week. We were super excited when our delivery of new helmets and cycling accessories arrived. We all helped prepare our bikes and then we were ready to go cycling. We got decked out in our bike gear and hi vis jackets for extra safety. We headed across the road to the local church car park and had so much fun cycling around. We spent a long time cycling around and when we came back to playschool we had a lovely cold drink and some treats.

Rower Inistioge Toddler Group held a morning to celebrate Bike Week and set up a small inside track for Balance Bikes, and other wheels to scoot around. A great morning's fun was had and the group received two upcycled bikes for their use and funky bells were provided to the members of the group.

Callan 40k Cycle

Callan Cycling Club hosted a beginner's sportive of 40km, over 80 participants took part in the event that was hosted by the club in conjunction with the community. This event caters for those who may want to attempt their first sportive or enjoy the longer distance on the quiet roads around Callan.



Kilnaspic Womens Shed Family cycles

Kilnaspic Women's Shed decided to hold a cycling event for all the community. This was to be our first public event and as it coincided perfectly with bike week and we decided to apply to be a part of it. We were thrilled to host approximately 25 people in our cycle. We cycled in two waves and many commented on how they had time to chat with neighbours they had never spoken to before or met. We ended the cycle with some refreshments and photographs in our custom-made photo booth. We plan to make the Sunday cycle a regular occurrence in our area.



Bike Week in Kilkenny School Project

Kilkenny School Project N. S. celebrated Bike Week from the 15th to the 19th of May. The Junior classes coloured some helmets and bicycles while the older classes worked on designing a bike. A pack of resources was sent around to each class with a timetable for the week. Our school's Environmental Committee helped with the organisation of the week.

Each class was given 5 prizes to be raffled. The prizes included helmets, lights, locks, puncture repair kits, tool kits, water bottles, pumps, bells and reflectors. A scavenger hunt was set up around the school and each class could take part in that during the week also. We were loaned 3 balance bikes which greatly helped children who could not cycle. There was a certificate for each child at the end of the week also. The feedback from parents and children was fantastic. Some children got new bikes as they were so encouraged to cycle and some older children who have been very reluctant to learn to cycle now want to learn. Overall, Bike Week in KSP was very successful. It was enjoyed by all the children and there was a great sense of fun around the school.



Children's Learn to Cycle

KRSP ran 2 learn to cycle programmes consisting of three lessons run over three consecutive days as it promotes better learning. A total of 28 children participated in the programme ranging from 3 years up to 11 years of age. The programme advertised to the general public and specifically to parents of children with a disability. It was run as a mixed ability programme, integrated and this worked very well. All but two of the children learned to cycle over the course of the programme with the younger two children learning to move confidently on balance bikes. Feedback from parents was very positive with many amazed at the progression over a short period of time.

Adults Cycle Right

KRSP ran a Cycle Right Programme for adults in Kilkenny City which was promoted extensively. The aim of this programme was to teach participants the skills to cycle confidently and competently on the road. Participants gained skills and knowledge on a phased basis over the 3 weeks moving from a designated car-free space to cycling within the City environs in traffic. Although the number of participants was small at 4, many of the participants stated said they are quite nervous cycling around the City and all were more confident at the end of the programme.

Fr. McGrath Family Resource Centre

Fr. McGrath Family Resource Centre had an introduction to cycling safety and they did two cycling spins around the community. They have already rebooked for the summer!



National Play Day

In 2023, €3,000 funding was allocated for a National Play Day. The Community Section in consultation with CYPSC organised and delivered sensory gift bags assembled with suitable sensory toys and distributed to families (*throughout the County*) for children and young people with disabilities. Special thanks to CYPSC, Tusla, HSE and Kilkenny Civil Defence who distributed the gift bags. This initiative was very well received by the families involved. In addition, grants were issued to a number of Family Resource Centres to support their National Play Day activities.



Kilkenny Civil Defence delivering sensory gift bags

Youth Work and Support

Kilkenny County Council continues to support the work of youth development throughout the County through:

- Young Social Innovator Programmes for 15-18 years old, focusing on innovation around social issues affecting young people.
- Ossory Youth – Support for delivery of programmes and funding of same.
- DRUM Youth Café – Joint funding partner with TUSLA for the DRUM youth café based at MacDonagh Junction.

LIBRARY SERVICES

Notable Achievements

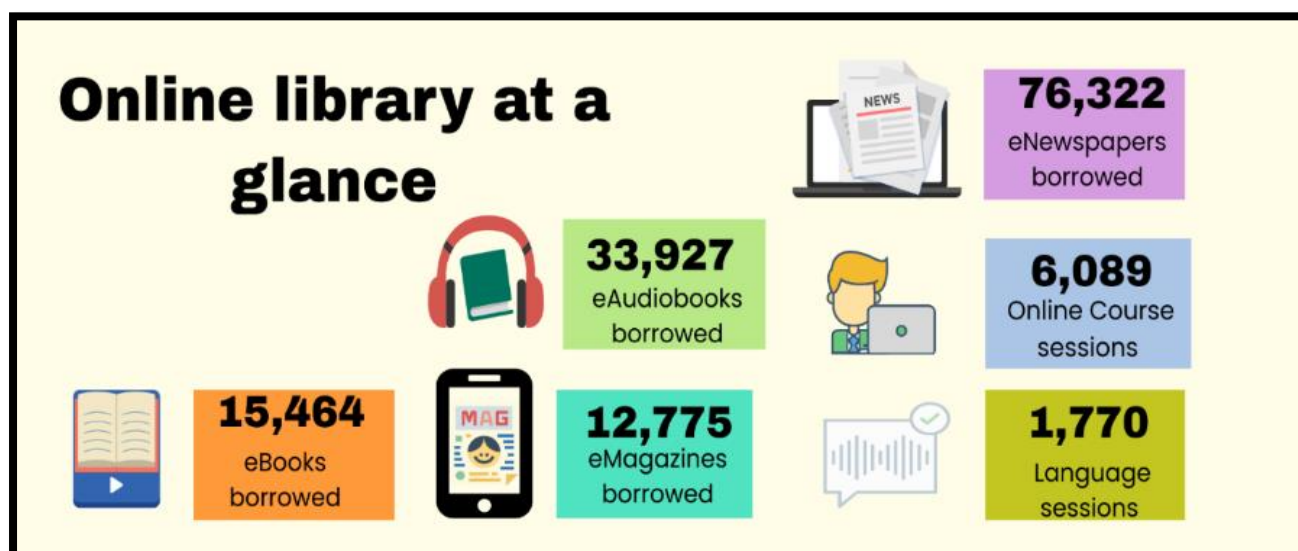
- 28% on library memberships this year, which brought our total to **19,409**.
- 335,188 books, eBooks and eAudiobooks were borrowed throughout the year, reflecting an increase of 22%.
- 197,652 library users came through our doors, reflecting an increase of 37%.

Other Achievements

- 13,000 Bookville Activity Books were distributed to 88 primary schools across Kilkenny as part of our annual Bookville Kilkenny Festival.
- Opening hours to the public increased by 16% across the network.

New Developments

- Mayfair Library has progressed substantially in 2023, with an opening expected in Quarter 2, 2024.
- All 8 libraries and our mobile library have been awarded Age Friendly status.



National Initiatives



Right to Read: This year, all of the "Right to Read" programmes proved highly popular with 276 events and 9,758 participants across the five major programme areas - Ireland Reads, Spring into Storytime, Summer Stars, Children's Book Festival, and Family Time at Your Library. We hosted storytimes, teddy bear sleepovers and craft sessions as part of the My Little Library Bag and Bedtime Books initiative, where 2,438 Bedtime books and 1,166 My Little Library Bags with 5 books in each were given children aged 0-4 to encourage a love of books and reading.

We engaged with all our partner primary schools and Early Learning Centres with 308 class visits to the library and 25 library presentations in schools. To celebrate the Women's World Cup over two thousand FAI COYGIG activity books were distributed to children in Kilkenny through our branches aimed at children from 3rd to 6th class and proved very popular.

Healthy Ireland At Your Library

Kilkenny Library Service held over 30 Healthy Ireland events across our library branches in 2023 for both children and adults. We hosted talks and workshops on gut health, water safety, hill walking, mindfulness for children and adults, back health, blood pressure checks and healthy eating to mention a few. We collaborated with partners such as the Irish Heart Foundation, Mental Health Ireland, Alone, Healthy Kilkenny and UPMC Ireland to promote a healthy lifestyle.



Age Friendly Programme

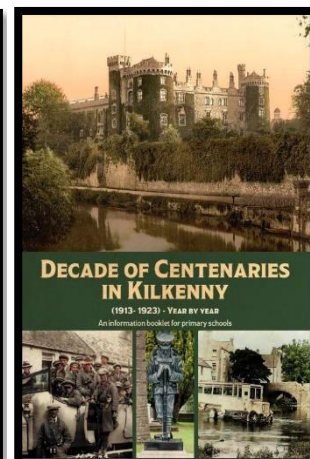
We were delighted to achieve Age Friendly status for all 8 libraries and the mobile library. We continued to provide a wide variety of Age Friendly programming including craft classes, languages classes and genealogy workshops. Our Mobile Library staff ran a very successful outreach programme with three nursing homes, facilitating craft workshops and bingo sessions at Tinnypark, Archersrath & Crosspatrick.

Local Studies

Additions to the Kilkenny Digital Archive included a collaborative venture with the Deenside Players to record the longstanding tradition of local theatre & pantomime in the Castlecomer community. Over 30 programmes have been digitised to date along with some photos of various productions over the last 60 plus years. Genealogy workshops and talks by local historians were delivered in library branches during Heritage week.

Decade of Centenaries

We produced an information booklet for primary schools and continued our podcast series covering significant local events on Small House' burnings, The final months of the Civil War, Everyday Life and General Elections in Kilkenny.



Creative Ireland

Bookville Kilkenny:

Bookville 2023 had an audience of over 18,500 with 13,000 educational activity books distributed to every primary school child across the County, six online videos, a Bookville exhibition, 49 live events and, new for this year, five virtual workshops. 34 authors, illustrators and entertainers engaged with children, families and schools across the County.

Storyteller in Residence

A new initiative where Kilkenny native, Helena Byrne designed and ran a programme promoting literacy and fostering the habit of enjoyment of reading amongst children and young people. Part of this included "*The Magic of Local Lore*" exhibition of stories gathered by some 5th & 6th class students, representing the rich history and cultural diversity within their Communities. This programme was supported by Creative Ireland.

Sensory Resources:

Our sensory services including a Toy & Sensory resource collection and a sensory book collection were available to all, along with social stories, ear defenders and a sensory box of toys to make visits to the library more comfortable. C-Pens are available in all libraries to help read text aloud. In 2023 we continued our pilot project of supplying TTRS licences to schools and families with children who experience difficulties in spelling, reading or writing.

Climate Action

We implemented a number of initiatives along three main themes in 2023– energy usage, biodiversity and sustainable living. Home energy Kits were loaned to help people monitor and improve their energy usage. In partnership with the Heritage Council, we offer access to ESKER (*a Citizen Science Kit*) which contains a variety of useful equipment, manuals and guides for biodiversity enthusiasts. We held events on seed saving, upcycling clothes and furniture, clothes swaps, food waste, soap making and GIY.



We recognise the importance of aligning the 17 Sustainable Development Goals [SDGs] around our services and programming. We continue to work with the South East Energy Agency to develop a Community Energy Hub, which is expected to be launched in 2024.

Programming

We organised events with over 35,000 people of all ages enjoying storytimes, Lego workshops, chess, author visits, open mic night, crafts, bookclubs and much more. Our Virtual Book continues, with over 150 members.

As part of our Booked Off Podcast, we released nine podcasts, covering a variety of topics from book recommendations to digital technology.

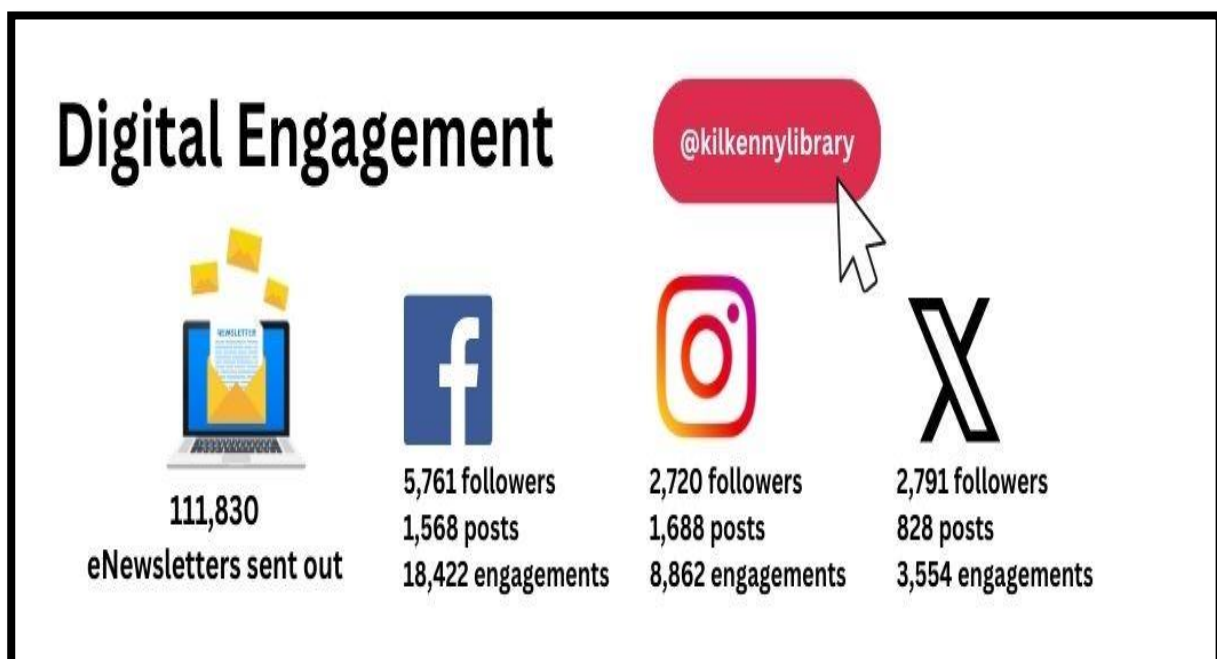


Partnerships

We actively collaborated and partnered with a range of organisations, agencies and community groups such as Kilkenny Carlow ETB, Kilkenny Education Centre, South East Energy Agency, The Heritage Council, Kilkenny Childcare Committee, Music Generation, HSE, and Calmast. We participated in national and local festivals such as Seachtain Na Gaeilge, National Poetry Day, Decade of Centenaries, Bealtaine, Heritage week and Science week.

Information & Communication

We had 31,777 engagements and 120,166 video views across our social media and YouTube platforms.



Our virtual newsletter was sent to over 5,600 subscribers every month to keep library members, potential members, Elected Members and local groups informed of upcoming events, library services, programmes and resources.

Reading Supports

Schools Services: We invested further in our class novel collection, sensory book collection, sensory book and toy collections, and Aistear collections this year, as well as Teacher's resource packs.

Mobile Library Service: Our mobile library network was expanded to include visits to approximately 60 schools, nursing homes and early learning centres across the County as well as 10 community stops which were open to all. Mobile library staff helped set up and run 3 community book clubs for adults in Freshford, Windgap and Mullinavat and organised a number of Age Friendly activities in local nursing homes. The mobile library also operated a door-to-door delivery service for those unable to visit their local stop or library.



Income

We successfully applied and were awarded €161,008 from a range of funding sources including Solas, Dormant Accounts Fund, Decade of Centenaries, Kilkenny Carlow ETB, Creative Ireland, LGMA and Dept. of Rural and Community Development.

Service Development & Infrastructure

- Mayfair Library made significant progress towards completion, with plans to open in Quarter 2, 2024.
- Budget approved for new library in Thomastown
- Callan Feasibility study in progress.
- Carnegie Library Feasibility study completed and funding applied for.
- Replacement funding application submitted for new mobile library.
- Upgrades completed across the network to include new carpet and information desk in Graiguenamanagh, painting in Ferrybank, upgrades to community room and WC facilities in Urlingford.
- New National Library Development Plan was launched by Libraries Ireland, which will feed into our Kilkenny Library Development Plan, to be completed in 2024.



Workforce



Library Staff member, Johanna Brennan was awarded the prestigious *Allen and Overy Award* recognising talent in the field of librarianship and information management having completed her 2 year Library and Information Management postgraduate diploma in Ulster University.

Over 417 training sessions were completed by staff in a variety of areas, to help us enhance the service we provide to our diverse community. Specialised Library training courses were completed by a large number of staff, with 2 staff currently training for a professional qualification in Librarianship. Our workforce plan was completed in 2023.

ARTS

The Arts Office develops, co-ordinates, motivates, inspires and empower artistic activity throughout the City and County. It promotes the arts as a worthwhile activity for all and work to further strengthen Kilkenny's position as a centre of excellence for the arts and ensure a successful and prosperous arts environment within the region. The Arts Officer also supports the facilitation and coordination of the Arts Office Creative Ireland Kilkenny Programme.

NOTABLE ACHIEVEMENTS IN 2023

- Over 26,000 people adults with our programmes.
- Over 21,900 young people engaged with our programmes.
- Over 220 artists and creatives were engaged in programmes.
- There was 62 grants & bursaries were awarded.

NEW DEVELOPMENTS

Waste Not Want Not - Climate action community project in partnership with Vincent's shop Kilkenny to utilise their waste streams. Participants turned worn-out denim into unique creations such as aprons, bags and cushion covers using Sashiko & Boro stitching techniques. Participants chat about the positive impact individuals can have on the climate crisis and the influence of collective action.



Participants and Tutors of the Waste Not Want Not Project

Artists Get-Togethers - Four sessions ran during October with a balance of networking, discussion and hands-on activities. Eight artists engaged in the programme.

Career Development for Emerging Musicians - An information session for Emerging Musicians on Career Development with Matthew Nolan, a Musician, Music Curator and Academic. The session gave practical advice on Working and Performing, Career Development, Marketing, Legal and Money & Wellbeing.

LITERATURE

Kilkenny Poetry Broadsheet - The 23rd edition of the Poetry Broadsheet was published in August. 105 poems by 58 poets were submitted. Editor Afric McGlinchey selected twelve poems for publication. The Broadsheet was launched at the Parade Tower with 150 people in attendance.



Launch of Poetry Broadsheet

Poetry Phone - Hugo Jellett, Co-founder of the Borris House Festival of Writing & Ideas, and one of the lead creatives in Electric Picnic selected poems from previously published Arts Office programmes for the first selection of poems. The second selection of poems from the 2023 Poetry Broadsheet. Anyone in Ireland can call the phone for free and listen to the poems. Freephone 1800 272 994.

Creative Writing Workshop as Gaeilge - Workshop through the Irish language with tutor and gaeilgeoir Róisín Sheehy. Seven people attended with positive feedback.

ARTISTS SUPPORTS

Bursary/Grant	Description	Successful Applicants	Funding Amount
Art Act Grants	Grants awarded to individuals and organisations of all art forms.	24	€22,000
ArtLinks Bursaries	Professional Development partnership programme with Kilkenny, Carlow, Waterford & Wexford County Councils.	11	€14,400
Tyrone Guthrie Residency	Bursary to spend two-week residency at Tyrone Guthrie Centre, Monaghan.	2	€1,600
Mentoring Bursaries	Mentor bursaries awarded in all artforms.	8	€8,300
Haumea Ecoversity	Bursary to study with the Haumea Ecoversity which educates people in the creative sector on how to bring eco issues into their work.	7	€1,953
Creative Futures Academy (CFA)	New collaboration with CFA for artists seeking to gain new qualifications.	4	€1,800
School Arts Bursary	Secondary schools have been awarded bursary to work with an artist.	5	€7,700

Your Voice Matters: Writer & Creative Coach Anne Tannam delivered a programme to support Kilkenny writers over a nine-month period. Kilkenny writers received both online and in-person support by way of workshops and groups and one-to-one coaching.

Emerging Curator Development Programme: Our 2023 Emerging Curator in Residence, Shannon Carroll organised three programmes. Her area of research focused on ecological art practice.

- (i) *Exhibition* - Horizon | Ag Bun na Spéire. An immersive multimedia installation by visual artist Catherine McDonald
- (ii) *Talk* - Returning to the Earth/Ag Filleadh ar an Talamh with visual artist Deirdre O'Mahony, and author of Irish & Ecology/An Ghaeilge agus Éiceolaíocht Michael Cronin.
- (iii) *Exhibition* - You never miss the water until the well runs dry. A multidisciplinary exhibition featured work by artists Mary Conroy, Bernadette Kiely, Laura Skehan and Claudia Breitschmid.

ArtEd: Partnering with Kilkenny Education Centre, ArtEd is a multi-disciplinary artist in primary schools residency programme specifically aimed at TAP trained artists. The initiative aims to respond to the local needs of artists who are dedicated to developing their skills in child participation & engagement. The four artists & schools were chosen to take part in the project.

KCLR Partnership – The Arts Show: Kilkenny Arts Office and KCLR radio with funding from Creative Ireland Programme co-produced a 10-week Arts Show which shared and highlighted arts and cultural activity. It included profiling and highlighted professional practitioners and experiences across art forms and community projects, giving a voice to artists and creative activity across the County. Shows can be listened back at: <https://kclr96fm.com/category/catch-up/the-arts-show-catchup/>

Culture Night: National night celebrating all that makes up the richness and diversity of culture in Ireland. Kilkenny had a varied programme of events with venues and groups in Kilkenny taking part in these celebrations. 21 events were hosted throughout the County. The night was very successful overall with over 1,900 people taking part around the County.

Bookville Festival: Fifty live workshops & five virtual working with authors & illustrators from Ireland and the UK. Events include reading, writing, storytelling, comedy, illustration, drama, music, visual arts and Irish, Ukrainian, Polish and Irish Sign Languages events. Over 13,000 Bookville activity books were distributed to every primary school child. The Bookville exhibition titled 'The Sandwich Story' by visual artist, writer, filmmaker & social farmer Lisa Fingleton. As part of the exhibition, there were four schools' workshops, one teachers' workshop in collaboration with Oíde & one adult workshop in collaboration with the Climate Action Team.

Artist in Residence - Youth Art: Residency programme in partnership with Ossory Youth & The Drum Youth Centre was developed to create a safe space for young people to explore their creativity. Aoife Doherty delivered the first residency in 2023 over a 6-week period. Aoife designed a programme to enable alternative ways of using different materials to encourage a fun and playful approaches to creative practices. The second residency was with artist Threadstories (*aka Carrie Lynam*) exploring various forms of self-portraiture using a variety of materials and techniques with 14 young people. Video artist Freddie Greenall documented the project. Video Link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2t0i9ODEa-w>



Artist in Residence - Youth Art, Self-portraiture project with artist Threadstories



Notable Achievements Statistics for the Arts Office

HERITAGE

The Heritage Office delivered a comprehensive programme of projects, grants and initiatives in 2023. The projects were co-funded by Kilkenny County Council and a range of partners including the Heritage Council, the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage (*National Monuments Service*), Creative Ireland and the Department of Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport and Media (*Commemorations Unit*).

Community Monuments Fund

Six projects were awarded a total of €340,134 from the Community Monuments Fund to help to conserve and protect the medieval sites. The projects awarded under Stream 1 funding (*i.e. capital conservation works*) were: Grangefertagh Medieval Church and Graveyard; Thomple Medieval Church and Graveyard; Infirmary Wall at Duiske Abbey and works on the west wall of the Augustinian Priory of St John the Evangelist (*at the Butler Gallery*), Kilkenny City. The projects awarded under Stream 2 funding (*i.e. Conservation Management Report*) were: Tubbrid Medieval Church and Graveyard and Rathpatrick Medieval Church and Graveyard. These completed projects will help to conserve these important archaeological monuments for future generations. More details of these projects can be found on www.kilkennyheritage.ie



Thomple Medieval Church and Graveyard – Completed conservation works, CMF23.

Decade of Centenaries

The 2023 Decade of Centenaries programme included a diverse range of projects such as Film & theatre projects, City Walking Tours, public talks and an oral history project were among the projects awarded funding under the Community Strand of the Decade of Centenaries Grants Programme and managed by the Heritage Office (*Total: €45,872*). These projects commemorated events that took place in Kilkenny in 1923 and reflected on the whole revolutionary decade 1912-1923.



*Launch of Kilkenny's
Decade of Centenaries*

To mark the end of the Decade of Centenaries Programme in Kilkenny, *Kilkenny's Decade of Centenaries, 1912-23/2012-23* was launched to document all the projects, events and activities funded over the past eleven years. The booklet can be viewed on <https://kilkennyheritage.ie/2023/12/launch-of-kilkennys-decade-of-centenaries-1912-23-2012-2023-booklet/>

OTHER ACHIEVEMENTS

County Heritage Plan Funding Secured

The Heritage Office was awarded €37,500 by the Heritage Council to support the actions of the Kilkenny County Heritage Plan. Co-funded by Kilkenny County Council, this included a Heritage Awareness and Engagement Programme. This programme comprised of six themed ad campaigns (*radio/newspaper/social media*) to promote Kilkenny's Heritage including Pledge Your Garden; Plant a Tree; Nature is Good for You; Holy Wells; Heritage Week; and Autumn Clean Up.

This also funded two data collection projects - Phase one of a countywide survey of Kilkenny's holy wells which was carried out by Shanarc Archaeology and the development of a methodology for surveying mass paths *Mass Paths in Memory* which was carried out by Heritage Consultant Pat Reid. This pioneering methodology will be used to survey mass paths in County Kilkenny in 2024 and can also be adapted and applied to other counties across the Country.

National Heritage Week

National Heritage Week saw close to 60 events and projects celebrating all aspects of our heritage take place across the City and County by heritage groups, venues and organisations. The Heritage Office organised a Tour of the City Walls delivered by Archaeologist Cólín Ó Drisceoil and a Story Sharing event on the theme of Holy Wells and Mass Paths in Johnswell. For a review of Heritage Week see:

<https://kilkennyheritage.ie/2023/08/heritage-week-2023-a/>



Tour of the City Walls delivered by
Archaeologist Cólín Ó Drisceoil

Creative Ireland - The History Show on KCLR

Series three of the History Show on KCLR presented and produced by John Moynihan. This series showcased Heritage Projects across the County and highlighted creative collaborations between people and communities, artists, archaeologists, historians and archivists. The series was funded through the Creative Ireland Programme at the Kilkenny County Council Heritage Office. Creative Ireland is supported by the Department of Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht and Sport and Media. To listen to the series: <https://kclr96fm.com/the-history-show/>

New Information Plaques on Kilkenny City Walls

Information plaques were installed on five additional sections of the Kilkenny City Walls including: Troy's Gate; Black Friars Gate; Black Abbey Carpark; Ormond Road and Ormond Street. The project was funded jointly through a grant award by the Heritage Council's Irish Walled Towns Network and the Heritage Office of Kilkenny County Council. This was Phase 1 of a larger project to develop a trail around Kilkenny's City Walls.



Community Engagement

The Heritage Office undertook extensive community engagement this year visiting many communities across the County to learn about their heritage needs; give presentations; and to provide support and guidance. In addition, Heritage packs were sent to every national school in the County. Many local organisations and projects received support from the Heritage Office this year including A History of Kilkenny City Harriers; South Kilkenny Historical Society; Gáirdín an Ghorta; The Acorn Project and An Chéad Tine.

BIODIVERSITY

The Biodiversity Officer commenced in 2023 and delivered a biodiversity programme of projects and awareness initiatives. The total expenditure for Local Biodiversity Action Fund (LBAF) projects were €63,379 co-funded by Kilkenny County Council (15%) and National Parks and Wildlife Service (85%).

Barn Owl Study

In partnership with BirdWatch Ireland, with the assistance of the local branch volunteers, barn owl studies continued in Kilkenny funded by LBAF. The Barn Owl Nest Box Scheme of 2022 were assessed for nesting pairs and a land use suitability study was completed to inform future policy to enhance the protection of barn owls in Kilkenny. A public talk took place during Heritage Week with over 300 attendees.

Biodiversity Action Plans

Three urban areas (*Piltown, Johnstown and Ballyragget*) underwent an update of habitat maps which were originally completed in 2010. The updated maps formed part of a larger community engagement project to develop a Biodiversity Action Plan with local Tidy Town Groups from the information derived from the mapping exercise and engagement with the visiting ecologist.

Community Engagement

The Biodiversity Officer assisted in securing funding for the Creative Ireland “Leave the Long Grass Grow” project developed by Maura Brennan. The art programme ran over the autumn and called artists and communities to come together and explored a collective vision for nature restoration in a series of nature immersion experiences, creative workshops and curated action days. These curated days included seed saving, scything and plant identification and wild food experiences in which participants came together to reflect on an ecological ethic based on systems thinking.



*Art Work from Leave the Long Grass Grow
Art Project (August 2023)*



Callan Seed Saving Event (Heritage Week 2023)

A number of engagement events were organised for the general public funded under LBAF, including a Swift Walk and Talk in Kilkenny City, a Seed Saving Walk and Talk on the Callan Meadows and foraging walk along the Dunmore Mass Path to highlight autumn fruits of the local hedgerows.

To highlight a previous study on the flora of the historic stone walls in Kilkenny, Jenny Castle a local artist was commissioned to provide a number of pieces of artwork of native botanical species that are frequently occurring on the City walls to highlight this unique

ecosystem present throughout the City. Created as a Birthday Calendar, this is a functional and sustainable item to decorate offices while creating awareness of this importance of these habitats exist across the City. This project was funded by LBAF.

Invasive Species Eradication

Two areas within Kilkenny underwent invasive species eradication funded under the LBAF. Supervised by the Parks Department, stretches of the River Barrow in the environs of Graignamanagh underwent Himalayan balsam (*Impatiens glandulifera*) removal. In Woodstock Gardens and Arboretum the Cherry Laurel (*Prunus laurocerasus*) was removed from the adjoining woodland.

Training & Education

An internal training workshop was undertaken by Kilkenny County Council staff, attendees included engineers, technicians and General Service Supervisors and focused on tree maintenance, hedgerow maintenance and grass cutting. The workshop outlined best practice to maximise the benefits for biodiversity. A second workshop was specifically for General Service Supervisors, to focus on practical matters, potential barriers were discussed and to attain a better understanding of their methods of operation. This workshop concluded with a visit to Kilkenny Castle Park. A tour was provided by the OPW gardening staff and a talk about the change in management practices in order to improve biodiversity in recent years and the impact it has on work practices.



Colm Mangan (OPW) speaking with Kilkenny County Council Staff Members

Educational outreach to schools was completed in tandem with the Council's Environmental Awareness Officer. Coill Na nOg was funded by LBAF and enabled 41 schools to plant 23 mini woodlands and collectively planted 144m length of native hedgerow. A collaboration with Keep Kilkenny Beautiful, SOS Kilkenny and Kilkenny County Council created a Nurture Nature campaign, encouraging Kilkenny City primary schools to make a pledge for Biodiversity. The Biodiversity Officer distributed over 3,000 pollinator education materials via education facilities, community gardens and outreach educators involved in the arts and the Carlow Kilkenny Education Training Board.

Council-wide Support for Pollinators

The Municipal District Councils, Parks Department, Environmental Awareness Office, Community and the Heritage Office have all undertaken significant work to protect pollinators and their habitats in Kilkenny during 2023. Actions included: - reducing mowing, protecting habitats, pollinator planting, raising awareness and supporting communities and schools. All work undertaken by Kilkenny County Council was collated into an annual report and submitted to the National Biodiversity Data Centre to meet our commitment under the All-Ireland Pollinator Plan.

CIVIL DEFENCE



Event Type	Number of Events	Number of Volunteers Attending	Number of Hours
First Aid	36	160	932
Search & Rescue	8	41	721
Ukraine Response	7	13	38
Community Assistance	16	43	243
Medical Assistance	13	18	78
Emergency Response	2	8	36
Safety Boat	4	21	115
Total	86	305	2,398

Overview of 2023

Kilkenny Civil Defence volunteers has seen a very successful and progressive year in terms of fulfilling our role in supporting the principal response agencies of AGS, Fire Service and HSE and supporting our local community. The commitment from Civil Defence volunteers is a credit to the unit in Kilkenny. Alongside attending first aid duties, missing person call outs and community support events our dedicated volunteers have continued to upskill with new training courses and recertifying in existing ones to ensure they are always ready to respond when the time comes.



In March, a major emergency was declared at Wexford Hospital and under the Major Emergency Management Framework Kilkenny Civil Defence were able to provide resources in the transport of 9 elderly patients by minibus from Wexford Hospital to St Luke's Hospital in Kilkenny

Kilkenny Civil Defence invested in our search and rescue capabilities with the purchase of a new boat allowing us access to the main river systems of the Nore, Barrow and Suir and some of the tributaries that pass through and along County Kilkenny boundaries.

To complement this, we have purchased a new Hummingbird PWMA Sonar. This state-of-the-art sonar can show the boat crew several different images of the riverbed at once.

This year saw us invest in climate action with the introduction of VEMS (*Volunteer and equipment management system*) and Proworks. This has all dramatically reduced our carbon foot print.

We held our annual awards night in December where the Volunteers received certification for courses completed during the year as well as promotions within the unit.

Qualification	2022	2023
Emergency First Responder	10	16
First Aid Responder	8	9
MapyX User	0	9
Network Operator	2	19
Swift water Responder	21	25
Emergency Medical Technician	3	7
Student paramedic	1	3
Advanced Paramedic	0	1



DIRECTORATE OF UKRAINIAN RESPONSE UNIT AND FIRE SERVICE

**Acting Director of Services:
Ms. Fiona Deegan**



UKRAINIAN RESPONSE UNIT

2023 continued to see the arrival of Ukrainians (*Beneficiaries of Temporary Protection*) into Ireland following the Russian invasion of Ukraine.

An additional 550 Ukrainian refugees arrived in Kilkenny in 2023 and the Ukrainian Unit continued to co-ordinate the Kilkenny response, with the majority of arrivals being accommodated initially in our Council managed Rest Centre at St. John of God Convent, before being moved into longer term accommodation through the Offer a Home Scheme and other commercial properties under contract with the Department of Children, Equality, Diversity Integration and Youth.

The Community Forum is chaired by the Chief Executive and continues to provide wrap around supports to ensure that all arrivals are supported. At the end of 2023 there were approximately 1,748 Ukrainians living in Kilkenny in two Council managed properties at St. John of God Convent in the City and The Friary in Knocktopher, various commercial properties throughout the County and in Pledged Properties, Offer a Home Properties and private arrangements offered by the people of Kilkenny.

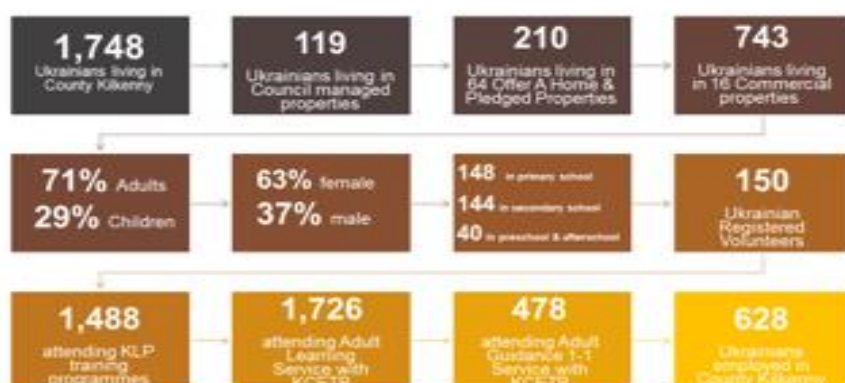
By the end of 2023:

- 1,488 Ukrainians had availed of training programmes developed through Kilkenny Leader Partnership in order to prepare them for the workplace.
- 1,726 Ukrainians had attended English as a second language with Kilkenny Carlow Education and Training Board in order to develop their language skills.
- 478 Ukrainians had availed of the Adult Guidance Services.
- 628 Ukrainians were registered as employees in Kilkenny businesses.
- Children integrated into our school system with 148 children enrolled in Primary Schools, 144 children enrolled in Secondary Schools and 40 children enrolled in pre-school education and afterschools.
- The integration was very noticeable in our Volunteer Centre with 150 Ukrainians registered as volunteers who became involved in the various festivals and other events arranged throughout the year.

A huge thanks must go to all the agencies who put their shoulder to the wheel to support the Ukrainian people during 2023 including the Health Service Executive, Kilkenny Carlow Education & Training Board, Department of Social Protection, Kilkenny Leader Partnership, Local Link and many more who continue to support the Ukrainian community in Kilkenny.

The work of the Ukrainian Crisis Unit within the Council will continue to provide emergency accommodation and oversee the work of the agencies and communities in 2024 and ensure that the people of Ukraine feel that Kilkenny is a safe place for them to live, until such a time as they can return to their homeland.

Ukrainian Monitor to 31.12.23



FIRE SERVICES & MAJOR EMERGENCY

Our focus is on protecting the communities we serve. The Fire and Rescue Service provides a highly skilled response to a range of emergencies. During the recent Storms Babet and Debi Local Authority Fire and Rescue Service showed to be very resilient and a useful resource in that Brigades (*trained and equipped manpower*) can be mobilised within minutes of an emergency in their area 24hrs a day/7days a week/365 day a year.

Fire & Rescue Service main functions are:

- To engage with the community in order to inform and educate citizens in how to reduce the risk of fires and other emergencies.
- To influence and regulate the built environment in order to protect people, property and the environment from harm.
- To plan and prepare for emergencies that may happen and making a high quality, effective and resilient response to them.
- To work together to deliver the highest quality services within a safe and positive environment for everyone in the organisation.

Capital Projects

The signing of the contract for the Design Team for the new Kilkenny City Fire Station took place in 2023. HLM Architects were awarded the contract for the design consultancy services including project management, client representative services and integrated design team consultancy services for a new fire station in Kilkenny City.



The construction of a new fire station for Urlingford is completed and ready to be opened in Q1-2024. The building is designed to satisfy the functional requirements of the Fire Brigade. The Fire Station is a two-bay design, meaning that it is capable of housing two fire service vehicles.



All 7 fire brigades were supplied with additional specialist battery operated road traffic collision equipment in 2023.



Cathaoirleach Michael Doyle presents battery powered Road Traffic Collision cutting equipment to Graiguenamanagh Fire Brigade.

Funding has recently been announced from the DHLG&H for the purchase of a new class B fire engine for Freshford Fire Brigade. This is part of our vehicle replacement policy as outlined in our Fire and Emergency Operations Plan 2022-2026.

Funding has also been approved for the provision of a pre-owned Class B appliance.

Fire Safety Certificate Applications

- 127 applications for fire safety certificates were received in 2023 and processed on behalf of the Building Control Section.
- A number of large-scale fire safety certificate applications for (a) Abbott Ireland Ltd, multi-storey development with a floor area of 29,490m², (b) Kilkenny Cheese joint venture development at Belview IDA and Technology Park, Gorteens, Slieverue, large scale industrial development with a floor area of 22,609m², (c) St. Kieran's College, Secondary School, multi-storey development with a floor area of 10,520m² were processed.

Ukrainian Response Unit - Fire Safety Certificate Compliance

- The Fire Authority technical staff have been involved with Kilkenny County Council's Ukrainian Response Unit. A large number of risk premises throughout Kilkenny City and County have been subject to review and fire safety certification applications to ensure minimum standards.

Fire Services Acts 1981 & 2003

- Fire Officers made a number of fire prevention visits to premises both to provide advice and to enforce legislation.
- 66 inspections of premises both to provide advice and to enforce legislation were undertaken.
- 47 Licence Applications were processed under Section 24 of the Fire Services Acts 1981 and 2003.
- 2 Dangerous Substance licence applications, 3 Vapour Recover Certificates and 1 certificate of installation were received and assessed to date.
- 2 Fire Safety Notices under the Fire Services Acts 1981 and 2003 was served in 2023.
- 1 fire safety assessment was ordered under Section 18(6) of the Fire Services Acts 1981 and 2003

Community Fire Safety



Home Fire Safety Visits were carried out by Fire Brigade personnel in 2023. Home Fire Safety Visits (HFSVs) are a significant element of our Community Fire Safety Strategy. Fire service personnel call to

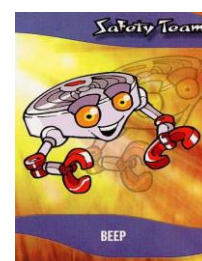
houses by appointment and give fire safety advice to the occupants. A HFSV is usually carried out by two uniformed operational fire service personnel. They use a checklist to ask questions, try to identify the fire safety hazards in the house and recommend solutions. Fire safety advice is given, fire 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 firefighters leave the occupier with further advice and information to 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.



Ongoing public messaging campaigns were maintained through our social media channels to encourage members of the public to install smoke alarms and to test their smoke alarms once a week to ensure that they are working.

Firefighters have been very busy in visiting their local primary schools to deliver the very successful primary schools programme. This programme has been delivered since 2006, as part of annual on-going community fire safety programme. Fire officers delivered the Primary School Programme (PSP) which covers: Fire safety in the home, the importance of smoke alarms, Test it Tuesday, what are the hazards and risks of accidental fires we have in our homes, how these can be prevented, how to call your local fire brigade 112, What to do if you do have a fire in your home.



Training

Kilkenny County Council's Fire and Rescue Service are obliged under the Fire Services Acts 1981 and 2003 and the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act 2005 to ensure that our Firefighters and Officers are adequately trained and competent to deal with tasks and varying roles they may encounter in the performance of their duties.

All personnel responding to Fire and Rescue Service incidents require a minimum level of training to meet core requirements. In addition, many personnel also require further training for specialist or supervisory roles. Furthermore, a number of Fire and Rescue Service personnel have completed "Instructor" courses in order that they can instruct and direct delivery of inhouse training sessions / courses. Personnel also require appropriate refresher training in all of the above throughout their careers, generally delivered either through on-station training or through specific refresher courses.

Training has traditionally been delivered at varying levels (*e.g. local station, fire authority, region, national and international*) and through a variety of arrangements.

We delivered quality training to date in 2023 *e.g.* QQI Initial Firefighting skills, QQI BA, BA Refresher, Emergency Services Driving Standard, Emergency First Responder and Recertification, Chainsaw Initial and Refresher Training and Managing Fire Service Incidents – Module 1.

The "Managing Fire Service Incidents – Module 1" course was run by Kilkenny County Council, as the Lead Authority and accredited by the National Directorate for Fire and Emergency Management in Castlecomer Fire Station, Co. Kilkenny from the 11th to 15th December, 2023. The participants and the instructors came from Kilkenny, Kildare and Tipperary.



Instructors and Participants on the “Managing Fire Service Incidents – Module 1”



Cathaoirleach Pat Fitzpatrick, Cllr. Mary Hilda Kavanagh & Michael McCarthy taking time out to visit our crews at our BA Refresher training in Freshford.

Breathing apparatus wearers undertake a two-day refresher course every two years. These courses reflect the breathing apparatus operational requirements of our firefighters. This includes training on the safe working practices, equipment use and maintenance, set duration, operational testing to enable a firefighter to safely enter a building on fire, use of guidelines, distress signal and entry control procedures.



Cathaoirleach Pat Fitzpatrick meets the new recruits and instructors on the QQI Fire Fighting Skills Course in Hacketstown Fire Training Centre.

The four new recruit fire-fighters underwent a full-time 3-week fire-fighting skills course. Having successfully completed the course, they recently took up their places on the run with their respective brigades (2 - Callan Fire Brigade, 1 - Kilkenny City Fire Brigade and 1 - Graiguenamanagh Fire Brigade).

Critical Incident Stress Management (CISM) is provided to all our staff. It represents an integrated 'system' of interventions, which are designed to prevent and/or monitor impact and/or mitigate the adverse psychological reactions that so often accompany emergency services, public safety and disaster response functions. CISM interventions are especially directed towards the monitoring and mitigation of post-traumatic stress reactions.

The system has a number of components (*internal and external to Kilkenny Fire and Rescue Service*) that all work toward providing a package of care to all operational staff. The individual components are as follows : Pre incident awareness training, Peer supporters and defusing sessions, Liaison Officer, Trained personnel for debriefing sessions, One on one confidential counselling sessions and a 24 hour helpline.

National Industrial Action SIPTU Retained Fire Fighters.

The industrial action over the months of June, July and August had an impact on brigades in relation to training, station duties, community fire safety, morale of all staff and the workload of Senior Fire Officers. However, we were able to maintain essential services, maintain relationships, maintain reasonable safe systems of work and ensured the safety of the public from fire. Thankfully, the strike action by retained firefighters was suspended from 17th August 2023. It followed lengthy talks between the union SIPTU and the Local Government Management Agency at the Workplace Relations Commission (WRC). There are major financial implications for all Local Authorities due to the recommendations of the WRC as there will be a need for an increase in staffing levels and increase in pay to all firefighters in the settlement terms contained within the proposals.

Operations

Fire Brigades responded to 892 turnouts in 2023. The Fire Service is a very resilient and a useful resource to the Local Authority in that Brigades (*trained and equipped manpower*) can be mobilised within minutes of an emergency in their area.

Major Emergency Management

The External Emergency Plan for Grasslands Fertiliser Ltd, Kilkenny was reviewed and tested under the Seveso III Directive in 2023. This comprised a test of the mobilisation procedures of the Principal Response Agencies (PRA's) and a test of the External Emergency by the PRA's, Site Operator and other Statutory Agencies.



Local Authority, HSE and An Garda Síochána Staff in the onsite Co-Ordination Centre

Occupational Health & Safety

Kilkenny Fire Service maintains a Safety Management System. The Safety Statement for each Fire Station was updated in 2023 and all staff were given their annual safety induction. The learning outcomes for all accident reports and near miss reports are used to update the Safety Manual each year.



DIRECTORATE OF PLANNING, ECONOMIC & ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES

**Director of Services:
Mr. Sean McKeown**



PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT

Development Management

A total of 880 planning applications were received during the year, compared to 837 in 2022, representing an increase of 5%. Approximately 70% of all planning applications were received electronically through the e-planning portal.

Building Control

During 2023, 307 valid Commencement Notices (CNs) were submitted compared to 336 during 2022, representing a decrease of almost 9%.

Just over half(or 157), of the CNs received were accompanied by an “opt- out declaration.” This type of notice may be used for a single standalone dwelling or a domestic extension.

63 CNs were lodged by registered construction professionals in respect of multi-unit developments accounting for a cumulative total of just under 400 dwelling units.

41 CNs lodged were in respect of non-domestic projects, such as educational, community, commercial and industrial projects.

As of 1st June 2023, all Disability Access Certificate (DAC) Applications are submitted online, via the online Building Control Management System(BCMS).

67 DAC Applications were received in 2023 compared to 72 in 2022, which is slightly below the average for the last 4 years.

During 2023, DAC applications included the following range of use:

- hospitals & healthcare facilities;
- secondary and primary schools;
- housing in the form of apartments & duplex buildings;
- community centres and other community buildings; and
- commercial buildings ranging from hotels, restaurants, shops, gyms, short term lets, multiple occupancy buildings (*Ukrainian/Refugee use*), to offices, warehousing and industrial buildings.

The figures above are an indication of the maintained level of activity in construction generally and in particular the sustained delivery of much needed housing units.

Taking In Charge

30 Taking in Charge (TIC) applications were progressed to various stages of the process during the year.

The TIC process was completed for the following 12 developments in 2023:

TC103	Lakeside, Kilkenny
TC173	Lakeside Cycleway
TC114	Collge Park, Callan Road
TC147	Rioch Court
TC106	Breaghagh Court
TC108	Patricks Gate

TC174	Steps At Talbots Inch
TC168	Abbeygate, Ferrybank
TC155	Black Church Square, Inistioge
TC107	The Belfry
TC178	Ardmillan
TC110	Friarshill, Graiguenamanagh

The main public infrastructure subject to TIC are:

- public roads and footpaths,
- public open spaces,
- unallocated surface parking areas, and
- public lighting.

There is a total of 29 estates remaining to be taken in charge as at the end of 2023.

Forward Planning

2 Year Review of the Kilkenny City and County Development Plan 2021 - 2027

The 2 year review of the Kilkenny City and County Development Plan was completed in Q3 of 2023.

LOCAL AREA PLANS

Ferrybank - Belview Local Area Plan

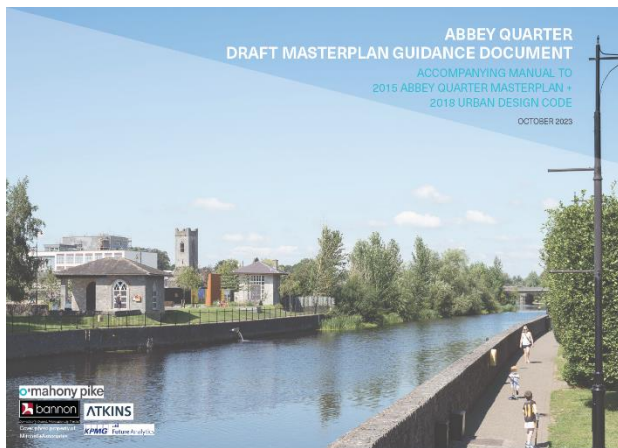
Tenders were advertised for the preparation of a new Local Area Plan for Ferrybank/Belview in Q4 of 2023. It is expected that Consultants will be appointed in Q1 2024, with a new plan in place by Q1 2025.

The tender documents provide for an issues paper and public consultation, along with the preparation of environmental reports and publication of the draft plan, the statutory public consultation and the final document for approval by the Council.

MASTERPLANS

Abbey Quarter

The Abbey Quarter Masterplan User Guide was adopted in September 2023.



A variation to the Kilkenny City and County Development Plan 2021 – 2027 (CDP) is now required to incorporate the User Guide into the CDP. Work will commence on this in Q1 2024. The Variation will require approval by the Elected Members.

The publication can be accessed at:

<https://www.kilkennycoco.ie/eng/services/planning/development-plans/abbey-quarter-brewery-site/review-of-abbey-quarter-masterplan-2023/>

Loughmacask Masterplan

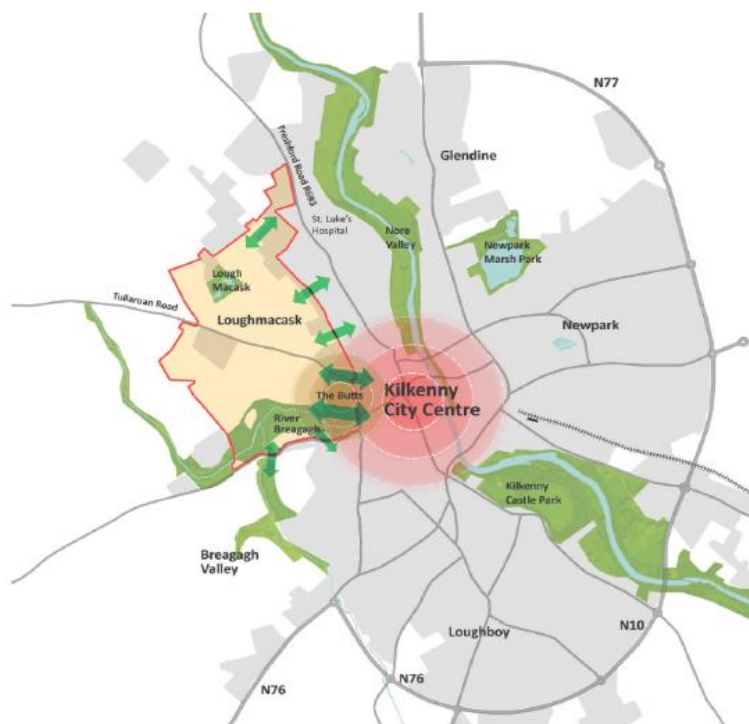
The Loughmacask Masterplan was adopted in Q2 of 2023. A variation to the City & County Development Plan will be required to incorporate it into the Statutory Plan. This will commence in Q1 2024

LOUGHMACASK

MASTERPLAN

A distinctive and new residential City Quarter, physically and culturally connected to the historic City of Kilkenny and its surrounding landscape.

June 2023



St. Canice's Campus

A draft Masterplan was completed in Q3 of 2023 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 in early 2024, before being placed on public display for a period of public consultation.

Smaller Towns and Villages

Urlingford Town Centre Masterplan was adopted in September 2023.



Turley

The purpose of the Masterplan is to guide the development of Urlingford into the future and to influence and deliver on real change for the Town, in order to make it a more attractive destination in which to live, work, visit and do business. Urlingford will become an increasingly vibrant, healthy, attractive and inclusive town, enhanced by revitalisation in tandem with enhanced connectivity, urban form and amenity.

Further Masterplans are currently being prepared for the settlements of Ballyragget, Paulstown and Kilmacow. Three public meetings, one for each town, have taken place. The feedback/inputs from these meetings have been incorporated into the draft Masterplans. The Planning Authority received draft Masterplans for each settlement and have reverted back to the Consultants with feedback along with the feedback received from Area Engineers, Community and Housing Sections. All feedback is currently being reviewed by the Consultants. It is anticipated that the draft Masterplan for Ballyragget and Paulstown will be presented to the Elected Members in early 2024, before they are placed on public display for consultation for a 4 week period. Walk in public meetings will also be scheduled for each settlement during the public display period.

Cluster Housing Design Guidelines for Co. Kilkenny

Consultants, Place +Urbanism Ltd, have been appointed to carry out Cluster Housing Design Guidelines for County Kilkenny. A delivery date for draft guidelines is anticipated for Q2 2024.

Conservation

The quality of our historic built environment contributes to the vitality of our urban areas, villages and countryside, instils a sense of pride of place and enhances the quality of our everyday lives. Our built heritage is one of the main attractions for visitors to Kilkenny, and therefore its protection and conservation is integral to the County's standing as the Medieval Capital of Ireland.

Conservation Grants

The following conservation grant projects were delivered in 2023:

Built Heritage Investment Scheme (BHIS) - The goal of the BHIS is to leverage private investment in small-scale, labour-intensive conservation projects and to support the employment of conservation professionals and craftspeople for the repair of the historic built environment.

Total funding of €177,910 was approved for 14 projects under the BHIS in County Kilkenny in 2023 for a wide range of works including window repairs, external render works, roof repairs, lime works and general masonry works.

A sum of €238,149 was privately leveraged from owners of these structures, culminating in a total BHIS project delivery of €416,059. Local professionals and crafts people accumulated a total of 603-person days to deliver same, providing a tangible economic benefit at local level.

Historic Structures Fund (HSF) - The goal of the HSF is to support conservation and enhancement of historic structures and buildings in both private and public ownership. One project was support to the value of €37,000 under the HSF. Privately leveraged funds were to the value of €12,102, bringing the total project cost to €49,102.

Local professionals and crafts people accumulated a total of 225-person days to deliver same, providing a tangible economic benefit at local level.



*Thatched Cottage Mooneeroe
Before Grant*



*Thatched Cottage Mooneeroe
After Grant*

Heritage Stewardship Fund: Funding of €30,000 for building interpretation, laser scanning and photogrammetry of two early modern (1580s) properties in Kilkenny City was funded by the Heritage Council. A 3D Rendered model of each these buildings has been created and will be hosted on the Council's website. Kilkenny County Council also has a 3D rendered model of the Shee Alms House and Rothe House. These two properties will add to the offering of medieval Kilkenny.

Kilkenny's Built Heritage Stocktake 2023: The collaboration between the Conservation Office and the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage (DHLGH) to undertake a stocktake of structures on the Record of Protected Structures (RPS) and on the National Inventory of Architectural Heritage (NIAH) of structures in Graiguenamanagh and Castlecomer is now complete. The total project cost was €21,525, which was fully funded by DHLGH.

Conservation Grants

Project	Amount of Project Supported	Funding Provided	Privately Leveraged Funds	Total Project Cost	Total Person Days
Built Heritage Investment Scheme (BHIS)	14	177,910	238,149	€416,059	603
Historic Structures Fund (HSF)	1	€37,000	€12,102	49,102	225
Heritage Stewardship Fund	1	€30,000	€ 6,092	€36,092	64
Kilkenny's Built Heritage Stocktake 2023	N/A	€21,525	N/A	€21,525	N/A
Total		€266,435	€256,343	€522,778	892

Derelict Sites

The new strategy for the management of derelict sites, which began in 2022 was progressed to good effect during 2023. The phased programme of additions continued and the team tackled key sites in Kilkenny City, Callan, Thomastown and Graiguenamanagh. (*Castlecomer will be addressed in 2024*). Twenty-four sites were added to the Derelict Sites Register in 2023, bringing the total number of derelict sites up to 39 at the end of the year. Five sites - one on John Street in Kilkenny, one on Duiske Lane, the Bank House and Anchor Bar in Graiguenamanagh were removed from the Register in 2023/early 2024 due to site improvement.



Bank House Before Works



Bank House After Works



Anchor Bar Before Works



Anchor Bar After Works

Sites on the Derelict Sites Register now have valuations attached and all sites subject to the Derelict Sites levy will be served with payment demands of 7% of the site's market value in Q1 2024. The CPO process of 3 derelict sites (*in Callan, Thomastown and Mooncoin*) commenced in December 2023.

Vacant Sites

There were 23 sites on the Council's Vacant Sites Register at the end of 2023. The number of cancelled entries due to site activation or improvement stands at 24 sites, which demonstrates that the levy is having the desired effect. The Vacant site levy will be replaced by the Residential Zoned Land Tax (RZLT) from 2025.

A total of €525,000 has been received to date in vacant site levies from private developers. The Council are continuing to pursue the payment of all outstanding levies and have instigated Court proceedings to pursue two landowners for non-payment during 2022, one of which has now been settled and an instalment payment plan is being implemented.

Residential Zoned Land Tax

A Final Map of lands in scope for the new Residential Zoned Land Tax (RZLT) was published on 1st December 2023. Variation 1 to the Development Plan was adopted at November's Council meeting, comprising two minor changes to zoning in the City, to ensure appropriate application of the tax. A new draft Annual RZLT map has now been published, and submissions are invited.

Town Regeneration Office

Town Centre First

Annette Fitzpatrick was appointed as Town Regeneration Officer in March 2023. This new role is part of the government's commitment to the Town Centre First Policy. Urlingford was designated as the first Town Centre First Pathfinder Town in County Kilkenny. As part of this process a Masterplan for the town centre of Urlingford was created in consultation with the Urlingford Town Team, the public and other stakeholders.

The Town Team, already well established, were successful in completing the delivery of a Remote Working Hub called "Exit 4" at the former Bank of Ireland building on the Main Street. They were also successful in securing funding and commencing works on Phase 1 of improvements to be carried out to the Community Centre.

URDF Call 3

The Council were successful in receiving funding of €6million to address vacancy in Kilkenny City with a view to bringing vacant buildings back into use.

Butts Area Regeneration

The Council were successful in receiving funding of €850,000 from the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage to develop a Regeneration Plan for the Butts area.

ENVIRONMENT

Dunmore Civic Amenity Site (CAS)

In 2023, the Dunmore CAS received 1,786 tonnes of Municipal Solid Waste and 973 tonnes of Municipal Dry Waste. Many recycling streams were also deposited at Dunmore CAS. Under our Anti-Dumping Initiative in 2023, there was a Dry Bulk Waste week facilitated at the Dunmore CAS and also at the Grannagh CAS.

For a set fee of €5, customers could bring any amount of timber or bulk furniture to the site for recycling. This initiative resulted in 25 tonnes of timber and 23 tonnes of furniture deposited at the site which was all broken down, transported off site where the various recycling streams were segregated and processed for recycling.



Bring Banks

The Council provides and manages 46 Bring Bank Recycling Centres across the City and County. A total of 2,036 tonnes of recyclables were collected at these Centres in 2023. Loughboy Shopping Centre is the busiest Bring Centre in the City while ALDI, Ferrybank is the busiest centre 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 holiday periods. The Council continues to look to expand the network of recycling centres and in this regard is in discussions with Tidy Town committee's in relation to suitable locations.

Anti-Dumping Initiative application for 2023

Kilkenny County Council was awarded funding for projects under the Anti-Dumping Initiative for 2023 in the amount of €90,000. This funding contributed to several projects around the County. One such project which involved working with Cartoon Saloon on designing graphics for our recycling containers.



Cartoon Saloon artwork on Recycling Containers @Dunmore CAS

Anti-Dumping Initiatives 2023

Project No.	Project Title	Total Amount Approved
1	Bulky Furniture Amnesty	€27,800
2	Media/Public Awareness	€18,000
3	Clean up of Various road verges around the County	€19,700
4	Clean up Litter Blackspots	€24,500
	Total	€90,000

Team Up to Clean Up 2023

Our Team Up to Clean Up Event saw a weekend of action across County Kilkenny, enabling groups and local communities to litter pick their neighbourhoods over the weekend of the 10th-12th of March, 2023. Over 200 registered groups and an estimated 5,000 volunteers were active, removing loose litter from the environment. It was an opportunity for neighbours to reconnect and a chance to get out into the fresh air and work as a collective to tackle litter throughout the County. This initiative was sponsored by Dawn Meats, Tirlán/Glanbia Plc, Panda, PRL Group and the John O'Shea Trust providing financial support to allow Kilkenny County Council make this initiative possible.



Litter Pick Kits were assembled by Council staff, army personnel in St Stephens Barracks and students from CBS Secondary School, Kilkenny. Kit distribution was completed by the assistance of Elected Members, staff, Area Offices and community hubs across the County.

The Green Awards 2024

Kilkenny County Council has been nominated under the “Green Collaboration” category of the National Green Awards for “Team Up to Clean Up-Together for Kilkenny 2023”. The Awards will take place in **The Clayton Hotel, Burlington Road on Tuesday, 27th February, 2024.**

TIDY TOWNS

Tidy Town Forum

Three Tidy Towns Forum meetings took place in 2023. This included presentations from Bernadette Moloney Biodiversity Officer, Dearbhala Ledwidge Climate Action Coordinator, Breda Maher Community Climate Action Officer and Dr. Mary Tubridy Ecologist. The final Forum took place in November 2023 in Thomastown Community Centre which was accompanied with a guided tour of the town and the new biodiversity garden in the Upper Paddock's.



Tidy Towns Awards

There were twenty-seven entrants from County Kilkenny which is an increase in participation from previous years. The following awards were achieved:

- *Kilkenny City* retained its gold medal and won the highly coveted South east Regional Award.
- *Inistioge* retained its gold medal and came 2nd in the County Awards
- *Tullahought* retained their silver medal, came 3rd in the County Awards and won the Small Town Regional Award under the Pollinator Programme
- *Listerlin* won the National Leave No Trace Award and the Endeavour Award for 2023

Green Schools Programme

The Environment Section corresponded with all schools due to renew their Green Flag programme. 70% of schools were due to renew their flag in 2023, however, many schools were just re-establishing their committee's and restarting the programme after the Covid disruption. Therefore, the majority will be in a position to renew in 2024.

For schools in a position to renew, their renewal applications were submitted to An Taisce. Prior to submitting their application, the Environmental Awareness Officer (EAO) visited and assessed the school. 12 schools were visited before the end of March. 8 schools were awarded a renewal flag in May and 3 schools received their first green flag award, which included 2 secondary schools (*Coláiste Cois Siúire, Mooncoin and Coláiste Mhuire, Johnstown.*)

For schools restarting the programme, the Environmental Awareness Officer provided advice to green school co-ordinators and completed talks to support schools working on litter and waste themes. Other supports were made available from external stakeholders including SEAI and Voice Ireland.

National Spring Clean

There were 95 National Spring Clean registrations recorded for the County, this is down by 30% on previous years, however a reduction in participation was expected in 2023 with the introduction of Kilkenny's unique clean up weekend "Let's Team Up to Clean Up, Together for Kilkenny" which aimed to activate different groups to participate. As the new Kilkenny campaign could only cater for groups operating within 60km/p/h speed zones, the National Spring Clean was a back up for groups who couldn't participate in the unique County initiative. Overall, the collective participation between the two community clean up schemes is approximately 255 groups. This reflects an overall increase of 70% in litter picking activity across the months of March and April when compared to previous years.

Kilkenny Community Composting 2023

Kilkenny LEADER Partnership in conjunction with the Southeast Energy Agency and Kilkenny County Council facilitated a training programme for community groups to teach people how to reduce food waste and compost within their community. Training consisted of 1 evening in-person, 3 evening online sessions and 1 half-day hands-on workshop (weekend) to learn how to prevent food waste and compost both garden and food waste using a variety of composting systems. Training took place in Freshford, Thomastown and Piltown.

Picker Pals 2023



A total of 40 classes started the Picker Pals programme throughout the City and County at the start of the academic term of 2023-2024. The programme provides a litter picking kit to participating classrooms and an opportunity for each pupil to borrow the kit over a weekend and tell the class their findings the following week. This programme saw over 1,000 families being involved in weekend litter picking adventures over the course of the programme throughout 2021-2022.

Coíl na nÓg

37 schools, representing both Primary and Secondary were funded and supported under the Cóil na nÓg programme. This was a collaborative project supported by the Environmental Awareness Officer (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 were given access to supporting resources including videos and worksheets to help them plant and get to know their trees.

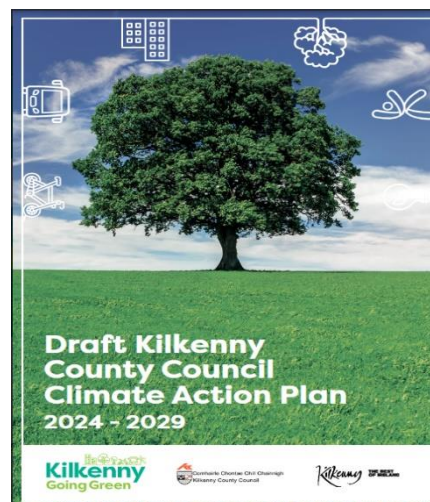
Litter Management Plan 2024-2026

The statutory process for the development of a new Litter Management Plan 2024-2026 commenced in November 2023. All sections of Environment feed into this process. The Environmental Awareness Officer (EAO) presented at the Municipal District Meetings before Christmas. A Draft Plan will go before the SPC 4 in February 2024 for input prior to being put on display for a period of public consultation.

Climate Action Office

Established the Kilkenny County Council Climate Action Steering Committee, a cross departmental committee of c.30 members, to support the preparation and implementation of the Kilkenny County Council Climate Action Plan.

Prepared the Draft Kilkenny County Council Climate Action Plan 2024-2029 and put it out for public consultation. The Plan includes 95 actions and the identification the Kilkenny City Decarbonisation Zone. A total of 32 submissions were received. The Draft Plan is due to be adopted in February 2024.



The Climate Action Office undertook an extensive programme of meetings and consultations with Elected Members, Staff and the public to prepare the Draft Climate Action Plan during 2023 as follows:

Meetings with Elected Members & Staff to Prepare the Draft Climate Action Plan	Number
Council Plenary Meetings	4
Workshop with Elected Members	1
Municipal District of Kilkenny City (DZ)	1
SPC 4 (<i>Environmental Protection, Climate Action and Energy</i>)	2
Climate Action Steering Committee meetings	6
Workshops with Service Areas/Staff	25

Phase of the Climate Action Plan	Public Engagement re the Draft Climate Action Plan
Pre-Draft Consultation Phase	PPN Plenary, Kilkenny Tidy Towns Network, Earth Day, Bike Week, Local Radio, Press releases/social media, Consultkilkenny.ie portal
Consultation on Kilkenny City Decarbonisation Zone (DZ)	PPN, Chamber of Commerce, Kilkenny Leader Partnership, Kilkenny Tourism, Kilkenny City MD, Sustainable Energy Communities
Statutory Consultation Phase	PPN, Library drop-in-clinics (Kilkenny City & Ferrybank), Local Radio, Videos, Press releases/social media, Consultkilkenny.ie portal

Launched the **Community Climate Action Fund** – a grant scheme of €511,000 for communities in County Kilkenny to support local climate action; and undertook an extensive programme of public engagement as follows:

Public Engagement in 2023 Regarding Community Climate Action Fund	Number
Earth Day, McDonagh Junction	1
Information Sessions in Libraries	4
Tidy Towns Annual Meeting	1
PPN	2
Radio Interviews	2
Video produced	1
Meetings with Communities	40

Other Achievements

- Provided Climate Action information at 2 **Staff Induction Training** events.
- Kilkenny County Council passed the annual Surveillance Audit for **ISO 50001** Energy Management Standard certification.
- Submitted the final progress report on the **Kilkenny County Council Climate Adaptation Plan (2019-2024)** to the Climate Action Regional Office.
- Signed a Service Level Agreement with the Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland (SEAI) to support the **Sustainable Energy Communities Programme**.
- Managed and updated **Energy Elephant**, an energy and sustainability management platform which tracks all the Council's energy use, energy costs and emissions.
- Coordinated the Council's participation in the national **Climate Hero Challenge** to reduce emissions.
- Commenced the Kilkenny County Council **"Reduce Your Use" energy campaign** for Winter 2023/24. The Thomastown and Callan Area Offices were selected as a pilot areas and Energy Reduction Plans prepared. The campaign will be documented from October '23 to March '24 and a video produced to communicate the findings and results from the campaign.

New Developments

Three new staff were recruited to the Climate Action Office, namely Community Climate Action Officer, Climate Action Officer and Clerical Officer.

Developed a new Council "Going Green" logo to build awareness about climate action. The six icons in the logo represent six different priority climate themes (*Buildings,*



Nature, Renewable Energy, Active Travel, Public & Sustainable Travel, Working with People).
Re-designed the [climate action page](#) on the Council website to be more user friendly.
Developed 2 short videos highlighting what Kilkenny County Council is doing on climate action.

Casual Trading

Five Casual Trading Licences issued in 2023 i.e. four of these were renewals: two in Castlecomer, one in Kells, one in Graiguenamanagh and one in Inistioge.

Casual Trading is a great opportunity for someone to start up a new business venture quickly with just a vehicle or unit that fits into a car parking space for an annual licence fee. Casual Traders who wish to sell food or drink are advised to contact the HSE to register their foodstall and all Casual Traders are advised to contact the Gardai.



Casual Trading Bay at Inistioge

Water Safety

The 2023 lifeguard season commenced on the June bank holiday weekend in 2023. Lifeguards were posted on our lifeguarded areas on weekends throughout June, daily lifeguard attendance was provided thereafter throughout July and August at The Weir, The Meadows, Thomastown, Inistioge and Graiguenamanagh.

22 lifeguards were engaged to cover the 5 lifeguarded areas.

Numbers of swimmers in attendance varied hugely throughout Summer 2023 due to inclement weather conditions and heavy downpours during June, July and August. The season started with good weather in early to mid June where lifeguards recorded in excess of 1,500 bathers at the lifeguarded areas on weekends in June. Lifeguards provided safety advice to in excess of 1,200 bathers, prevented 216 accidents and provided first aid on 13 occasions. There were a small number of assists and rescues recorded.

The lifeguard hours were amended in 2023 from the previous hours of 2pm to 7.30pm to 1.00 p.m. to 6.30 pm.

Upgrading Works at the Meadows Amenity Area were completed by The Parks Section in association with the Water Safety Development Officer (WSDO) in Q1 2023, including upgrading of the lifeguarded area and signage. These works created a safer environment for users and lifeguards patrolling the lifeguarded area.

Excessive Litter at the Meadows was noted during June, due to end of school year activities. As a result, additional waste receptacles were provided by Kilkenny City Area Office. The issues were highlighted on social media channels. These measures helped to maintain a tidier bathing area for the remainder of the season.



The lifebuoys in the City are checked weekly by Kilkenny City Area staff and rurally by the lifeguards at swimming areas during the lifeguard season. Members of the public can report missing lifebuoys to the national website; www.Ringbuoy.ie, the Council's Environment Section and the WSDO. Kilkenny Civil Defence, Kilkenny Aqua Canoe Club members and landowners have kindly retrieved a large number of reusable lifebuoys from the banks of the river throughout the year and returned them to the Water Safety Development Officer (WSDO) for checking and reuse.

Kilkenny Water Safety Committee ran "Summer Swim Week" from the 17th to the 21st July at Graiguenamanagh Swimming area with assistance from our lifeguards. Unfortunately, due to substandard water quality the Thomastown Swim Week was cancelled. Swim week was promoted through Kilkenny County Council's social media channels. Swim Week was very well received in Graiguenamagh with positive feedback from swimmers and parents alike.

Burial Grounds

Community Monuments Fund – Grangefertagh & The Thomple Historic Church & Graveyards Conservation Works

Kilkenny County Council have carried out works to help conserve and protect two medieval churches and graveyards at Grangefertagh and The Thomple in Thomastown under the Community Monuments fund 2023 provided by the Department of Housing, Heritage and Local Government. Stage 1 of the Conservation Works on Grangefertagh Historic Church & Graveyard have been completed in 2023 with Stage 2 works commencing in 2024 once approved by the Department of Housing, Heritage and Local Government. All conservation works have been completed on the Thomple Historic Church & Graveyard in Thomastown. The projects were managed by the Environment Section and Heritage Office.

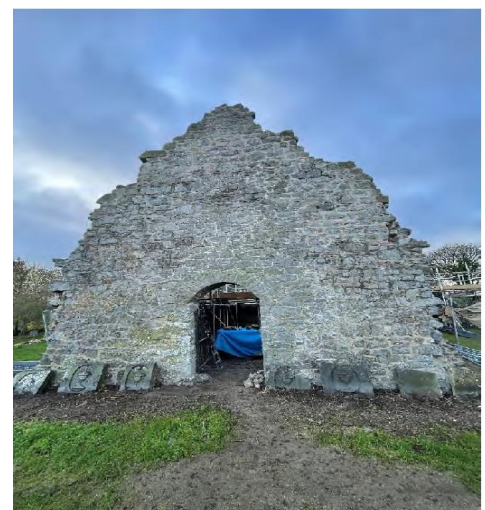


Photo of recent conservation works at Grangefertagh Historic Church & Graveyard



The Thomple Historic Church and Graveyard



The Thomple Historic Church and Graveyard

Water Quality - Farms Inspections

Farm Inspections were carried out in County Kilkenny in 2023. An accelerated inspection programme was put in place in the Environment Section using external resources in order to meet the required inspection targets.

Farm inspections mainly took place in the Dinin & Nuenna Catchments with a small number spread across various other catchments in the County. The farm surveys involved both farmyard & farmland surveys, which lead to a more complete overall assessment of the farms inspected.

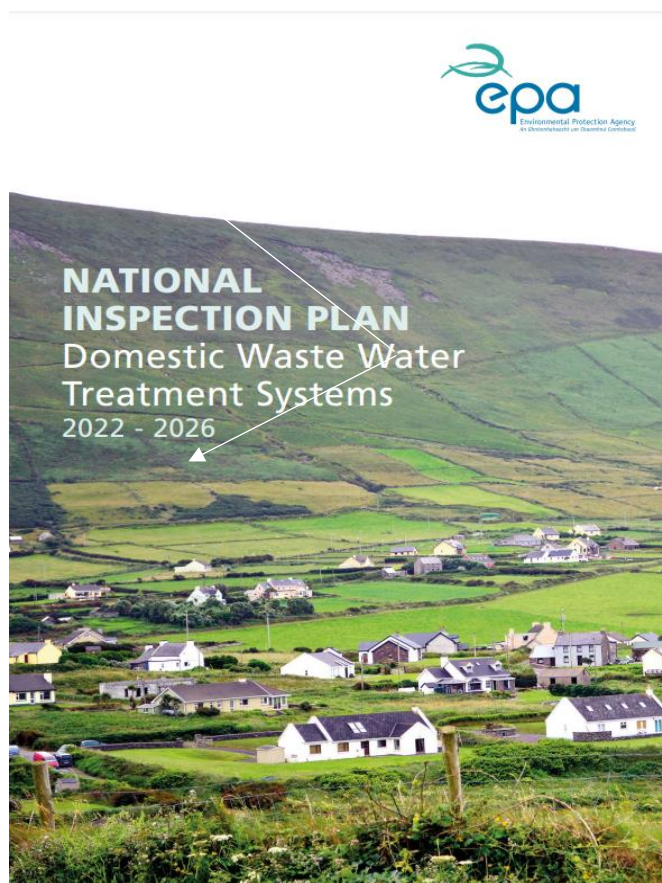
The vast majority of farmers were found to be in compliance following inspection, with only a very small number cross reported to the Department of Agriculture Food and the Marine for non-compliance with the Good Agricultural Practice for the Protection of Water Regulations 2022.

The total number of farm inspections to be carried out by the Local Authority in the year 2024 will more than double with additional staff resources employed by Kilkenny County Council in order to achieve this objective.

Water Quality - National Inspection Plan - Septic Tanks

51 septic tank inspections were carried out in 2023 under the National Inspection Plan 2022-2026. 29 of these inspections passed and advisory notices were issued to all 22 property owners who failed the inspections.

Environment Section will be following up in 2024 to ensure all instructions contained within advisory notices are carried out. 2 septic grant applications were granted in 2023 with a total value of €10,000.



VETERINARY SERVICES

What we do – Food Safety Authority of Ireland Service Contract

- The Veterinary Service fulfils the food safety service contract between the FSAI and Kilkenny County Council, which includes responsibility for the Local Authority Veterinary Service in the Carlow area.
- As a result of a Government decision at national level, it is proposed that the service will be redeployed to DAFM in the near future.

Year 2023

- Slaughterhouses under the service's supervision in 2023 slaughtered.
- 5,351 Cattle, 13,036 Sheep and 110,112 Poultry. It should be noted that each animal slaughtered in approved premises for human consumption must undergo an Ante Mortem and Post Mortem inspection.
- 20 Food Businesses were under the supervision of the service in 2023.
- 211 Hygiene Inspections (*other than AM/PM Inspections*) were done in food premises under the service's supervision.
- 185 Official Control Samples were taken by the Veterinary Service consisting of the following:
 - 27 for Animal Remedies
 - 11 for chemicals in food
 - 17 water samples
 - 100 Carcass Swabs for microbes
 - 30 food samples for microbes
- All of these were sent to designated Official Control Laboratories in accordance with Ireland's National Official Control Sampling Plan

The challenge of Veterinary Certification for trade with GB for food of animal origin was postponed to 31st January, 2024. The Veterinary Service continued to attend BREXIT /TRACES training in 2023 on this subject.

Dogs and Horses

Together with the Dog Warden Service (DWS) which is shared with Carlow County Council, the Veterinary Service is involved in the implementation of the Control of Dogs Act 1986 as amended and the Dog Breeding Establishments Act 2010 as amended (*for both counties*).

- 35 Dog Breeding Establishments were regulated by the service in 2023 and there were 32 Dog Breeding Establishments inspections were completed in 2023.
- The number of dogs licensed was 4,795.
- The number of dogs surrendered (*including those picked up by the DWS as strays*), was 232 (*surrenders + strays*)
- The number of dogs reclaimed was 52
- The number of dogs rehomed was 176 and the number of dogs put to sleep was 5.
- 21 horses were impounded under the Control of Horses Act in 2023.

The Carlow/Kilkenny Dog Shelter experienced another very busy year with an increase of approx. 10% in dogs surrendered compared to 2022. The Shelter reached capacity on a number of occasions in 2023 due to the volume of dogs requiring attention. Staff on site worked tirelessly to rehome dogs and have built up excellent working relations with a number of dog charities nationwide.

There has been a huge increase in phone calls and reports from members of the public in relation to issues regarding restricted breeds and stray dogs.

LAWPRO

Kilkenny and Tipperary County Council's continue to lead the national shared service "The Local Authority Waters Programme" (LAWPRO) which operates as a national Water Framework Directive (WFD) office fostering cooperation between Local Authorities and relevant public bodies both locally and nationally to produce positive water quality outcomes. In order to meet the requirements of the WFD and to support delivery of a new River Basin Management Plan due to be approved and published by Government in 2024, the LAWPRO staff compliment is expanding from 61 to 75 with staff working out of 13 Local Authority centres in a five-region structure: Border, West, East and Midlands, Southeast and Southwest. Currently six staff are based in Kilkenny County Council. LAWPRO is fully funded by the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage.

Throughout 2023, LAWPRO carried out assessments and engaged with stakeholders in the seven current Priority Areas for Action (PAAs) wholly or partly in County Kilkenny namely, the River Dinin, River Duiske/Powerstown Stream, River Nuenna, Pocke (Brownstown) River, River Breaghagh, River Erkina and the River Lingaun. This work will continue when the number of PAAs in Kilkenny increases with the publication of the next River Basin Management Plan in early 2024 to include the Baunballinlough Stream, the Blackwater (Kilmacow), Caherleske Stream, Castlecomer Stream, Desert Stream, Ennisnag Stream, the River Glory, the River Goul, the Gowran River, Kings River, Lisdowney Stream, the Monefelim River and the Stoneyford Stream. Where agriculture is a significant pressure in the PAAs, LAWPRO works closely with Teagasc and Dairy Advisors of the Agricultural Sustainability Support and Advice Programme (ASSAP) to assist farmers in understanding pressures on their local catchment and implementing local measures where required.

The Community Water Officer for Kilkenny continued to work with community groups in 2023 to develop their awareness of their local waters and supporting various local projects. Water Heritage Day is a key public awareness and engagement day in the LAWPRO calendar. It occurs each August on the 2nd Sunday of Heritage Week and the 2023 theme 'Living Heritage' fitted in nicely with LAWPROs vision.



Water Heritage Day, Inistioge with Nore River Catchment Trust, Inland Fisheries Ireland and the Heritage Council, 16th August 2023

Key Kilkenny events this year included:

- **World Water Day:** Anglers and the River with Nore River Catchment Trust and IFI, Castlecomer, March 22nd
- **Keep Kilkenny Beautiful** Bio-blitz at Kilkenny Castle, Biodiversity Week.
- **Nature Paddle** with Nore River Catchment Trust and Kilkenny Aqua Canoe Club, Biodiversity Week
- **Water Heritage Day:** Eels of the River Nore with NRCT and IFI, Inistioge, August 16th
- **Water Heritage Day:** Barrow Safari with Eanna Ni Lamhna, The Hub, Graiguenamanagh, August
- **Buffer Wetland Workshop,** Mark O'Brien's Farm, Breagh Catchment, with Nore River Catchment Trust, Teagasc and Feidhlim Hearty, May 2023
- **Buffer Wetland Construction,** Mark O'Brien's Farm, Breagh Catchment with Nore River Catchment Trust, Teagasc and Feidhlim Hearty, July 2023



Nature Paddle for Biodiversity Week, Nore River Catchment Trust and Kilkenny Aqua Canoe Club, May 2023

Other Achievements in 2023

- Capacity funding was provided for the Nore River Catchment Trust.

The Community Water Development Fund granted:

- €8,242 to Nore River Catchment Trust for the design of a wetland at the Old Water Barracks field, Kilkenny City.
- €4,000 to the Acorn Project for the development of a tree strategy for the Nore Catchment.
- €1,250 to Barrow Valley Community Development for survey and installation of nest boxes.

Supports to Local Authorities in 2023

- LAWPRO has proposed water quality improvement actions for inclusion in the Local Authority Climate Action Plans which also align with the Water Framework Directive and the draft River Basin Management Plan. A guidance document has been prepared and shared with Local Authority Climate Action Teams.
- Training in catchment science and management (CSM) has been provided to Local Authority and implementing body staff.
- LAWPRO co-ordinate the sharing of information between the Department of Agriculture and Local Authorities and manage the data sharing agreements to provide LPIS (*land parcel identification system*) and nitrates information to Local Authorities.
- LAWPRO are a member of the National Agricultural Inspection Programme Working Group which is to provide guidance and focus to Local Authority agricultural inspection programmes.
- LAWPRO in partnership with the DHLGH and Engineers Ireland provide information, training and deliver webinars on mainstreaming nature-based solutions (NBS) in public and private infrastructure projects.

New Developments

- The expansion of the LAWPRO team to support delivery of the new River Basin Management Plan has added a Senior Community Water Officer and an additional two Community Water Officers to the Southeast Region.
- In 2024, LAWPRO will commence the implementation of the Water European Innovation Partnership (EIP) Project in partnership with Teagasc/ ASSAP and Dairy Sustainability Ireland which will operate until 2027. The Water EIP is an agri-environmental project providing grant funding for farmers to implement targeted actions to reduce losses of nutrients, sediment and pesticides from agricultural lands. The total project budget is €60m consisting of €50 million for farm measures, as well as other catchment-based initiatives where water quality issues are identified and require actions on agricultural lands. The scheme will focus on supplementary measures for water quality but will also include co benefits such as aquatic and terrestrial biodiversity, climate action and natural flood management measures.

Awards/Recognitions if any

Nore River Catchment Trust – Kilkenny Chamber Award’s Finalist and National Lotto Good Causes Award – County Winner



World Water Day, Castlecomer, 22nd March 2023



Awareness building on the Kings River with Malcolm Noonan and Nore River Catchment Trust



National Ploughing Championships 2023

PARKS & AMENITY

The Project Office & Parks Department oversees the development and maintenance of a wide variety of outdoor recreational amenities in Kilkenny City and County including playgrounds, parks, walking trails, multi-use game areas and sports pitches, which are available for use to people of all ages. The Project Office & Parks Department also manage grass cutting, pollinator and biodiversity projects, tree surgery and the day-to-day upkeep of parks and playgrounds in our care. It also has responsibility for the on-going restoration, visitor management and maintenance of Woodstock Gardens and Arboretum in Inistioge and is working with Coillte to upgrade trails in the wider estate area and across the County.

Parks & Playgrounds

The Project Office & Parks Department continued to provide technical assistance throughout the year to local communities to aid in the development of new parks and playgrounds. In June, a new playground in Freshford was officially opened bringing the total number of playgrounds maintained by the Project Office & Parks Department to 33. Construction works were also completed on Phase 2 of the new Slieverue Linear Park which was officially opened in June.

All playgrounds are inspected weekly by staff and any repairs or cleaning deemed necessary are undertaken immediately in the interest of maintaining the playgrounds to a high standard of presentation and in good order for safe play. Over the course of the year significant upgrades, including play equipment replacement, the installation of new play components, safety surface repairs and painting of timberwork, were undertaken across more than half of our playgrounds, including Kilmacow, Bennettsbridge, Mooncoin, Ballyhale, Fairgreen Callan, Castlecomer Discovery Park, Coan, Garringreen, Graiguenamanagh, Paulstown, Woodstock Gardens, Castlecomer - Kilkenny Road, Rosehill, Windgap, Urlingford, Tullaron, Kells, Newpark Close and Stoneyford.



Freshford Playground

These works were funded through the Council's own funds, the Community Recognition Fund, the Outdoor Recreation Infrastructure Scheme and the Disability Participation and Awareness Fund.

Woodstock Gardens and Arboretum

The Project Office & Parks Department continued to look after the day-to-day maintenance, promotion and enhancement of Woodstock Gardens in Inistioge. Some of the year's highlights are outlined below.

Interventions to build on our efforts to make the gardens more inclusive for all, including the installation of a fully accessible play-tower and wheelchair see-saw within the playground area. These new play elements will afford wheelchair users the opportunity for play immersion with peer and family groups. A new fully electric wheelchair accessible buggy was also purchased which will provide a scheduled service between the Carpark and Tea Room for the less able-bodied.



Over the spring and summer significant replanting works were carried out within the Winter Sunken Garden to strengthen the overall formal structure of same. In the Walled Garden, the central herbaceous borders were also replanted with species in keeping with the Victorian era.

Phase One of a new tree planting programme was carried out during the year to replace mature trees that have succumbed to storm damage, disease or end of life, along the Noble Fir and Monkey Puzzle Avenues. More works are planned for 2024.

The inaugural meeting of the newly established Woodstock Committee was held in May. The Terms of Reference for the group focus on inputs and recommendations on the offering and promotion of Woodstock Gardens so as to maximise the natural, built and cultural heritage of same as a tourist destination.

Over the October bank holiday weekend Woodstock hosted an event to celebrate all things Halloween. The event, themed the 'Ghoulish Gardens', provided enchantment and eerie excitement for all the family. Entry was ticket only and tickets were sold out well in advance of the event.

GHOULISH GARDENS PHOTOS



We continued our food and beverage offering during the peak tourist season, which included the Tea Room Conservatory, coffee truck and ice cream parlour, along with the provision of our tented seating area for outdoor dining.

Woodstock once again hosted Santa's Woodland Reindeer Trail within the Gardens as part of the Yulefest Christmas Festival. The trail had both a fun and educational element to it, providing information to visitors on the incredible trees in Woodstock.

The promotion and marketing of the Woodstock Estate continued to be very active in 2023 across key social media platforms, with regular posts including video content encouraging users to the Woodstock website to learn more about and visit the gardens. Interaction and feedback from the public has been extremely positive in terms of the visitors experience.

Amenity Grants

In 2023, 180 applicants under the Amenity Grant Scheme were awarded funding totalling €140k. This funding enabled groups across the County to maintain their own outdoor recreational spaces. The range of works typically involve tree planting, grass cutting, flower/shrub planting and many other amenity type projects.

South East Greenway

The construction of the South East Greenway, over a length of 24km has been divided into a number of Lots allowing the works to progress on a phased basis. Lot 1 (from Mount Elliot to Rosbercon), Lot 2 (urban section through Ferrybank) and Lot 3 (from New Ross Boatyard to Glenmore) are now completed. In July, Phase 1, a 6km section from New Ross to Glenmore was officially opened to the public and over that period to the end of the year c.27,000 people enjoyed same. The works contract for Lot 5a, a 5.5km section from Ferrybank to Curraghmore was awarded in Q4 with works commencing in mid-November.



Failte Ireland engaged The Paul Hogarth Company to conduct an Interpretation, Wayfinding and Orientation Plan for the Greenway. A series of public consultation events were held during the latter half of the year to inform this process. The completed Plan will be used in future funding applications to animate the Greenway.

Related Greenway Schemes

Greenway Link to Glenmore: Planning approval under Part 8 was obtained for the scheme in November.

Greenway Link to Slieverue: The Feasibility and Route Selection Report is now completed.

Woodstock (Inistioge) to South East Greenway Link: A competition utilising TII's Technical Services Framework Agreement was held for a multi-disciplinary engineering team. A tender assessment and recommendation report was subsequently issued to Transport Infrastructure Ireland, TII, who approved same. The scope of the service requirements include Phases 0-4 of the (TII) Project Managers Manual for Greenway Projects and TII's Project Management Guidelines, which will bring the scheme to the completion of the planning stage.

Outdoor Recreational Infrastructure Scheme (ORIS)

Under ORIS Measure 1, a total of 7 projects were completed in 2023. The projects included:

- Dock Road to Barrow Valley Outdoor Activity Hub - Pedestrian/Cyclist Connectivity Link Upgrade - Graiguenamanagh.
- Windgap Village Loop - Repair & Enhancement of Walking Trail.
- Mooncoin Rose Walk.
- Castlemorris Woodland Trail Repair & Enhancement Scheme.
- Outdoor Kilkenny Digital/Social Media, Marketing and PR Campaign 2023.
- The Wood Road to the River Barrow Amenity Area - Pedestrian Connectivity Link-Graiguenamanagh.
- Woodstock Estate Marketing and Communications Plan – (running until April 2024).



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



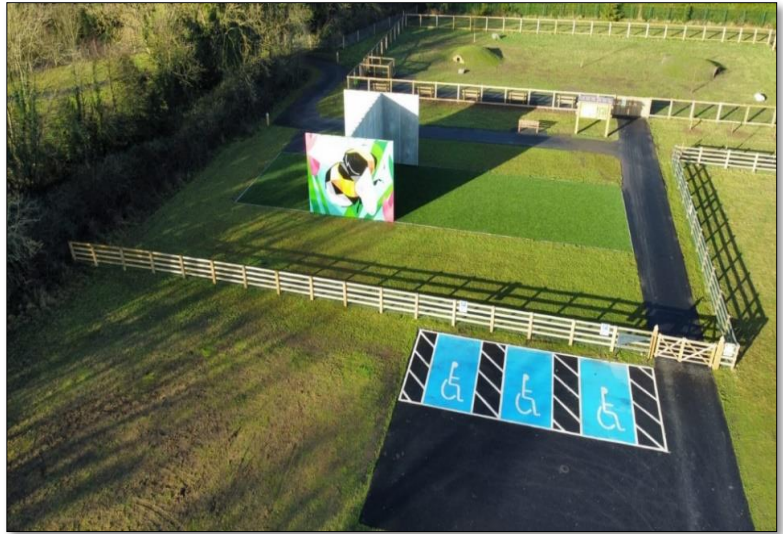
Before & After Images– Castle Morris Woods



*Before & After Images– Dock Road to Barrow Valley Outdoor Activity Hub
Pedestrian/Cyclist Connectivity Line - Graiguenamanagh*

Kilkenny Countryside Park

In December, the new Kilkenny Countryside Park at Dunmore was officially opened to the public. This project sees the development of a new Countryside Park on the site of the now closed municipal landfill at Dunmore which occupies an area of circa. 24 acres and is located just 5km north of Kilkenny City Centre. The new park offers visitors three themed trails, the Mass Path Trail, which starts at Dunmore village, an Accessibility Trail and Biodiversity Trail. The new park also provides a myriad of other attractions including two ball walls, a bespoke viewing area, play and exercise equipment and novel relaxing spaces that include hammocks, and loungers along with Kilkenny's first dedicated dog-friendly enclosure.



Lacken Boardwalk Replacement Scheme

Technical Consultants have been appointed to prepare a detailed design for a new 3m to 3.5m wide boardwalk to be constructed using 100% recycled plastic. Site investigation and advance vegetation removal works are now complete and the replacement works tender is expected to be advertised in Q1. 2024.

Sports Capital & Equipment

The following three projects, that secured funding under the Sports Capital & Equipment Programme were advanced over 2023:

Newpark Multi-use Games Area (MUGA) – Works completed include the replacement of the all-weather playing surface, kicker boards, goal surrounds and basketball hoops, along with the painting of the perimeter fencing.

Kilkenny Countryside Park - Installation of new ball-wall - works completed

Ferrybank Park Multi-use Games Area (MUGA) – Detail design, contract documents and tendering process complete. Works to commence in January.



Freshford Playground

On Tuesday the 6th of June, in front of a big crowd bathed in sunshine, the Cathaoirleach of Kilkenny County Council, Cllr. Pat Fitzpatrick officially opened the much anticipated new playground in Freshford Village. This new playground extends to just under one acre and includes a zip-wire, swings, slides, play tower, basket swing and woodland play equipment along with a new access road and carparking area to service the amenity.

Slieverue Linear Park

On Wednesday the 14th June, the Cathaoirleach of Kilkenny County Council, Cllr. Pat Fitzpatrick officially opened Slieverue Linear Park, much to the delight of the big crowd in attendance including many excited local school children. The new Park has been designed to promote an open space where both people and biodiversity can flourish. It includes a central pathway that forms part of a wider walking route within the village, natural woodland play and exercise equipment, seating areas, an outdoor class room with blackboard and a basketball area.

Surrounding these features the Park evolves into a more natural setting with a strong focus of native biodiversity planting and wildflower meadows.



South East Greenway – Phase One

On Tuesday the 25th July a big crowd turned out, in beautiful sunshine for the opening of Phase 1 (*New Ross to Glenmore*) of the South East Greenway.

This first phase of the project was officially opened by Minister Jack Chambers T.D. in the presence of Cllr. Michael Doyle, Cathaoirleach of Kilkenny County Council & Cllr John Fleming, Cathaoirleach of Wexford County Council.



Mooncoin Rose Walk

The Mooncoin Rose Walk was officially opened by the Cathaoirleach of Kilkenny County Council, Cllr. Michael Doyle on Friday, 1st December.

The local community turned out in force to mark the occasion. Mooncoin Tidy Town's held a competition within the local National School for the naming of the walk. The winning name, "Mooncoin Rose Walk", was put forward by 6th class student Muireann Keane.



Kilkenny Countryside Park

A big crowd turned out to mark the official opening of the new Kilkenny Countryside Park at Dunmore on Friday the 15th December. Kilkenny's newest amenity offering was opened by Minister Malcom Noonan of the Department for Nature, Heritage and Local Reform, in the presence of the Cathaoirleach of Kilkenny County Council, Cllr. Michael Doyle. This project sees the development of a new Countryside Park on the site of the closed municipal landfill at Dunmore which occupies an area of circa. 24 acres and is located just 5km north of Kilkenny City Centre.





LOCAL ENTERPRISE OFFICE KILKENNY FIVE YEAR FIGURES

A total of €2,962,284 was approved in direct financial assistance to businesses throughout the County. €891,070 was awarded for Covid Related Assistance.

This included 61 Business Expansion Grant applications valued at €1,441,914 and 21 Priming assistance applications at €910,413.

52 Technical Assistance for Micro Exporter grants were awarded valuing €89,664 to support businesses in exploring new export market opportunities.



57 Businesses have commenced LEAN one to one consultancy programmes to investigate possible resource efficiencies and process improvements their businesses.

3,759 Second Level Students participated in the Student Enterprise Programme.

€120,000 was awarded across 4 Grad Start initiatives which offered support to LEO client companies.



491 Businesses were approved a Trading Online Voucher totaling €1,099,704 to support the enhancement of their online trading capacity.

Since 2022, 9 Businesses availed of the Digital Start programme totalling €38,349 to prepare and implement a plan for the adoption of digital tools and techniques across the enterprise.



3 Businesses availed of Research, Development and Innovation Supports valued at €186,560.

€213,733 was awarded across 22 Businesses for Feasibility Study grant assistance.



12 Businesses transferred to the Enterprise Ireland Portfolio.



42 businesses were assisted to make loan applications to the Micro Finance Ireland loan fund.

Since 2021, 37 Green for Business supports have been awarded. This scheme supports businesses to become greener and more environmentally friendly.



4,788 people attended 167 Business skills programmes, including 722 people participating on the Starting Your Business programme.

3408 businesses received specialised 1:1 Business specific mentoring on a variety of topics including finance, marketing, social media marketing and HR.

Launch of Local Economic and Community Plan

Monday, 12th June saw the launch of a new Framework document, the Local Economic and Community Plan 2023 to 2028 for Kilkenny in a joint initiative by Kilkenny County Council and the LCDC.



Design Kilkenny 2023 – Global Ambition



Following on from the success of Design Kilkenny 2022, Kilkenny County Council held a second Irish Design Week event on Friday 17th November. The conference which took place at the Parade Tower at Kilkenny Castle examined the global impact and continuing influence of the Kilkenny Design Workshops on business, academia and entrepreneurship.

Green for Business Showcase Event



Local Enterprise Office Kilkenny in conjunction with Kilkenny County Council 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. Representatives from a range of state agencies and funding organisations were showcased at the event.

Night Time Economy

During October, Conor Sweeney took up the post of Night Time Economy Advisor. Kilkenny City has been selected as one of nine pilot areas of this two-year initiative funded by the Department of Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport and Media. Work is underway to develop an Action Plan.



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/>

TOURISM INCLUDING FESTIVAL SUPPORT

Kilkenny County Council Tourism Development Strategy

Kilkenny County Council's Tourism strategy was renewed during 2023. The Strategy aligns with the Fáilte Ireland Destination Experience Development Plan for Kilkenny. The Plan will be overseen and implemented through SPC 1 with regular updates and presentations on the Action Plan's progress.

The Plan focuses on measures to attract more visitors to Kilkenny, encourage visitors to stay longer and facilitate the visitor to easily navigate the County. The Plan also focuses on maintaining our partnership approach with a wide range of stakeholders for the development of the sector.



Kilkenny Tourism - Marketing

We strive to ensure that our "Kilkenny is Buzzing" campaigns align with national marketing and promotions. The campaign which ran during 2023 is designed to keep Kilkenny to the forefront of the domestic visitors' mind and for Kilkenny to be top of the visitors "must see" destinations for great year-round experiences and world class events.



The Shop Kilkenny campaign was a great success during Q3 of 2023 and attracted over 17,000 additional subscribers to the Visit Kilkenny newsletter. The Visit Kilkenny campaigns also closely aligns with and promotes local festivals and events, such as our St Patrick's Day celebrations and our Yulefest, Christmas in Kilkenny events.

Festivals and Events

Taste Kilkenny Restaurant Week Jan 27th - 5th February visitkilkenny.ie/restaurant-week	Abhainn Rí Festival 20th-23rd July facebook.com/AbhainnRiCallan	Rás na mBan 6-10th September rasnamban.com
St. Patrick's Day Festival March 15-19th stpatriksfestivalkilkenny.com	Alternative Kilkenny Arts Fringe Festival 4th - 13th August akafringe.com	Kilkenny Animated 29th Sept - 1st Oct kilkennyanimated.com
Kilkenny Tradfest March 16th-19th kilkennytradfest.com	Kilkenny Arts Festival Jan 27th - 5th February kilkennyarts.ie	Savour Kilkenny Friday 27th to 30th Oct savourkilkenny.com
Kilkennyomics Nov 2nd to 5th kilkennyomics.com	Yulefest Kilkenny Nov-Dec 2023 yulefestkilkenny.ie	
SPRING		
Kilkenny County Fleadh Cheoil 21st - 23rd April facebook.com/KilkennyFleadh	Graigueanamanagh Town of Books 18th- 20th August graigueanamanaghtownofbooks.ie	Hughes Farm Pumpkin Festival 13- 31st October hughesfarming.ie
Kilkenny Roots Festival 29th April - 1st May kilkennyroots.com	Keep Her Lit 18th - 20th August keepherlitfestival.ie	Castlecomer Wellie Race 1st Jan 2024 wellierace.com
Kilkenny Cats Laugh 1st - 5th June thecatlaughs.com	Iverk 26th August www.iverkshow.ie	
EVENTS CALENDAR 2023 Comhairle Chontae Chill Chainnigh Kilkenny County Council For more information visit our website visitkilkenny.ie		

Kilkenny County Council continues to support a year-round calendar of events with a range of events across the year and in locations across the County. Our Festivals Kit is also available to event organisers who might want to consider outdoor events as part of their programme.

Taste Kilkenny Restaurant Week



Taste Kilkenny in collaboration with Kilkenny Tourism hosted #tastekilkenny Restaurant Week from the 27th January to 5th February, 2023. An initiative of Kilkenny County Council and supported by the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine, Taste Kilkenny Restaurant Week offered visitors and local foodies alike a meaningful opportunity to experience some of the County's most sought-after restaurants and a flavour of local produce on local menus. For 10 days, over 20 participating establishments showcased some of their best loved and most popular dishes at discounted prices.



Familiarisation Trips

In May, a variety of guests were welcomed to our City and County, all interested in learning more about our history and heritage whilst also seeing and experiencing all the wonderful things to see and do throughout the County. Hosted by TradeBridge a delegation visited from Savannah Georgia to enhance economic links between both partners. Kilkenny Leader Partnership hosted groups from both Italy and France, interested in all outdoor activity throughout the City and County, whilst Failte Irelands entire team held their staff conference in Kilkenny in 2023.



Kilkenny Welcome Team Returned for 2023 Summer Season



Kilkenny County Council in partnership with Kilkenny Volunteer Centre again rolled out the 'Kilkenny Welcome Team' in 2023. The Welcome Team are a group of approx. 20 trained volunteers who meet and greet visitors to Kilkenny, providing a warm Kilkenny welcome, along with visitor information over the summer months. The Kilkenny Welcome Team were strategically placed at high footfall locations around Kilkenny City to provide a range of useful and practical information for visitors, from opening hours to local attractions, nearby toilet facilities, ATM locations, train and bus times, etc.

Bloom 2023



Bord Bia Bloom took place over five days on the June Bank Holiday weekend with over 100,000 attendees. Kilkenny Tourism supported by Kilkenny County Council attended Bloom 2023 to showcase Kilkenny as a great domestic tourism destination. A competition was ran to win a trip to Kilkenny and this attracted over 700 entries.

Kilkenny Tourism Summer Networking



Kilkenny Tourism, supported by the Council and the Local Enterprise Office held a networking event on the evening of 22nd June, where all tourism and hospitality businesses in Kilkenny were welcomed. The event gave both existing and prospective members of Kilkenny Tourism the chance to meet and discuss ways to work together to promote Kilkenny as a great tourism destination. Guests heard thoughts and insights from leading travel writer Pól Ó Conghaile who was guest speaker on the evening.

Outdoor Kilkenny

October 2023 saw the finalisation of a new Outdoor Kilkenny map and visitor brochure. The map will be printed for the 2024 season and distributed throughout the City and County. The map highlights all the wonderful outdoor adventure offerings available for visitors to enjoy across County Kilkenny.



BROADBAND

In September 2023, Rita McGarvey took up the role of Broadband Officer within the Local Enterprise Office (LEO). This post is part funded by the Department of Rural and Community Development (DRCD) and the key aspects of the role are to develop a Digital Strategy for County Kilkenny and to work with the broadband connection points (BCP'S) and remote working hubs across the County, to provide support and develop an Action Plan for the next 12 – 18 months. The Broadband Officer attends monthly meetings of the Broadband Officer Network and has commenced work on a Digital Audit and will progress the Digital Strategy thereafter.

During 2023, the Broadband Officer met with the broadband connection points (BCP's) and remote working hubs across the County.

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/>

2023 saw the launch of the WIFI4EU scheme across 6 locations in the County.



DIRECTORATE OF FINANCE, INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY, FACILITIES MANAGEMENT

**Head of Finance:
Mr. Martin Prendiville**



FINANCE

The Finance Department is responsible for the overall control and management of the Council's finances. The main services being provided under this directorate are Financial Planning and Control, Income Collection, Treasury Management, Property Management, and Motor Taxation

Statement of Comprehensive Income *(formerly Income & Expenditure Account)*

The total expenditure incurred on the provision of services by the Council in 2023 was €114.4m. The adopted budget for the year was €98.7m. 80% of the additional expenditure is accounted for in Housing, Roads and Development. The net surplus for the year was €19k, bringing the cumulative surplus to date to €128k.

A significant portion of the additional expenditure in Housing and Roads was funded from additional grant income. The full amount of grant allocation is not known at the time when budgets are being prepared. The largest budget shortfall in the year was in pension costs, with expenditure exceeding budget by €1.5m. This is a result of the number of staff who retired during the year. This additional cost was offset by a reduction in the rates strike-off of €919k, and additional compensation for Payroll cost increases of €532k. The other major issue arising was the underspend in payroll costs of approximately €1.6m. This was transferred to capital reserves to provide funding for the capital programme. This issue will not arise to the same extent in 2024 as many of the posts have been filled.

Financial Position *(formerly Balance Sheet)* **at 31st December 2023**

The Council has maintained a relatively strong balance sheet as at December 2023. The bank overdraft facility was not utilised during 2023. The closing cash balance at the end of December 2023 was €47.2m compared with a balance of €42.1m at the end of December 2022. Of the total cash balance on hand at December 2023, €17.3 is ring-fenced to provide funding for capital projects.

The total non-mortgage bank loans outstanding at the end of the year amounted to €13.4m, a decrease of €0.8m from the previous year. The total mortgage loan balance at December 2023 was €33.34m, a decrease of €6.5m from the previous year.

The collection rates on commercial rates is down at the end of December 2023 to 87% resulting in an increase in arrears to €3.2m. Almost 50% of this increase in arrears has been paid since 1st January. We remain confident that the arrears can be brought back in line in 2024.

The collection rates for housing rents and loans are in line with previous years.

The historical income collection performance since 2018 is set out in the following Table:

	Percentage Collection					
	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Commercial Rates	93	94	83	87	95	87
Rents & Annuities	93	95	96	97	96	96
Housing Loans	88	90	90	90	90	90

Capital Project Funding Arrangements

The total expenditure on capital projects delivered under the Capital Programme in 2023 was €93m. 84% of the expenditure was incurred in Housing and Roads. The outstanding balance on completed capital projects at December 2023 was €8.5m. The annual budget provides for repayment of this commitment over a period of up to 8 years.

The Council adopted a three-year capital budget for the period 2023 to 2025 in January 2023. A draft six-year capital programme for the period 2024 – 2029 has now been prepared for consideration by the Elected Members at the March Council Meeting. The estimated expenditure over this period is €832m (*excluding TII roads projects – 100% grant funded*).

The match funding to be provided by the Council is €70.2m. The total funding identified is €40.8m (*including €8.5m of new non-mortgage loans*). This leaves a funding shortfall of almost €30m. Opportunities for additional grant funding will have to be explored.

Conclusion

It is critical that the Council continues to manage its finances in a prudent manner. The sector continues to face new challenges each year. While inflationary pressures have eased somewhat from the highs of the last two years, many costs remain high which presents a challenge in trying to deliver the various services provided by the Council. The draft capital programme is very ambitious and will be reviewed annually to ensure that the Council has the capacity to provide the match funding.

FINANCE TABLE

Expenditure by Division				
	Gross Expenditure	Income	Net Expenditure	Net Expenditure
	2023	2023	2023	2022
	€	€	€	€
Housing & Building	27,798,761	28,714,689	(915,928)	(923,596)
Roads Transportation & Safety	30,539,449	23,905,326	6,634,123	6,595,275
Water Services	8,022,395	8,146,171	(123,775)	375,233
Development Management	12,660,130	6,228,216	6,431,914	5,460,176
Environmental Services	14,031,838	5,019,331	9,012,507	8,335,314
Recreation & Amenity	7,926,046	633,062	7,292,985	6,663,466
Agriculture, Food and the Marine	637,872	446,688	191,185	178,682
Miscellaneous Services	5,176,922	7,556,534	(2,379,612)	(992,455)
Total Expenditure/Income	106,793,415	80,650,016		
Net cost of Divisions to be funded from Rates & Local Property Tax			26,143,399	25,692,095
Rates			21,350,380	20,876,017
Local Property Tax			11,744,898	11,809,350
Surplus/(Deficit) for Year before Transfers			6,951,879	6,993,272
Transfers from/(to) Reserves			(6,932,727)	(6,975,042)
Overall Surplus/(Deficit) for Year			19,152	18,230
General Reserve @ 1st January 2023			108,770	90,540
General Reserve @ 31st December 2023			127,922	108,770

STATEMENT OF INTERNAL FINANCIAL CONTROL

Introduction

I, Lar Power, Chief Executive (CE) of Kilkenny County Council am responsible for the annual financial statement (AFS), prepared by the Head of Finance, in accordance with the accounting code of practice issued by the Minister under section 107 of the Local Government Act, 2001.

I certify that the financial statements of Kilkenny County Council for the year ended 31 December 2023, are in agreement with the books of account and have been prepared in accordance with the accounting requirements of the Minister of Housing Local Government and Heritage.

The AFS is subject to external audit, by an auditor of the Local Government Audit Service, whose purpose is to form an independent opinion of the accounts and state whether the annual financial statement presents *fairly the financial position* of the local authority and of its income and expenditure for the period in question, and whether the transactions of the audited body conform with the statutory or other authorisation under which they purport to have been carried out.

The AFS reports on the day-to-day activity of Kilkenny County Council in the form of the Statement of Comprehensive Income & Expenditure, summarised by Division. The Statement of Financial Position outlines the Kilkenny County Council overall financial position as of the 31st of December 2023.

The *Statement of Comprehensive Income* represents expenditure and income on the day-to-day running of the Kilkenny County Council.

The key sources of income for Kilkenny County Council are as follows:

	Current Year €	Previous Year €
Goods & Services	30,118,971	27,344,495
Grants & Subsidies	50,464,309	44,143,906
Other Contributions (<i>as appropriate</i>)	0	0
Rates	21,350,380	20,876,017
Local Property Tax	11,744,898	11,809,350

Activity on the Income and Expenditure account for 2023 is as follows: The total expenditure incurred on the provision of services by the Council in 2023 was €114.4m. The adopted budget for the year was €98.7m. 80% of the additional expenditure is accounted for in Housing, Roads and development.

A significant portion of the additional expenditure in Housing and Roads was funded from additional grant income. The full amount of grant allocation is not known at the time when budgets are being prepared. The largest budget shortfall in the year was in pension costs, with expenditure exceeding budget by €1.6m. This is a result of the number of staff who retired during the year. This additional cost was offset by a reduction in the rates strike-off of €919k, and additional compensation for Payroll cost increases of €532k.

	Current Year €	Previous Year €
Income	113,745,294	104,198,853
Expenditure	106,793,415	97,285,581
Transfers to Capital	(6,932,727)	(6,975,042)
Exceptional Item	0	0
Surplus for 2023	19,152	18,230
Prior Year Adjustment	0	0
Opening Revenue Reserve	108,770	90,540
Closing Revenue Reserve	127,922	108,770

The net surplus for the year was €19k, bringing the cumulative surplus to date to €128k. There was an underspend in payroll costs of approximately €1.6m. This was transferred to capital reserves to provide funding for the capital programme

The Statement of Financial Position (Balance Sheet) represents the total financial activity of the Council for the year together with comparative year figures as appropriate.

The statement includes assets and liabilities as follows:

- Assets both recently constructed/ purchased and historical assets
- Work in progress and preliminary schemes- mainly roads and housing
- Long Term Debtors – housing loans
- Current Assets- including Stock, Debtors, Cash at bank
- Current and long term liabilities- mortgage and non-mortgage loan borrowings
- Various Reserves/Balances

The Net Assets Kilkenny County Council at the end of 2023 total € 2,905,655,441 m and are as follows:

	Current Year €	Previous Year €
Fixed Assets	2,841,613,377	2,814,617,14
Works in Progress	34,334,613	17,713,987
Long Term debtors	66,063,159	67,347,449
Current Assets	57,120,038	48,180,239
Current Liabilities	23,004,244	21,221,732
Net Current Assets/ (Liabilities)	34,115,794	26,958,507
Creditors (Amounts greater than 1 year)	70,471,503	72,347,785
Net Assets/(Liabilities)	2,905,655,441	2,854,289,306

A Statement of Funds Flow was introduced as part of AFS 2011. While the guidance of International Accounting Standard 7 Statement of Cash Flows has been followed, the business of local authorities is substantially different to most private sector organisations and therefore some minor changes to the format have been agreed to ensure the data displayed is meaningful and useful within the local government sector.

System of Internal Financial Controls

As CE of Kilkenny County Council, I acknowledge my responsibility for ensuring that an effective system of internal financial control is maintained and operated by the Kilkenny County Council. This responsibility is exercised in the context of the resources available to Kilkenny County Council. Also, any system of internal financial control can provide only reasonable and not absolute assurance that assets are safeguarded, transactions authorised and properly recorded, and that material errors or irregularities are either prevented or would be detected in a timely manner. Maintaining the system of internal financial controls is a continuous process and the system and its effectiveness are kept under ongoing review.

Financial Control Environment

As CE of Kilkenny County Council, I confirm that a financial control environment containing the following elements is in place:

- Financial responsibilities have been assigned at management level with corresponding accountability.
- Reporting arrangements have been established at all levels where responsibility for financial management has been assigned.
- Formal procedures have been established for reporting significant control failures and ensuring appropriate corrective action.

- There is an Audit Committee which as part of its work programme regularly review the internal financial control system.
- Procedures for all key business processes have been documented.
- There are systems in place to safeguard the assets.

Administrative Controls and Management Reporting

As CE of Kilkenny County Council, I confirm that a framework of administrative procedures and regular management reporting is in place including segregation of duties and a system of delegation and accountability and, in particular, that:

- procedures for key business processes have been documented
- there are systems aimed at ensuring the security of the ICT systems
- there are systems in place to safeguard the assets of the local authority and
- there are appropriate capital investment control guidelines and formal project management disciplines in operation.

Procurement Compliance

Kilkenny County Council ensures that there is an appropriate and ongoing focus on good practice in tendering and purchasing and that procedures are in place to ensure compliance with all relevant procurement guidelines.

Internal Audit and Audit Committee

As Chief Executive, I can confirm that Kilkenny County Council has an internal audit function with appropriately trained personnel, which operates in accordance with a written charter. Its work is informed by analysis of the financial risks to which Kilkenny County Council is exposed and its annual internal audit plans are based on this analysis. I am satisfied that there are procedures in place to ensure that the reports of the internal audit function are followed up.

I can confirm that Kilkenny County Council has an effective audit committee which carries out an annual effectiveness review of their activities. I can also confirm that an Audit Committee is in place in accordance with the requirements of Section 122 of the Local Government Act 2001 (as amended).

The statutory functions of audit committees as set out in section 59 and 60 of the Local Government Reform Act 2014 are as follows:

- to review financial and budgetary reporting practices and procedures within the local authority that has established it;
- to foster the development of best practice in the performance by the local authority of its internal audit function;
- to review any audited financial statement, auditor's report or auditor's special report in relation to the local authority and assess any actions taken within that authority by its chief executive in response to such a statement or report and to report to that authority on its findings;
- to assess and promote efficiency and value for money with respect to the local authority's performance of its functions; and
- to review systems that are operated by the local authority for the management of risks.

I recognise that the audit committee plays a crucial role in the governance framework of local authorities, particularly in the context of increased public sector accountability. They have an independent role in advising the Council on financial reporting processes, internal control, risk management and audit matters as part of the systematic review of the control environment and governance procedures of the local authority.

I acknowledge the Audit Committee's role in the risk management process and in the continuing review of the control environment and governance procedures in Kilkenny County Council.

Risk and Control Framework

Kilkenny County Council has implemented a risk management system which identifies and reports key risks and the management actions being taken to address and, to the extent possible, mitigate those risks.

A corporate risk register is in place which identifies the key risks and evaluates and grades them according to their significance. The register is reviewed and updated by the Management Team on a regular basis. There is also a risk register in place for each service division and these are also reviewed and updated on a regular basis.

The outcome of these assessments is used to plan and allocate resources to ensure risks are managed to an acceptable level. The risk register details the controls and actions needed to mitigate risks and responsibilities for the operation of controls are assigned to specific staff.

As Chief Executive, I confirm that key risks and related controls have been identified and processes have been put in place to monitor the operation of those key controls and report any identified deficiencies.

The Statement of Internal Financial Control will be included in the draft Annual Report submitted to Council members by 30 April 2023 and thereafter included in the published Annual Report prepared and adopted by the Council by 30 June 2023.

Signed by:

Dated: 19th March, 2024.



Chief Executive

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

Kilkenny County Council is committed to the use of information systems to expand and increase the efficiency and quality of service delivery to staff and to the public. The Information Services Department looks after the Information Systems requirements of the County Council and County Library. The Key achievements for 2023 were:

- Additional Security Systems rolled out
- Audio Visual System installed in Patricks Court
- Carried out Accessibility improvements on the County Council Web Site
- Commenced upgrade of the Travel and Subsistence system
- Commenced work on Upgrade to the new iPlan System
- Completed the configuration of the Choice Based Letting system
- Completed the rollout of WIFI4EU project
- Completed the provision of ICT services to Patricks Court Offices
- Completed Software Upgrade to Telephone System
- Completed upgrades to library reservation machines
- Completed updates to our customer relationship management (CRM) system
- Completed Updates of iHouse, iDocs, and iReg systems
- Continuation of the email migration project
- Continued the expansion in the use of mobile devices to staff
- Continued the migration to cloud services
- Continued support for the Central Credit Register process
- Expanded the use of Two Factor Authentication
- Expanded the use of MS Teams Deployment to staff
- Fibre Upgrades to Ferrybank and Thomastown Area Offices
- GIS support provided to the PLEEP, RZLT, Assets Register, Habitat Mapping and Active Travel Scheme projects
- Implemented additional workflows and document management system
- Implementation on the new Online Payment Systems
- Implemented the new Planning Application Capture System (PACE).
- Implemented various online surveys and application forms
- Improved email security systems
- Installation of new Backup solution
- Maintained GDPR compliance for our websites
- Managed and supported our consultation portal consult.kilkenny.ie
- Network Upgrades to the Dunmore/Troyswood/Purcellsinch sites
- Ongoing additions, updates, and security enhancements to the various local authority web sites.
- Ongoing rollout of new PCs and laptops
- Ongoing rollout of surveying technologies to staff
- Ongoing updates to servers and PCs to maintain security of the network
- Rollout of new Managed Print Service completed
- Updated the public Geographical Information System (GIS) viewers.
- Updated the internal GIS Portal for staff
- Upgrade of Remote Working facilities for staff

PROCUREMENT

Kilkenny County Council's Procurement Unit have continued to facilitate the progress of an ongoing flow of contract opportunities in line with the organisation's ambitious public works programme. Approximately €36 million of Kilkenny County Council's Revenue spend and €42 million of capital spend is procured on various works, services and goods from suppliers mainly based locally or nationally.

Key Achievements for 2023

- 47 Tenders loaded and advertised on the *eTenders* procurement portal
- 38 Mini tenders and Quotations advertised on the *SupplyGov* portal
- The Office of Government Procurement and the Local Government Operational Procurement Centre work closely with local authorities to provide national frameworks that local authorities can draw from. Kilkenny County Council drew on these frameworks in 2023 in the areas of public utilities, fleet, ICT, professional services, PPE and Debt Collection.
- Further measures to promote Green Procurement Policies (GPP) including the implementation of electronic tendering for all tenders at national level and the roll out of extensive training in GPP for key tendering sections across the organisation. Contract notices are now expected to highlight where the tender adheres to and promotes Green Procurement and Social Considerations.
- Participation by staff at internal and OGP training courses.

Some of the Key Tenders Delivered in 2023 include:

- Completion of the tendering process for various Architectural, Structural Conservation, Engineering works and design for special projects such as the former Piltown Garda Station, the Kilkenny Countryside Park, Thomastown Library, the Tholsel Building and the Abbey Quarter. A major design consultancy contract was awarded in respect of a new Fire Station in Kilkenny City.
- Various housing tenders throughout Kilkenny City and County.
- Successful completion of a number of tenders under the Active Travel Programme.
- Provision of Services for Grass Maintenance in Kilkenny City and County.
- Procurement by way of open tender of a number of machines that will facilitate road maintenance and improvement throughout the City and County.
- Commencement of a tendering process in respect of a Call-Off Contract for Technical Consultancy Service under Framework Agreement TII191 for Woodstock (*Inistioge*) to South East Greenway Link. This process was completed in early 2024.
- Award of contracts for Roads Projects following various tender competitions by open tender and by drawing on the South Eastern Pavement Framework which has Kilkenny as the Lead Authority.
- Completion of the tendering process that lead to the reappointment of the service provider relating to the Social Inclusion and Community Activation Programme (SICAP) 2024-2028.
- Maintenance of services to the user sections during the roll out of the new ETenders system despite significant functionality changes.

SPECIAL PROJECTS

Abbey Quarter - Masterplan

Work on the implementation of the Abbey Quarter Masterplan has continued in 2023.

The Abbey Quarter Masterplan was updated to take into consideration policy and legislation changes since the original Masterplan was approved in 2015 and to review the works that have been undertaken to date in the Abbey Quarter.

Abbey Quarter - Brewhouse Building *(by Kilkenny Abbey Quarter Development Partnership)*

The fit out of the final unit in the Brewhouse building for Security Risk Advisors (SRA) was completed by Kilkenny Abbey Quarter Development Partnership in early 2023. The building is now fully let and occupied, with SRA joining Tirlan (formerly Glanbia Ireland) and O'Neill Foley Accountants as tenants in the building.

Abbey Quarter - New Buildings

(by Kilkenny Abbey Quarter Development Partnership)

Planning permission for the next building on the Abbey Quarter was granted in May 2023, but this permission was subsequently appealed to An Bord Pleanála. An Bord Pleanála had yet to decide on this planning appeal by the end of 2023.

The proposed use of the building will be office use with commercial or retail uses on the ground floor.



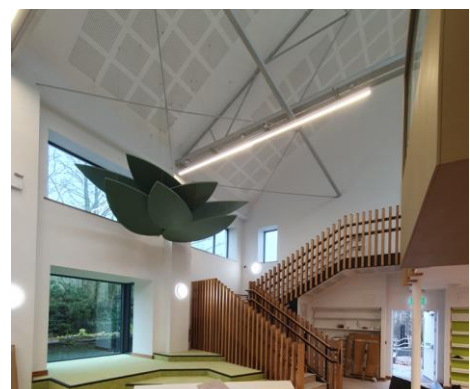
Abbey Quarter - Mayfair Library



The new Kilkenny City Library is to be located within the Mayfair Building on the Abbey Quarter site.

The Mayfair Building is a very significant building in the social heritage of Kilkenny having housed the Mayfair Ballroom from 1943 to 1973.

Duggan Lynch Ltd were appointed as main contractors for the Mayfair Library project in September 2021. The project programme has been adversely affected in 2022 & 2023 with supply chain issues for construction materials associated with COVID 19 and the war in Ukraine. The project was substantially completed by the end of 2023 and is expected to be handed over to Kilkenny County Council in Jan 2024, with an opening date in April 2024.



Abbey Quarter - Public Realm Areas

Kilkenny County Council are responsible for the development of the extensive areas of public realm areas in the Abbey Quarter Site with 60% of the former brewery site to be developed as public realm. The development of areas of High-Quality Public Realm through the site is considered to be critical to the integration of the former Brewery Site into the City Centre.

Funding for these works has been provided through the Urban Regeneration and Development Fund (URDF) the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) through the Designated Urban Centres Grant Scheme and Kilkenny County Council's own funds.



Tionscadal Éireann
Project Ireland
2040



Ireland's European Structural and
Investment Funds Programmes
2014-2020
Co-funded by the Irish Government
and the European Union



European Union
European Regional
Development Fund

Abbey Quarter - Horse Barrack Lane

The construction contract for the redevelopment of the Brewhouse Building included the redevelopment of Horse Barrack Lane and Brewhouse Square, with these projects completed in May 2022. The development of the Mayfair Library includes the completion of the landscaping works to Horse Barrack Lane, with the works substantially completed in 2023.



Abbey Quarter - Urban Street and Park Project

Work on the detailed design of the Urban Park & Street in the Abbey Quarter has been completed and funding approval to proceed to tender was received from the URDF in 2023. The project will go to tender in Q1 2024.

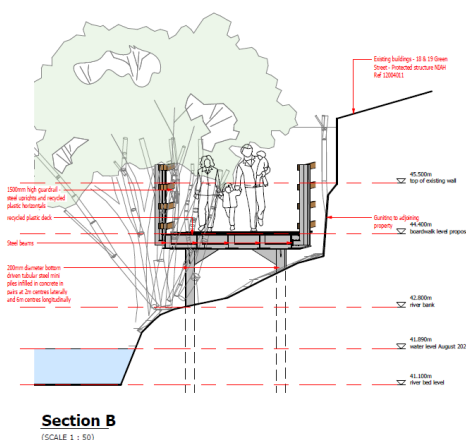
The Urban Park centred around the National Monument of St Francis Abbey will be the central focus of the Abbey Quarter Site and will be designed to accommodate outdoor events associated with the many festivals held in the City throughout the year. The development of the Urban Street which will be of pedestrian and cyclist priority will facilitate the development of the proposed new buildings within the Abbey Quarter Site.



Abbey Quarter - Greensbridge Boardwalk

With the completion of the Riverside Garden through the former Smithwicks Brewery site, the last missing link in the existing Riverside Walks through the City Centre is a short 150m length of walkway immediately north of Greensbridge.

An application for Planning Approval for the project was submitted to An Bord Pleanála in Q3 2023 and a planning decision is currently awaited.



Tholsel Project

Work on the detailed design of the Tholsel Project was completed in 2023 and tenders have been received for the main construction works. Confirmation of funding is awaited before a contractor will be appointed to the project in 2024.

The Tholsel is to be renovated and will incorporate a new Tourist Visitor Attraction whilst retaining the civic function of the building. Work on the Visitor Exhibition has also been advanced in 2023.



Sessions House, Thomastown

Work on the redevelopment of the Sessions House (former Courthouse) in Thomastown was completed in 2023. The building was renovated for reuse by the Design & Craft Council of Ireland, with funding from the Rural Regeneration Fund, LEADER and Kilkenny County Council's own funds. The development offers the opportunity to provide a sustainable new use for the building whilst also promoting the vibrancy of Thomastown as a creative and artistic hub in the region.

The building was formally opened by Minister Heather Humphries in May 2023.



Thomastown Library

Thomastown Library which currently does not meet with the requirements of a modern-day library is to be relocated a short distance from its current location on Marshes Street to the adjoining former Community Sports Hall.

The detailed design and tender documents for the project were completed in 2023. Tenders were received for the main construction works and funding for the project was confirmed in December 2023. The project will proceed to construction in early 2024. The project is part funded through the Rural Regeneration & Development Fund (RRDF).

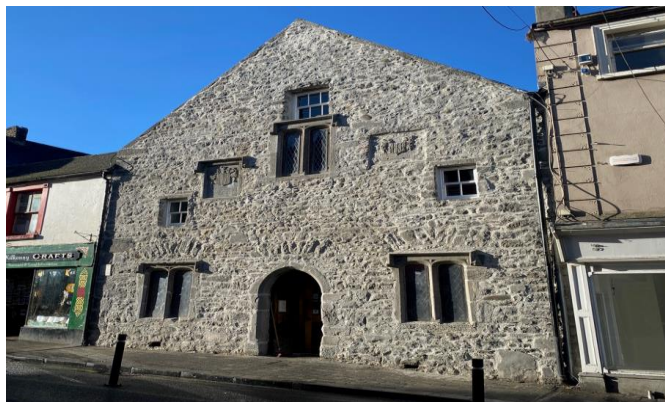


Shee Alms House

The Shee Alms House on Rose Inn Street, Kilkenny, which was previously used as a Tourist Office by Fáilte Ireland was renovated in 2023. The renovation works were undertaken to address a number of issues with this historic building including poor heating and ventilation. The stone work façade of the building was repointed using lime mortar and the roof was restored using the existing slate tiles and new insulation.

The Shee Alms house dates to 1582 and is one of the last surviving Alms Houses of Tudor date in Ireland. The building has been renovated to be flexible to the requirements of future users of the building.

The project was part funded through the Historic Structures Fund from the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage.



Piltown Garda Station

Work on the renovation of Piltown Garda Station for reuse as a remote working hub was advanced in 2023. The building will continue to be used as a Garda Station but the area formerly used for residential accommodation will be repurposed as a remote working hub. The project is part funded by the Department of Rural and Community Development through the 2021 Town and Village Renewal Scheme.

Richard McEvoy Contracting Ltd were appointed to undertake the conservation works in 2023 and the works are expected to be completed in 2024.

PERFORMANCE INDICATORS FOR KILKENNY - YEARS 2021 & 2022			
Topic	Indicator	01/01/2021 - 31/12/2021	01/01/2022 - 31/12/2022
Housing: H1, H2 & H4	A. Number of dwellings in the ownership of the local authority at 1/1/2022	2466	2559
	B. Number of dwellings added to the local authority owned stock during 2022 (whether constructed or acquired)	114	101
	C. Number of local authority owned dwellings sold in 2022	20	8
	D. Number of local authority owned dwellings demolished in 2022	1	1
	E. Number of dwellings in the ownership of the local authority at 31/12/2022	2559	2651
	F. Number of local authority owned dwellings planned for demolition under a D/HLGH approved scheme at 31/12/2022	1	0
	A. The percentage of the total number of local authority owned dwellings that were vacant on 31/12/2022	2.50 %	2.38 %
	The number of dwellings within their overall stock that were not tenanted on 31/12/2022	64	63
	A. Expenditure during 2022 on the maintenance of local authority housing compiled from 1 January 2022 to 31 December 2022, divided by the no. of dwellings in the local authority stock at 31/12/2022, i.e. the H1E less H1F indicator figure	€1417.91	€1416.83
	Expenditure on maintenance of local authority stock compiled from 1 January 2022 to 31 December 2022, including planned maintenance and expenditure that qualified for grants, such as Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland (SEAI) grants for energy efficient retro-fitting works but excluding expenditure on vacant properties and expenditure under approved major refurbishment schemes (i.e. approved Regeneration or under the Remedial Works Schemes).	€3627010	€3756003.75
Housing: H3 & H5	A. The time taken from the date of vacation of a dwelling to the date in 2022 when the dwelling is re-tenanted, averaged across all dwellings re-let during 2022	22.68 wk	26.03 wk
	B. The cost expended on getting the dwellings re-tenanted in 2022, averaged across all dwellings re-let in 2022	€16408.32	€18903.07
	The number of dwellings that were re-tenanted on any date in 2022 (but excluding all those that had been vacant due to an estate-wide refurbishment scheme)	75	59
	The number of weeks from the date of vacation to the date the dwelling is re-tenanted	1701 wk	1536 wk
	Total expenditure on works necessary to enable re-letting of the dwellings	€1230624.1	€1115281.02
	A. Total number of registered tenancies in the LA area at the end of June 2022		
	B. Number of rented dwellings inspected in 2022	162	365
	C. Percentage of inspected dwellings in 2022 not compliant with the Standards Regulations	98.77 %	98.11 %
	D. Number of dwellings deemed compliant in 2022 (including those originally deemed non-compliant)	219	93
	E. The number of inspections (including reinspections) undertaken by the local authority in 2022	437	448

Housing: H6	A. Number of adult individuals in emergency accommodation that are long-term (i.e. 6 months or more within the previous year) homeless as a percentage of the total number of homeless adult individuals in emergency accommodation at the end of 2022	48.39 %	50.0 %
	The number of adult individuals classified as homeless and in emergency accommodation on the night of 31 December 2022 as recorded on the PASS system	31	34
	The number out of those individuals who, on 31/12/2022, had been in emergency accommodation for 6 months continuously, or for 6 months cumulatively within the previous 12 months	15	17
Roads: R1 & R2	A. (a) The percentage of Regional road kilometres that received a PSCI rating in the 24 month period prior to 31/12/2022	94.00 %	98.00 %
	A. (b) The percentage of Local Primary road kilometres that received a PSCI rating in the 24 month period prior to 31/12/2022	32.00 %	99.00 %
	A. (c) The percentage of Local Secondary road kilometres that received a PSCI rating in the 24 month period prior to 31/12/2022	94.00 %	97.00 %
	A. (d) The percentage of Local Tertiary road kilometres that received a PSCI rating in the 60 month period prior to 31/12/2022	68.00 %	83.00 %
	B. (a.1) The percentage of total Regional road kilometres with a PSCI rating of 1-4 at 31/12/2022	3.75 %	2.80 %
	B. (a.2) The percentage of total Regional road kilometres with a PSCI rating of 5-6 at 31/12/2022	6.45 %	9.26 %
	B. (a.3) The percentage of total Regional road kilometres with a PSCI rating of 7-8 at 31/12/2022	74.81 %	63.90 %
	B. (a.4) The percentage of total Regional road kilometres with a PSCI rating of 9-10 at 31/12/2022	14.98 %	23.35 %
	B. (b.1) The percentage of total Local Primary road kilometres with a PSCI rating of 1-4 at 31/12/2022	4.14 %	6.05 %
	B. (b.2) The percentage of total Local Primary road kilometres with a PSCI rating of 5-6 at 31/12/2022	35.83 %	12.41 %
	B. (b.3) The percentage of total Local Primary road kilometres with a PSCI rating of 7-8 at 31/12/2022	29.73 %	59.28 %
	B. (b.4) The percentage of total Local Primary road kilometres with a PSCI rating of 9-10 at 31/12/2022	29.52 %	22.18 %
	B. (c.1) The percentage of total Local Secondary road kilometres with a PSCI rating of 1-4 at 31/12/2022	12.85 %	10.00 %
	B. (c.2) The percentage of total Local Secondary road kilometres with a PSCI rating of 5-6 at 31/12/2022	12.56 %	12.38 %
	B. (c.3) The percentage of total Local Secondary road kilometres with a PSCI rating of 7-8 at 31/12/2022	55.79 %	62.20 %
	B. (c.4) The percentage of total Local Secondary road kilometres with a PSCI rating of 9-10 at 31/12/2022	17.55 %	14.83 %
	B. (d.1) The percentage of total Local Tertiary road kilometres with a PSCI rating of 1-4 at 31/12/2022	20.75 %	23.28 %
	B. (d.2) The percentage of total Local Tertiary road kilometres with a PSCI rating of 5-6 at 31/12/2022	13.57 %	14.44 %
	B. (d.3) The percentage of total Local Tertiary road kilometres with a PSCI rating of 7-8 at 31/12/2022	29.09 %	41.81 %
	B. (d.4) The percentage of total Local Tertiary road kilometres with a PSCI rating of 9-10 at 31/12/2022	6.99 %	8.31 %
	A.1 Kilometres of regional road strengthened during 2022	10.7 km	7.5 km
	A.2 The amount expended on regional roads strengthening work during 2022	€2577535.00	€1486736.00
	A.3 The average unit cost of regional road strengthening works per square metre (€/m2)	€30.39	€27.35

	B.1 Kilometres of regional road resealed during 2022	15.5 km	18.7 km
	B.2 The amount expended on regional road resealing work during 2022	€603228.00	€696105.00
	B.3 The average unit cost of regional road resealing works per square metre (€/m2)	€6.01	€5.96
	C.1 Kilometres of local road strengthened during 2022	67.6 km	67.0 km
	C2. The amount expended on local road strengthening work during 2022	€6998124.00	€8618072.00
	C.3 The average unit cost of local road strengthening works per square metre (€/m2)	€24.74	€29.55
	D.1 Kilometres of local road resealed during 2022	73.4 km	70.8 km
	D.2 The amount expended on local road resealing work during 2022	€1788550.00	€1792164.00
	D.3 The average unit cost of local road resealing works per square metre (€/m2)	€5.60	€5.69
Motor Tax: R3	A. The percentage of motor tax transactions which were dealt with online (i.e. transaction is processed and the tax disc is issued) in 2022	86.35 %	82.71 %
Water: W1 & W2	Percentage of drinking water in private schemes in compliance with statutory requirements		
	The number of registered schemes monitored by each local authority as a percentage of total schemes registered	100 %	100 %
	The number of registered schemes monitored in 2022	26	23
	Total number of registered schemes in 2022	26	23
Waste: E1	A. The number of households which availed of a 3-bin service offered by a licensed operator at 31/12/2022	11391	11560
	B. The percentage of households within the local authority that the number at A represents (based on agglomerations of more than 500)	98.91 %	93.05 %
Environmental Pollution: E2	A. Total number of pollution cases in respect of which a complaint was made during 2022	1204	983
	A. Number of pollution cases closed from 1/1/2022 to 31/12/2022	1047	1315
	A. Total number of pollution cases on hands at 31/12/2022	456	124
	The opening number of pollution cases carried forward from the year end 2021	299	456
Litter Pollution: E3	A1. The percentage of the area within the local authority that when surveyed in 2022 was unpolluted or litter free	48 %	63 %
	A2. The percentage of the area within the local authority that when surveyed in 2022 was slightly polluted	39 %	25 %
	A3. The percentage of the area within the local authority that when surveyed in 2022 was moderately polluted	10 %	13 %
	A4. The percentage of the area within the local authority that when surveyed in 2022 was significantly polluted	3 %	0 %
	A5. The percentage of the area within the local authority that when surveyed in 2022 was grossly polluted	0 %	0 %
Green Flag Status: E4	A. The percentage of schools that have been awarded/renewed green flag status in the two years to 31 December 2022	32.61 %	28.26 %
	Schools which attained a Green Flag for the first time in 2022	0	0
	Schools which renewed their Green Flag in 2022	12	14
	Schools which held a Green Flag from 2021 and therefore do not require renewal until 2023	18	12
Energy Efficiency: E5	A. The cumulative percentage of energy savings achieved by 31/12/2022 relative to baseline year (2009)		-37.49 %
Public Lighting: E6	A. Total annual consumption of the public lighting system	3528.00 MWh	3656.55 MWh
	B. Average wattage of each public light	76.91 W	74.16 W
	C. Percentage of the total system that LED lights represent	55.00 %	57.63 %
	Number of LED lights in the public lighting system	6132	6661
	Number of non-LED lights in the public lighting system	5080	4897

Planning: P1	A. Buildings inspected as a percentage of new buildings notified to the local authority	22.69 %	18.30 %
	Total number of new buildings notified to the local authority i.e. buildings where a valid Commencement Notice was served in the period 1/1/2022 to 31/12/2022 by a builder or developer on the local authority	498	541
	Number of new buildings notified to the local authority in 2022 that were the subject of at least one on-site inspection during 2022 undertaken by the local authority	113	99
Planning: P2 & P3	A. Number of local authority planning decisions which were the subject of an appeal to An Bord Pleanála that were determined by the Board on any date in 2022	33	20
	B. Percentage of the determinations at A which confirmed (either with or without variation of the plan) the decision made by the local authority	51.52 %	60.0 %
	Number of determinations confirming the local authority's decision (either with or without variation)	17	12
	A. Total number of planning cases referred to or initiated by the local authority in the period 1/1/2022 to 31/12/2022 that were investigated	119	92
	B. Total number of investigated cases that were closed during 2022	105	84
	C. Percentage of the cases at B that were dismissed as trivial, minor or without foundation or were closed because statute barred or an exempted development	24.76 %	36.90 %
	D. Percentage of the cases at B that were resolved to the local authority's satisfaction through negotiations	1.90 %	14.29 %
	E. Percentage of the cases at B that were closed due to enforcement proceedings	73.33 %	48.81 %
	F. Total number of planning cases being investigated as at 31/12/2022	399	407
	Number of cases at B that were dismissed as trivial, minor or without foundation or were closed because statute barred or an exempted development	26	31
	Number of cases at B that were resolved to the local authority's satisfaction through negotiations	2	12
	Number of cases at B that were closed due to enforcement proceedings	77	41
Planning: P4 & P5	A. The 2022 Annual Financial Statement (AFS) Programme D data divided by the population of the local authority area per the 2022 Census	€31.22	€28.62
	AFS Programme D data consisting of D01 - Forward Planning, D02 - Development Management, D03 - Enforcement (inclusive of the relevant Programme D proportion of the central management charge) for 2022	€3097895	€2967151
	A. The percentage of applications for fire safety certificates received in 2022 that were decided (granted or refused) within two months of their receipt	77.78 %	85.71 %
	B. The percentage of applications for fire safety certificates received in 2022 that were decided (granted or refused) within an extended period agreed with the applicant	18.06 %	12.09 %
	The total number of applications for fire safety certificates received in 2022 that were not withdrawn by the applicant	72	91
	The number of applications for fire safety certificates received in 2022 that were decided (granted or refused) within two months of the date of receipt of the application	56	78
	The number of applications for fire safety certificates received in 2022 that were decided (granted or refused) within an agreed extended time period	13	11

Fire Service: F1	A. The Annual Financial Statement (AFS) Programme E expenditure data for 2022 divided by the population of the local authority area per the 2022 Census figures for the population served by the fire authority as per the Risk Based Approach Phase One reports	€56.91	€46.93
	AFS Programme E expenditure data consisting of E11 - Operation of Fire Service and E12 - Fire Prevention for 2022	€4775964	€4866390
Fire Service: F2 & F3	A. Average time taken, in minutes, to mobilise fire brigades in Full-Time Stations in respect of fire	0 min	0 min
	B. Average time taken, in minutes, to mobilise fire brigades in Part-Time Stations (retained fire service) in respect of fire	6.06 min	6.23 min
	C. Average time taken, in minutes, to mobilise fire brigades in Full-Time Stations in respect of all other (non-fire) emergency incidents	0 min	0 min
	D. Average time taken, in minutes, to mobilise fire brigades in Part-Time Stations (retained fire service) in respect of all other (non-fire) emergency incidents	6.13 min	5.95 min
	A. Percentage of cases in respect of fire in which first attendance at scene is within 10 minutes	31.56 %	26.42 %
	B. Percentage of cases in respect of fire in which first attendance at the scene is after 10 minutes but within 20 minutes	54.10 %	62.74 %
	C. Percentage of cases in respect of fire in which first attendance at the scene is after 20 minutes	14.34 %	10.85 %
	D. Percentage of cases in respect of all other emergency incidents in which first attendance at the scene is within 10 minutes	28.43 %	27.97 %
	E. Percentage of cases in respect of all other emergency incidents in which first attendance at the scene is after 10 minutes but within 20 minutes	55.85 %	58.52 %
	F. Percentage of cases in respect of all other emergency incidents in which first attendance at the scene is after 20 minutes	15.72 %	13.50 %
	Total number of call-outs in respect of fires from 1/1/2022 to 31/12/2022	244	212
	Number of these fire cases where first fire tender attendance at the scene is within 10 minutes	77	56
	Number of these fire cases in which first fire tender attendance at the scene is after 10 minutes but within 20 minutes	132	133
	Number of these fire cases in which first fire tender attendance at the scene is after 20 minutes	35	23
	Total number of call-outs in respect of all other emergency incidents (i.e. not including fire) from 1/1/2022 to 31/12/2022	299	311
	Number of these non-fire cases in which first fire tender attendance at the scene is within 10 minutes	85	87
	Number of these non-fire cases in which first fire tender attendance at the scene is after 10 minutes but within 20 minutes	167	182
	Number of these non-fire cases in which first fire tender attendance at the scene is after 20 minutes	47	42
Library Service: L1	A. Number of visits to libraries per head of population for the local authority area per the 2022 Census	0.75	1.39
	B. Number of items issued to library borrowers in the year	236267	306553
	C. Library active members per head of population	0.09	
	D. Number of registered library members in the year	6606	14519
	Number of visits to its libraries from 1/1/2022 to 31/12/2022	74310	143926
Library Service: L2	A. The Annual Financial Statement (AFS) Programme F data for 2022 divided by the population of the local authority area per the 2022 Census	€31.41	€31.90
	B. The annual per capita expenditure on collections over the period 1/01/2022 to 31/12/2022	€1.66	€1.52
	A. AFS Programme F data consisting of F02 - Operation of Library and Archival Service (inclusive of the relevant proportion of the central management charge for Programme F) for 2022	€3116846	€3307968

	B. The annual expenditure on new stock acquired by the library in the year	€165002	€157176
Youth and Community: Y1 & Y2	A. Percentage of local schools involved in the local Youth Council/Comhairle na nÓg scheme	75.00 %	56.25 %
	Total number of second level schools in the local authority area at 31/12/2022	16	16
	Number of second level schools in the local authority area from which representatives attended the local Comhairle na nÓg AGM held in 2022	12	9
	A. The number of organisations included in the County Register at 31/12/2022 and the proportion of those organisations that opted to be part of the Social Inclusion College within the PPN	22.33	22.43
	Total number of organisations included in the County Register (maintained in accordance with section 128 of the Local Government Act 2001) for the local authority area as at 31/12/2022	403	428
	Total number of those organisations that registered for the first time in 2022	36	36
	Number of organisations that opted to join the Social Inclusion Electoral College on whatever date they registered for the PPN	90	96
Corporate: C1, C2, C4 & C5	A. The wholetime equivalent staffing number as at 31 December 2022	569.30	573.69
	A. Percentage of paid working days lost to sickness absence through medically certified leave in 2022	3.54 %	3.57 %
	B. Percentage of paid working days lost to sickness absence through self-certified leave in 2022	0.23 %	0.34 %
	Total number of working days lost to sickness absence through medically certified leave in 2022	5495 day	5900 day
	Total number of working days lost to sickness absence through self-certified leave in 2022	303 day	452 day
	Number of unpaid working days lost to sickness absence included within the total of self-certified sick leave days in 2022	6 day	14 day
	Number of unpaid working days lost to sickness absence included within the total of medically certified sick leave days in 2022	923.5 day	1254 day
	A. All ICT expenditure in the period from 1/1/2022 to 31/12/2022, divided by the WTE no.	€3963.74	€4082.15
	Total ICT expenditure in 2022	€2256556.38	€2341887.52
	A. All ICT expenditure calculated in C4 as a proportion of Revenue expenditure	2.25	2.41
	Total Revenue expenditure from 1/1/2022 to 31/12/2022 before transfers to or from reserves	100422484	97205581
Corporate: C3	A. The per capita total page views of the local authority's websites in 2022	21.42	20.12
	B. The per capita total number of followers at end 2022 of the local authority's social media accounts (if any)	1.09	1.11
	The cumulative total page views of all websites operated by the local authority for the period from 1/1/2022 to 31/12/2022 obtained from a page tagging on-site web analytics service or equivalent	2125612	2086487
	The total number of social media users who, at 31/12/2022, were following the local authority on any social media sites	108220	115326
	The number of social media accounts operated by the local authority	19	19
Finance: M1 to M4	A. Cumulative surplus/deficit balance at 31/12/2018 in the Revenue Account from the Income & Expenditure Account Statement of the AFS	€17805	€17805
	B. Cumulative surplus/deficit balance at 31/12/2019 in the Revenue Account from the Income & Expenditure Account Statement of the AFS	€27998	€27998

C. Cumulative surplus/deficit balance at 31/12/2020 in the Revenue Account from the Income & Expenditure Account Statement of the AFS	€44633	€44633
D. Cumulative surplus/deficit balance at 31/12/2021 in the Revenue Account from the Income & Expenditure Account Statement of the AFS	€90540	€90540
E. Cumulative surplus/deficit balance at 31/12/2022 in the Revenue Account from the Income & Expenditure Account Statement of the AFS		€108770
F. Cumulative surplus or deficit at 31/12/2022 as a percentage of Total Income in 2022 from the Income and Expenditure Account Statement of the AFS	0.12 %	0.15 %
G. Revenue expenditure per capita in 2022	€1012.00	€937.51
H. Revenue expenditure per capita in 2022 excluding significant out of county / shared service expenditure	€0	
The 2022 Total Income figure from the Income and Expenditure Account Statement of the AFS	€74091962	€71513487
The 2022 Total Expenditure figure from the Income and Expenditure Account Statement of the AFS	€100422484	€97205581
The 2022 Revenue expenditure excluding county / shared service expenditure for the service providers of HAP, MyPay, DRHE and Dublin Fire Services	€0	
A. (a) Collection level of Rates in Appendix 7 of the AFS for 2018	93.0 %	93.0 %
A. (b) Collection level of Rent & Annuities in Appendix 7 of the AFS for 2018	93.0 %	93.0 %
A. (c) Collection level of Housing Loans in Appendix 7 of the AFS for 2018	88.0 %	88.0 %
B. (a) Collection level of Rates in Appendix 7 of the AFS for 2019	94.0 %	94.0 %
B. (b) Collection level of Rent & Annuities in Appendix 7 of the AFS for 2019	95.0 %	95.0 %
B. (c) Collection level of Housing Loans in Appendix 7 of the AFS for 2019	90.0 %	90.0 %
C. (a) Collection level of Rates in Appendix 7 of the AFS for 2020	83.0 %	83.0 %
C. (b) Collection level of Rent & Annuities in Appendix 7 of the AFS for 2020	96.0 %	96.0 %
C. (c) Collection level of Housing Loans in Appendix 7 of the AFS for 2020	90.0 %	90.0 %
D. (a) Collection level of Rates in Appendix 7 of the AFS for 2021	87 %	87.0 %
D. (b) Collection level of Rent & Annuities in Appendix 7 of the AFS for 2021	97 %	97.0 %
D. (c) Collection level of Housing Loans in Appendix 7 of the AFS for 2021	90 %	90.0 %
E. (a) Collection level of Rates in Appendix 7 of the AFS for 2022		95 %
E. (b) Collection level of Rent & Annuities in Appendix 7 of the AFS for 2022		96 %
E. (c) Collection level of Housing Loans in Appendix 7 of the AFS for 2022		90 %
A. Per capita total cost of settled claims for 2022	€8.45	€14.33
IPB Insurance: Number of notified claims for 2022	27	25
IPB Insurance: Number of settled claims for 2022	16	21
IPB Insurance: Total cost of settled claims for 2022	€419078.92	€742799.54
Total cost of claims settled under excess for 2022	€419078.92	€742799.54
Self-insured: Number of notified claims for 2022		
Self-insured: Number of settled claims for 2022		
Self-insured: Total cost of settled claims for 2022		
A. Overall central management charge as a percentage of total expenditure on revenue account	12.92 %	14.85 %
B. Total payroll costs as a percentage of revenue expenditure	37.21 %	40.11 %

	Overall central management charge from the Local Authority FMS and defined in the Annual Budget	€12972203	€14431771
	Total payroll costs from Appendix 1 of the AFS for 2022 (including Salaries, Wages and Pensions)	€37364056	€38988347
Economic Development: J1 to J5	A. The number of jobs created with assistance from the Local Enterprise Office during the period 1/1/2022 to 31/12/2022 per 100,000 of population	81.6269	99.3393
	The number of jobs created with assistance from the Local Enterprise Office during the period 1/1/2022 to 31/12/2022	81.0	103.0
	A. The number of trading online voucher applications approved by the Local Enterprise Office in 2022 per 100,000 of population	88.6811	31.8272
	B. The number of trading online vouchers that were drawn down in 2022 per 100,000 of population	61.4721	14.4669
	The number of trading online voucher applications approved by the Local Enterprise Office in 2022	88	33
	The number of those trading online vouchers that were drawn down in 2022	61	15
	A. The number of participants who received mentoring during the period 1/1/2022 to 31/12/2022 per 100,000 of population	766.8897	539.1330
	The number of participants who received mentoring during the period 1/1/2022 to 31/12/2022	761	559
	The spend on local economic development by the local authority in 2022 per head of population	€143.60	€143.34
	The spend on local economic development by the local authority in 2022	€14250029	€14861792

