

CHIEF EXECUTIVE REPORT

FEBRUARY 2024 ISSUE

EXECUTIVE FUNCTIONS

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

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

Bike Week 2024 Kilkenny
Bike Week 2024 will be running from Saturday 11th May to Sunday 19th May, 2024.

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CORPORATE

The Corporate Franchise Team is diligently working on updating Kilkenny's electoral register following the commencement of the new Rolling Register and in anticipation of the local and European Elections. This essential task is aimed at enhancing the accuracy of our Electoral Register.

However, we cannot accomplish this crucial task without the active participation of the citizens of Kilkenny. Whether you are already registered or not, each and everyone plays a vital role in this process. We are requesting people's assistance in verifying and, if necessary, updating their voter information. By including details such as your date of birth and PPSN, this contributes to the verification process, enhancing the integrity of our electoral system.

Furthermore, we encourage people to inform us of any necessary changes, such as the removal of deceased family members from the register. We understand how distressing it can be to receive a polling card for a loved one who is no longer with us. The Elected Members' assistance in raising awareness about this initiative is greatly appreciated.

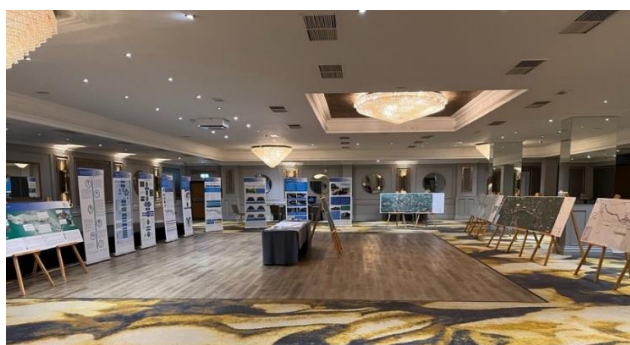
ROADS

MAJOR PROJECTS

Included in NDP- Funded by TII

N24 Waterford to Cahir Scheme

- Phase 2 Option Selection Preferred Transport Solution went on display to the public, landowners, homeowners and other project stakeholders commenced on the 23rd of January 2024, with in-person Public Display Events being held in Cahir, Clonmel, Mooncoin & Carrick-on-Suir. See Photo below. The recorded attendance at the public Display Events are as follows:



Public Display Boards – Clonmel

VENUE	RECORDED ATTENDANCE
23 rd January, 2024 <i>Cahir House Hotel Cahir</i>	240
24 th January, 2024 <i>Talbot Hotel Clonmel</i>	601
25 th January, 2024 <i>Community Hall Mooncoin</i>	354
26 th January, 2024 <i>Carraig Hotel Carrick-On-Suir</i>	402
TOTAL	1,597

- Letters and maps of the Preferred Solution Corridor were sent out to all Landowners and Homeowners whose property was under the Preferred Transport Solution Corridor in advance of the in-person Public Display Events.
- A presentation was also given to Elected Members of Tipperary & Kilkenny County Council on the 19th of January 2024.
- In-person and online meetings with affected Landowners and homeowners were facilitated up to and including the 9th of January 2024.
- All Public Display Material including Brochure is available to view online at the top of the front page on the Project Website at <https://n24waterford2cahir.ie/>.
- Details of the Public Display of the Preferred Transport Solution and key findings will be recorded within the Phase 2 Option Selection Report.
- Date for Publication of the Option Selection Report is Q2 2024.

MINOR PROJECTS

Not included in NDP-Funded by TII

N24 Tower Road (Safety Scheme)

Substantial completion is expected by mid-February 2024. Landscaping and snagging works will continue beyond that time for a number of weeks.



Overhead drone footage of the compacted grade separated junction.

N77 Ballyragget to Ballynaslee

- A contract signing event officiated by Cathaoirleach of Kilkenny County Council Cllr. Michael Doyle took place on the 29th January, 2024 in the presence of Cllr. Michael Delaney Chairperson of the Castlecomer Municipal District and invited guests.
- Construction of the scheme is scheduled to commence on Tuesday 6th February 2024 with an expected 12-month time frame.
- The completion of this project will realise an improvement scheme objective identified within the City & County Development Plan 2021-2027. The total cost of the project is approximately €13.3 million.
- The contractor is Fox Building and Engineering Ltd and supervision during the construction phase will be undertaken by Barry Transportation Ltd.



Contract Signing 29th January 2024.

N24 Carrick Road

- Simultaneous applications to An Bord Pleanála for 177AE Planning Approval and Compulsory Purchase Order Approval was made on the 25th November 2022.
- An Bord Pleanála decision on the scheme is expected towards the end of Q1 2024.

Pavement Schemes

The design work is ongoing in respect of the N76 Callan By Pass Pavement Scheme. The PAAR report was approved by TII in December 2023. Design work and the preparation of tender documentation are on-going with a view to issuing a tender for works during 2024. The overall cost of the scheme is expected to be in excess of €4m with varying sources of TII funding necessary to deliver the scheme.

Non - National Roads Output 2023

- Restoration Improvement received an allocation of €10,647,885 which completed 70km of road.

- Restoration Maintenance €2,488,499 completed 72km of road.
- Discretionary Grant €2,633,000.
- Community Involvement Scheme €440,100 - completed 7 projects.
- Drainage Grant of €651,999.
- Climate Change Adaptation Grant - 15 projects completed.
- Former National Roads €580,871 - 2 projects completed.
- Safety Improvement Works €362,639 - 16 projects completed.
- Bridge Rehabilitation Grant €323,804 - 19 projects completed.
- Local Improvement Schemes €633,522 - 12 projects completed.

ENVIRONMENT

CLIMATE ACTION

Draft Climate Action Plan

The Draft Climate Action Plan was placed on public display for a period of 4 weeks to 20th December last. A total of 32 submissions were received. Details of the submissions, responses and modifications to the Plan were discussed at a workshop on 12th February. The “Chief Executive’s Report on Submissions to the Draft Kilkenny County Council Climate Action Plan” will be considered by the Elected Members at the February Plenary Council Meeting.

Community Climate Action Programme (CCAP)

The Community Climate Action Programme is currently open to applications until 12 Noon on the 28th February 2024. Information on the Programme, how to apply, application forms and Guidance documentation can be found here: [Community Grants - Kilkenny County Council \(kilkennycoco.ie\)](https://kilkennycoco.ie). The programme also features in the 2024 Grants Booklet that was launched recently.

The programme has had very positive feedback to date and is being well received with Kilkenny communities. There has continued to be many visits to various parts of the county by the Community Climate Action Officer to discuss potential applications and it is expected that this programme will be competitive and oversubscribed.

Reduce-Your-Use Campaign

Kilkenny County Council is now three months into the national Reduce Your Use campaign, which will conclude in March 2024. An information landing page has been set up on the Kilkenny County Council website to inform staff on ways to reduce their energy use within the organisation, including video, tips and facts. See [Information Page](#)

As part of the campaign we have selected the Callan and Thomastown Area Offices as case studies and we have implemented a number of energy-saving initiatives that will help us reach our energy saving targets of at least 15%. A report on the final results will be completed and presented on completion of the campaign.

Climate Action Promotional Campaign (HVO Trial)

Kilkenny County Council's Climate Action Team's ongoing promotion through the use of videos, have over the last few weeks included a promo on Kilkenny County Council Climate Action activities and the recently announced Climate Action Community Grant. A third video promo has been completed and promoted in January. This promo was completed in partnership with the Kilkenny County Council machinery yard and focuses on Kilkenny County Council's test use of HVO (Hydrotreated Vegetable Oil) in some of our diesel-powered vehicles. HVO is a replacement fuel for diesel, made from recycled vegetable oil and can reduce emissions by up to 90%. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HJpiC87N_KY&t=20s

These Climate Action video promos are uploaded on our newly developed Climate Action website and will play a key role in helping us communicate with the wider community. The videos are also being promoted on social media, with one of the Climate Action videos recently posted having over 10,000 views/impressions on Facebook.



National Climate Action Plan 2024

The Government approved the 2024 National Climate Action Plan on 20th December last. Public consultation on the Plan will take place shortly. The Plan builds on the Climate Action Plan 2023 and outlines how Ireland will accelerate the actions required to respond to the climate crisis, putting climate solutions at the centre of Ireland's social and economic development. For more details see <https://www.gov.ie/en/press-release/fcf90-government-approves-climate-action-plan-2024-for-public-consultation/>

Environment Complaints

All Environmental complaints received are logged on the CRM (Customer Relations Management) System. The number of complaints that have been received and logged by Environment staff for investigation in January 2024 was 102, compared with 101 for January 2023 (i.e. a small increase of 1%). The nature of these complaints ranged from littering, illegal dumping, burning of waste and abandoned cars. The majority continue to be related to littering and illegal dumping. Whilst every effort is made to bring unacceptable environmental practice into compliance, Environment Enforcement staff continue to manage significant enforcement cases progressing through prosecution cases.

ENVIRONMENTAL AWARENESS

Litter Management Plan

A draft Litter Management Plan 2024-2026 is now in place. See the below timeline for the remainder of the process.

The draft plan was brought before SPC 4 on the 7th of February last, and will be going live on consult.ie on Monday 19th of February for a 4 week public consultation period.



Green Schools

The Environmental Awareness Officer (EAO) continues to support 92 schools as part of the An Taisce Green Schools Programme to renew or attain a flag. Green schools is an international environmental education programme, offering a well-defined, controllable way for schools to take environmental issues into the curriculum and apply them to the day-to-day running of the school. Green schools is a holistic, long-term programme and has a two-year cycle in relation to preparation, assessment and attainment of a particular flag.

The EAO is continuing to assist schools around the County to renew their membership as part of the Green Schools programme under their respective themes- Litter and Waste, Energy, Water, Travel, Biodiversity and Global Citizenship. Deadline for the applications for School Flags is March 15th, 2024. The EAO has assessed 6 schools for their application for a Green Flag since the 1st of February.

Nature Nurture- Schools



St. John's Senti



St Canice's N.S

The Council co-funded a new biodiversity awareness programme with Keep Kilkenny Beautiful (KKB) called “Nature Nuture”. Members of the KKB committee and the EAO are visiting registered schools who have made a biodiversity pledge to implement 3 practical actions within their school community that is biodiversity friendly. The pupils are being presented with a specially commissioned “Biodiversity in your Garden” colouring book (*which was illustrated by a local Kilkenny artist*), pencils and native plants. The school has to complete their proposed actions within 6 months of taking the pledge.

School Mobility Management Teams for Sustainable Transportation Initiatives

As part of our ongoing commitment to promoting sustainable transport and fostering a healthier, more active lifestyle among students, Kilkenny County Council invited secondary schools within the City to participate in a schools mobility management initiative.

Schools were invited on the 31st of January, 2024 to set up Mobility Management Teams comprised of 5 to 6 enthusiastic transition year students, and are supported by Kilkenny County Council to implement initiatives aimed at encouraging walking, cycling, and park-and-stride practices with the aim of creating a positive impact on both the environment and the overall well-being of our community. The following Schools are participating so far:

- Loreto Secondary School
- St Kieran’s College
- Presentation
- CBS

Key objectives of the Mobility Management Teams:

- Promote Walking: Encourage students to adopt walking as a primary mode of transport to and from school.
- Embrace Cycling: Advocate for cycling as a sustainable and healthy alternative for daily commuting.
- Park-and-Stride Initiatives: Collaborate on encouraging parents to park their vehicles away from the school entrance and encourage students to walk the remaining distance to school.

The initiative is being supported by 4 departments within Kilkenny Local Authority: Planning, Environment, Health and Active Travel.

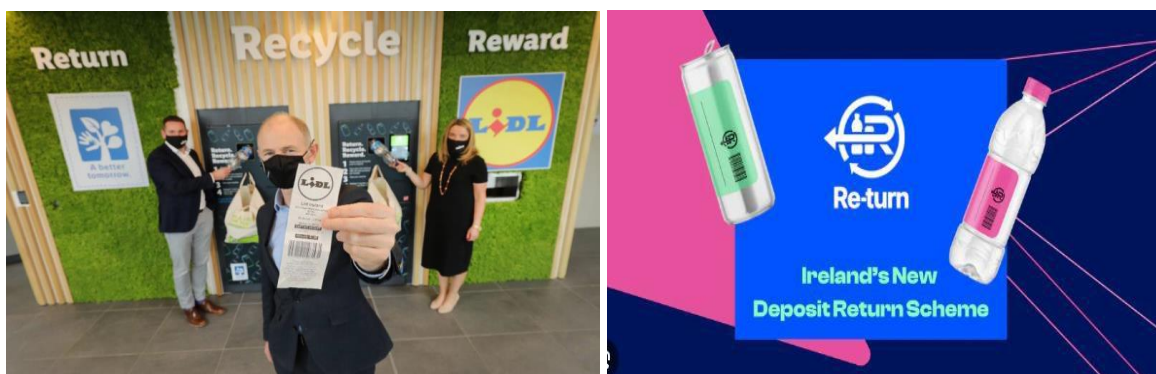


The Deposit Return Scheme

This is a new bottle and can recycling system known as the Deposit Return Scheme. The scheme began on 1st February 2024. The cost of the deposit is automatically added to the cost of the drink. You can reclaim the deposit by returning your containers and participating outlets with a Reverse Vending Machine (RVM), once they are empty and undamaged. This includes bottles, tins and cans made from plastic, steel and aluminum between 150ml and 3 litres.

No glass, dairy products or containers over 3 litres will be accepted. Containers between 150ml and 500ml will have a 15c deposit. Containers between 500ml and 3 litres will have a 25c deposit.

You can return containers to shops that have a Reverse Vending Machine (RVM) or accept the containers manually. Some shops have a takeback exemption as they are not able to accept the containers back for the Deposit Return Scheme. There is an interactive map online on www.re-turn.ie to establish stores that are participating.



WASTE

Waste Enforcement

Kilkenny County Council have begun compiling their data for the RMCEI return due on 29th February. This data includes an inspection of our 41 licensed sites across the County. In 2023, 61 enforcement files were opened for unauthorised sites against individuals and companies during the year. Some files were closed when a satisfactory environmental outcome was achieved. Other files remained open with the potential for these to be brought forward for criminal prosecution in 2024. Kilkenny County Council has been asked by the EPA to present at the National Waste Conference in March 2024 to share their experiences on enforcement cases.

Bring Banks Usage

The Council provides and manages 46 Bring Centres across the City and County. A total of 198 tonnes of recyclables were collected from our Bring Centres so far in 2024. This represents that the 1% increased to the prior year during the same period. Loughboy shopping centre (18 tonnes collected), Aldi Kilkenny city (16 tonnes collected) and New Park Shopping centre (13 tonnes collected) are the busiest locations in the City and Aldi, Ferrybank (8 tonnes collected) is the busiest outside of the city. Environment staff are continuing to work very closely with our service providers to ensure the collection service is in keeping with demand, especially around long weekends and holiday periods.

Dunmore Civic Amenity Site (CAS)

Our site at Dunmore continues to be one of the busiest amenity sites in the country. During 2023 we have seen an increase in the volumes of material delivered to the site when compared to 2022. In 2023 the Dunmore CAS received 1786 tonnes of Municipal Solid Waste and 973 tonnes of Municipal Dry Waste.

National Brown Bin Collection Scheme

From January 2024, new legislation means every household will be entitled to avail of a brown bin collection service. Approximately 69% of households in Ireland up until now, are able to avail of a food waste collection service from their waste service collector. MyWaste.ie is encouraging everyone, here, there, and everywhere to contact their waste collector and request a brown bin service in 2024, because "you're never too remote to recycle!" (Details <https://www.mywaste.ie/brown-bin-service/>).

National Waste Management Plan

Following the statutory public consultation and engagement process for the National Waste Management Plan for a Circular economy, and having considered the outcomes of the process, the CCMA Executive recommended on the 2nd of November 2023 that it is appropriate for all Chief Executives to make the Plan simultaneously by way of Chief Executives Order, subject to the revisions arising from the consultation

process. The orders for making the Plan will be simultaneously signed on the 21st Feb 2024. The Plan launch will take place on 1st March 2024, with the publication of all five volumes of the Plan that day.

Volume I: *Current Situation and Challenges*

Volume II: *Policy Responses and Actions*

Volume III: *Delivery Roadmap*

Volume IV: *Supporting Documentation*

Volume V(A): *SEA Environmental Report*

Volume V(B): *Natura Impact Statement*

The Supporting documentation contains all the consultation reports. All documents will be available on www.mywaste.ie

CCTV

On 13th December last, three draft Codes of Practice were submitted to Ossian Smyth TD, Minister of State with Special Responsibility for Public Procurement, eGovernment, Communications and the Circular Economy:

- (i) Draft Code of Practice on the operation of CCTV under the Waste Management Act 1996 (*as amended*);
- (ii) Draft Code of Practice on the operation of CCTV under the Litter Pollution Act 1997 (*as amended*); and
- (iii) Draft Code of Practice on the operation of Mobile Recording Devices under the Waste Management Act 1996 (*as amended*).

Codes have now been approved by the Minister and have been laid before the Houses of the Oireachtas in accordance with Sections 22 and 33 of the Circular Economy and Miscellaneous Provisions Act 2022. We now await commencement of the legislation which has to be completed by the Attorney General's Office and the Department of the Environment, Climate and Communications shortly. Whilst awaiting the commencement order, the Local Authority Waste Programme Coordination Office is overseeing the development of the standardised operating procedures and procedural templates that need to be in place before CCTVs and MRDs can be put in to practice. This is required in advance of turning back on any cameras at bottlebanks etc. In accordance with Section 12 of the Code of Practice, the Environment section is presently preparing Data Protection Impact Assessments (DPIAs), identifying sites, associated risks, signage, etc.

AIR NOISE WATER

Domestic Waste Water Treatment System Inspections 2023

Under the National Inspection Plan for Domestic Wastewater Treatment Systems 2022-2026 the Environment Section of Kilkenny County Council has carried out 51 inspections in total. Out of the 51 inspections 28 Wastewater Treatment Systems Passed. 19 Wastewater Treatment Systems Failed and a further 4 need a follow up inspection. From the 1st of January 2024 the septic tank grant will increase from €5,000 to €12,000. In order to apply for the grant all homeowners must have their septic tank registered, and will either have to be inspected by the Local Authority under the National Inspection Plan or be located in a Prioritised Area for Action or High-Status Objective Area.



Discharge License's – Trade Effluents

Currently the Environment Section along with external consultants are reviewing all 25 Discharge licenses in the County Kilkenny. Discharge licences are issued under Section 4 of the Local Government (Water Pollution) Act 1977, as amended in 1990, in respect of the discharge of trade effluent to surface water or groundwater. Licences set conditions so the discharge is treated and controlled in a manner that protects the receiving environment.

Burial Grounds

Community Monuments Fund – Consultants acting on behalf of the Environment Section of Kilkenny County Council are currently preparing Community Monument Fund Applications for Stream 1,2 & 3 projects in 2024.

The Community Monuments Fund has 3 Streams:

Stream 1 will offer grants up to €100,000 aimed at essential repairs and capital works for the conservation and repair of archaeological monuments.

Stream 2 will offer grants of up to €30,000 for development of Conservation Management Plans/Reports that are aimed at identifying measures for conservation of archaeological monuments and improving public access.

Stream 3 will offer grants of up to €30,000 for enhancement of access infrastructure and interpretation (including virtual/online) at archaeological monuments.

Stream 1 CMF application are as follows:

- Grangefertagh Historic Church and Graveyard (Stage 2)
- Tubrid Historic Church and Graveyard
- Rathpatrick Church & Graveyard

Stream 2 CMF application are as follows:

- Kellymount Historic Church and Graveyard
- Clara Historic Church and Graveyard
- Castleinch Historic Church and Graveyard

Stream 3 CMF application are as follows:

- Garryduff Graveyard
- Cloghabrody Graveyard

CMF deadline is for receipt of applications by the 14th of February 2024.

arm Inspections

The Environment Section of Kilkenny County Council are currently issuing correspondence to all 82 farmers who had Farm Inspections carried out by the Environment Section of Kilkenny County Council in 2023 under the European Union (Good Agricultural Practice for Protection of Waters) Regulations 2022. The farm inspections were out in mainly the Nuenna and Dinin Catchments in the north of the county with a small number farm in other catchments selected.

Out of the 82 farms inspected a compliance rate of 30% was achieved with the European Union (Good Agricultural Practice for Protection of Waters) Regulations 2022. 32% of farmers were issued an advisory letter with 27% issued a warning letter for non-compliances with the regulations. The remaining 12% were cross reported to the Department of Agricultural, Food & the Marine for non-compliance with the European Union (Good Agricultural Practice for Protection of Waters) Regulations 2022. The Environment Section is in the process of selecting farms for inspection in 2024.

HOUSEHOLD AND BUSINESS



RECYCLING
TARGETS
FOR WASTE
COLLECTORS



STANDARDISED BIN COLOURS
ACROSS THE STATE: GREEN
FOR RECYCLING, BLACK FOR
RESIDUAL AND BROWN FOR
ORGANIC WASTE



WASTE RECOVERY LEVY TO
ENCOURAGE RECYCLING

WASTE OVERSIGHT
BODY TO MANAGE
CONSUMER RIGHTS



EDUCATION AND
AWARENESS CAMPAIGN
TO IMPROVE WASTE
SEGREGATION

FOOD WASTE



HALVE OUR
FOOD WASTE
BY 2030



WASTE SEGREGATION
INFRASTRUCTURE
FOR APARTMENT
DWELLERS

SUSTAINABLE FOOD
WASTE MANAGEMENT
OPTIONS FOR ALL
HOMES AND BUSINESSES



PLASTIC, PACKAGING AND SINGLE USE PLASTIC (SUP)

DEPOSIT AND RETURN SCHEME
FOR PLASTIC BOTTLES AND
ALUMINIUM CANS



SINGLE USE ITEMS BANNED FROM
JULY 2021:



COTTON BUD STICKS,
CUTLERY, PLATES, STIRRERS,
CHOPSTICKS, STRAWS,
POLYSTYRENE CONTAINERS
AND OXO-DEGRADABLE
PLASTIC PRODUCTS

SIGNIFICANTLY REDUCE
SUPS BEING PLACED ON
THE MARKET BY 2026



ALL PACKAGING
REUSABLE OR
RECYCLABLE
BY 2030

EXTENDED PRODUCER RESPONSIBILITY (EPR)

MANDATORY EPR
FOR ALL PACKAGING
PRODUCERS BEFORE
2024 EU DEADLINE




NEW RULES FOR
EPR SCHEMES TO
INCENTIVISE GOOD
PRACTICE IN WASTE
RECYCLING AND
DRIVE BETTER
PRODUCT DESIGN

PRODUCERS LIABLE FOR
MODULATION
FEES



CONSTRUCTION AND DEMOLITION WASTE



STREAMLINE
BY-PRODUCT
NOTIFICATION AND
END-OF-WASTE
DECISION MAKING
PROCESSES

REVISION OF
THE 2006 BEST
PRACTICE
GUIDELINES
FOR C&D
WASTE



WORKING GROUP TO
DEVELOP NATIONAL
END-OF-WASTE
APPLICATIONS FOR
PRIORITY WASTE
STREAMS

ENFORCEMENT

EXPANDED ROLE FOR
LOCAL AUTHORITIES TO
ADDRESS PRIORITY WASTE
ENFORCEMENT CHALLENGES



UNAUTHORISED SITES
ACTION PLAN AND
ANTI-DUMPING TOOLKIT

FIXED PENALTY NOTICES
FOR BREACHES OF WASTE LAW



TEXTILES



TEXTILE
ACTION GROUP
TO EXPLORE
OPTIONS TO
IMPROVE FUTURE
CIRCULARITY IN
TEXTILES

CONSIDER
GLOBAL
IMPACTS
OF THE
INTERNATIONAL
TRADE IN USED
TEXTILES



WORK WITH IRISH
DESIGNERS AND RETAILERS
TO PROMOTE ECO-DESIGN
FOR CLOTHING AND TEXTILES



TREATMENT



REVIEW STATE
SUPPORT FOR
DEVELOPMENT
OF RECYCLING
INFRASTRUCTURE

STANDARDISE
WASTE STREAMS
ACCEPTED AT
CIVIC AMENITY
SITES



EXAMINE LEGISLATION
AND PROCEDURES FOR
DEVELOPMENT OF WASTE
MANAGEMENT INFRASTRUCTURE



GOVERNMENT LEADERSHIP ON CIRCULAR ECONOMY

HIGH LEVEL ALL OF
GOVERNMENT CIRCULAR
ECONOMY STRATEGY



INCLUSION OF
GREEN CRITERIA AND
CIRCULAR ECONOMY
PRINCIPLES IN ALL
PUBLIC PROCUREMENT

DEVELOP CIRCULAR
ECONOMY SECTORAL
ROADMAPS



EXPLORE HOW IRELAND'S
DIGITAL SECTOR CAN
ACCELERATE TRANSITION
TO A CIRCULAR ECONOMY

PARKS & SPECIAL PROJECTS

South East Greenway

Mainline Works

Glas Civil Engineering Ltd commenced works on Lot 5A (c5.5km section from Ferrybank to Curraghmore) in November. Works are progressing to programme and the anticipated contract completion date remains the end of 2024.

Unfortunately, no tender submissions for the provision of services for a multi-disciplinary engineering consultancy team, to complete all remaining phases of the Greenway, were received before the submission deadline. The Project Team are now in discussions with Transport Infrastructure Ireland (TII) to agree a path forward to advance the appointment process.



Legal contracts are now finalised and will be signed shortly to conclude the acquisition of the lands along the abandoned rail corridor from CIE.

Interpretation, Wayfinding & Orientation Plan

On the 25th January, Failte Ireland and The Paul Hogarth Company (TPHC) gave an on-line presentation to the Elected Members of the 4 Municipal Districts through which the Greenway traverses. The presentation outlined the emerging animation themes and the programme of works still to be undertaken. A brief Q & A session was held after the presentation and inputs by those in attendance were noted by TPHC for consideration.

RELATED SCHEMES

Greenway Link to Glenmore: Part 8 Planning is now in place. A funding application under the Rural Regeneration Development Fund (RRDF) was prepared and submitted to advance this project to detail design, land acquisition and construction stage. The funding application also incorporated the provision of a new Pink Rock Cycle Loop, which would offer Greenway users, travelling from the New Ross end, with the option of cycling back on an alternative route along the scene River Barrow.



Woodstock (Inistioge) to South East Greenway Link: The Tender Assessment and Recommendation Report for Technical Consultancy Services to identify and progress a route to planning has been approved by TII. The appointment of the successful multi-disciplinary engineering consultancy team, RPS Consulting Engineers Ltd. has now been concluded.

Woodstock Gardens & Arboretum

Over the past number of years, through funding secured under the Outdoor Recreation Infrastructure Scheme (ORIS), we have been able to engage Marketing Consultants to help develop and grow Woodstock Gardens and Arboretum's on-line presence in a bid to increase visitors numbers to this amenity and the wider region. The adjoining data provides

a snap shot of our on-line interactions from July last to mid-January 2024.

Woodstock House (Ruin)

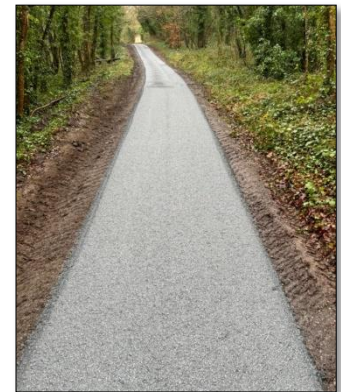
Woodstock House is currently in very poor condition and will continue to deteriorate without intervention. The increased frequency of heavy rainfall events resulting from global warming will accelerate this deterioration. In response to the above, an application for funding to secure the ruin was submitted recently under the Historic Structures Fund.

The proposed works under this phase concentrate on securing the ruin for the long term. The scope of the works include the removal of the significant vegetation and thereafter focus on stabilising the main front and rear elevations. This work when complete will allow for surveying and assessment of the interior fragile walls with a view to preparing a future repair plan for same.



Outdoor Recreation Instructure Scheme (ORIS)

Jeninstown Wood Enhancement Scheme - Works commenced recently on this project, which when complete will provide for the rehabilitation of sections of the existing loop walk and the creation of a new accessible loop walk around the walled garden and amenity area. Age friendly seating, new trailhead, interpretative and way-marker signage will also be installed along the trails. Works also include the upgrading of the picnic amenity space beside the carpark consisting of the installation of age friendly and accessible seating, a new access ramp to provide greater connectivity to the carpark, hard and soft landscaping and general signage upgrades.



Funding to facilitate the above was secured under the Outdoor Recreation Infrastructure Scheme (ORIS), with c.10% match funding from the Council's own resources and the completed project will see an investment of €227,000 into this public amenity.

Lacken Boardwalk Replacement Scheme



In January, enabling works for the above project were completed and the tender to replace the boardwalk was advertised. Tenders are due back before Tuesday 13th February, and subject to the outcome of the tender assessment process it is expected works will commence in March. The completed project will see the replacement of the existing 1.2m wide timber boardwalk with a c.3.0m wide boardwalk made entirely from recycled composite materials. Funding for this project was secured under Measure 3 of the Outdoor Recreation Infrastructure Scheme (ORIS) in the amount of €500,000, which will be supplemented from the Council's own funds.

Sports Capital Programme

Works to construct the new all-weather Multi-use Games Area (MUGA) in Ferrybank Neighbourhood Park commenced in early January, and it is anticipated that this new amenity will be open to the public in April. Funding to deliver this project includes grant funding secured under the Sports Capital Programme, specific development contributions and the Council's own funds.



Excavation works for new MUGA, Ferrybank Park

PLANNING

Development Management

Planning Summary		Total at end January		
		2023	2024	Change
Planning Received	Applications	50	54	+4
Planning Granted	Applications	41	64	+23
Planning Refused	Applications	10	5	-5
Complaints Received		7	16	+9
Warning Letters Issued		2	24	+22
Enforcements Issued	Notices	1	4	+3
Cases Closed		6	14	+8

FORWARD PLANNING

Masterplans:

Abbey Quarter

A variation to the Kilkenny City and County Development Plan 2021 – 2027 (CDP) is required

to incorporate the Abbey Quarter Masterplan 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/>

St Canice's Campus

A draft masterplan has been completed and the necessary environmental reports are currently being prepared. It is anticipated that the draft masterplan and environmental documents will be presented to the Kilkenny City Municipal District members in early 2024, before being placed on public display for a round of public consultation. The environmental documents are currently being finalised to allow publication.

Ballyragget/Paulstown/Kilmacow

Masterplans are also 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.

It is anticipated that the draft masterplan for Ballyragget and Paulstown will be presented to Elected Members at the February Castlecomer MD meeting and the draft masterplan for Kilmacow will be presented at the March Piltown MD meeting, prior to the draft masterplans being placed on public display for a 4 week period. Walk in public meetings will also be scheduled for each settlement during the public display period.

Local Area Plans

Tenders have been advertised for the preparation of a new Local Area Plan (LAP) for Ferrybank/Belview. It is expected that consultants will be appointed in Q1 2024 with a new LAP in place by Q1 2025.

The tender documents provides 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.

Cluster Housing Design Guidelines

Consultants, Place +Urbanism Ltd, have been appointed to carry out Cluster Housing Design Guidelines for County Kilkenny. The process will commence officially when an induction meeting is held with the consultants and the Council on 8th February. A delivery date of 3-6 months for draft guidelines is anticipated.

Taking in Charge

The following estates will be progressed in 2024:

TC141	Ayrfield
TC 170	Larchfield
TC175	Harrowville, Leggettsrath West, Kilkenny
TC176	Beechwood, Richview, Castlecomer Road
TC177	Weir View Gardens, Castlecomer Road
TC182	Smithsland North, Waterford Road
TC184	Baun/Cnoc Baun, Ballyfoyle Rd., Kilkenny
TC172	Orchard Close, New Orchard Road, Kilkenny
TC158	10 houses at Moneenroe
TC164	Westcourt, Callan
TC38	Clonkill, Callan
TC183	Hillview, Bennetsbridge, Co.Kilkenny
TC160	Farmeleigh, Ferrybank
TC167	Fiodh Mor & Leaca Ard, Abbeylands, Ferrybank
TC18	Greenoaks, Ferrybank

E-Planning

Applications through e-planning continue to come through the planning system and in 2023, 69% of all planning applications received have been through the e-planning portal.

Active Land Management

There are now 39 sites on the Derelict Sites Register. One site; the Bank House and Anchor Bar in Graiguenamanagh was cancelled from the Register in January.

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*) has commenced.

A Draft Annual Map of lands in scope for the new Residential Zoned Land Tax was published on the 31st January 2024. Submissions on the maps are now invited; submissions can be made either on inclusions or exclusions to the land in scope, and also, landowners can request a rezoning of their land.

There are 23 Vacant Sites on the Vacant Sites Register, and the number of cancelled entries due to site activation or improvement is 24. The Vacant site levy will be replaced by the Residential Zoned Land Tax from 2025, but any outstanding levies will remain due to the Council.

A payment of €28,000 was received in December, bringing the total VSL income to €891,900, of which €525,000 was paid by private developers.

CONSERVATION

Conservation

The Conservation Office manages all protected structures in Kilkenny County and City. These structures are recognised for the following special interest: Architectural, Historical, Archaeological, Artistic, Cultural, Scientific, Technical, Social.

An advisory service on conservation matters is provided to the public and colleagues, while the conservation grants and funding applications are also delivered.

Applications have been received for the Built Heritage Investment Scheme (18 in total) and the Historic Structures Fund (5 in total).

Built Heritage Investment Scheme (BHIS) 2024

The aim of the Built Heritage Investment Scheme is to investment in a significant number of small-scale, labour-intensive conservation projects throughout the county and to support the employment of conservation professionals, craftspeople and tradespersons in the repair of the historic built environment. Kilkenny's grant allocation is €156,800, with a further supplementary finding of €22,950 ring fenced for thatched structures.

Historic Structures Fund (HSF) 2024

Funding for the Historic Structures Fund (HSF) is being made available as part of *Project Ireland 2040*. The primary focus of the Historic Structures Fund will be on conservation and enhancement of historic structures and buildings for the broader benefit of communities and the public.

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

Stream 1 Historic Shopfronts Sub-Stream

To incentivise the conservation of historic shopfronts, each Local Authority is invited to submit an additional application under Stream 1 for eligible essential repairs and small capital works for the refurbishment and conservation of historic shop facades, windows, signage and other associated details to safeguard them and keep them in use.

Local Authorities are also invited to make an additional application for Irish-language shopfronts.

Stream 2 will offer a small number of grants from €50,000 up to €200,000 for larger enhancement, refurbishment or reuse projects involving heritage structures, where:

- (a) A clear community or public benefit has been demonstrated, or
- (b) A clear residential benefit has been demonstrated (*such projects must be advanced through the planning process as necessary*)

A grant of over €200,000 may be awarded in exceptional circumstances where a case is made by the applicant in relation to the significance of the project and the works proposed.

Vernacular Structures Stream – In the context of *A Living Tradition: A Strategy to Enhance the Understanding, Minding and Handing on of Our Built Vernacular Heritage* (2021), the stream for vernacular structures is being retained for 2024, with funding of €150,000.

The purpose of the stream is to support conservation repairs and small capital works to vernacular structures that are not listed in local authority Records of Protected Structures or otherwise legally protected.

Valid Commencement Notices Received:

January 2024.....21
January 2023.....14
January 2022.....38
January 2021.....15

Disability Access Applications Received:

January 2024.....4
January 2023.....3
January 2022.....5
January 2021.....4

International Protection

The following premises were notified to the Planning Authority in accordance with the regulations:

Notification Received	Name of Premises	Received From
08-Jun-23	Kilkenny Inn, Vicar Street.	Bury Architects, Mayo
14-Jul-23	MacGabhinn's Hostel, Vicar Street.	Specialised Accommodation Services Ireland Ltd
25-Sep-23	Kilkenny Hostel, Parliament Street	Banandel Limited
27-Sep-23	Riverview House, Dublin Road	White Sand Consultancy Ltd



LOCAL ENTERPRISE OFFICE KILKENNY 2023 AWARDS

A total of €514,124 was approved in direct financial assistance to 20 businesses located throughout the county. This includes €107,759 in Business Expansion Grant assistance, €213,190 in Priming assistance and €54,393 awarded in feasibility study grant assistance.

11 Technical Assistance for Micro Exporter grants were awarded to support businesses in exploring new export market opportunities.



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

5 Businesses have availed of the Digital Start programme to prepare and implement a plan for the adoption of digital tools and techniques across the enterprise.



43 Businesses were approved a Trading Online Voucher totaling €86,147 to support the enhancement of their online trading capacity.

**1,100 employed the LEO portfolio of businesses in Kilkenny
53 Net new jobs created in LEO supported businesses in 2023**



1 Intellectual Property (IP) Start Grant has been approved to support a client company in obtaining expert IP advisory and support services in relation to Trademarks.



1 Agile Digital Process Innovation Grant was awarded in the amount of €138,782.



10 applicants have been supported to make loan applications to the Micro Finance Ireland loan fund.

13 Green for Business supports have been awarded. This scheme supports businesses to become greener and more environmentally friendly.

1 Grant has been approved under the Energy Efficiency Grant scheme.



554 businesses have availed of specialised business specific mentoring on a variety of topics including finance, marketing, social media marketing and HR.

1026 people participated on focused small business training, including 149 people participating on the Starting Your Business programme.

Night Time Economy

The second Night Time Economy Stakeholder Forum took place in the County Council Chambers on Tuesday 16th January. The consultation phase with all of the key stakeholders in the City is currently underway. A public and business survey closed on Friday 2nd February and 333 responses were received. The forum members also took part in a two-hour night walk of the City with the public representatives on Friday 26th January. Feedback from the night walk will be included within the development of the Action Plan.



Kilkenny County Council Festival Grant Scheme

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

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

- Tourism Impact
- Visitor numbers / participation
- Sustainability and Accessibility measures
- Seasonality
- Support for the Night Time Economy

Application deadline for festival grants was 31st January, 2024.

The applications received are under assessment and a recommendation for award of grants will be listed for approval by Elected Members at the February meeting.



Faile Ireland Festival Grant Scheme

Kilkenny County Council have been awarded €8,000 in 2024 from Faile Ireland's Regional Festivals fund and this will be used to enhance its' grant awards to festival organisers locally.

Kilkenny Tourism and visitkilkenny.ie



Kilkenny Tourism continued its work in preparing Kilkenny's Marketing and PR Plans for 2024. "Kilkenny Gifts You" campaign will aim to keep Kilkenny to the forefront of the domestic visitor's mind for booking breaks throughout the shoulder season, for mid-term and for St. Patricks Day. Kilkenny County Council also secured additional marketing funding from Faile

Ireland to support our Cultural and Heritage Attractions in the quieter months.

COMMUNITY & CULTURE

CLÁR 2023

Minister for Rural & Community Development, Heather Humphreys, TD announced on Friday 12th January, 2024 CLÁR funding of almost €6.2 million in funding for community & sports facilities nationwide. This is in addition to the already announced €4.7 million fund to support over 100 Sports Clubs in rural areas in December 2023 which focussed predominantly on supporting our GAA and other sports clubs.

The funding under the 2023 CLÁR Programme will support the delivery of 152 projects including astro-turf pitches, playgrounds, sensory gardens, walking tracks, nature trails, outdoor performance spaces and community cafes. This will ensure that some of our most rural communities benefit from projects that will make them vibrant places to live, work and visit.

The funding under CLÁR is being provided as part of 'Our Rural Future', the Government's strategic five-year plan to revitalise our rural towns and villages nationwide which is having a transformational impact right across Rural Ireland.

CLÁR is a targeted investment programme for rural areas that aims to provide funding for small infrastructural projects in designated rural areas including parts of rural Kilkenny.

The total CLÁR Grant allocation for County Kilkenny is €295,469. The successful applications are as follows:

Kilkenny County Council supported by Coolagh Community Group	€45,000
Kilkenny County Council Upgrade Public Lighting Muckalee	€24,750
Galmoy Community Hall	€30,015
Windgap Tidy Towns.....	€20,788
Tullogher Rosbercon GAA Club.....	€50,000
Muckalee Football Club	€50,000
Kilmoganny GAA Club.....	€30,150
St. Martin's GAA Club, Coon.....	€44,766

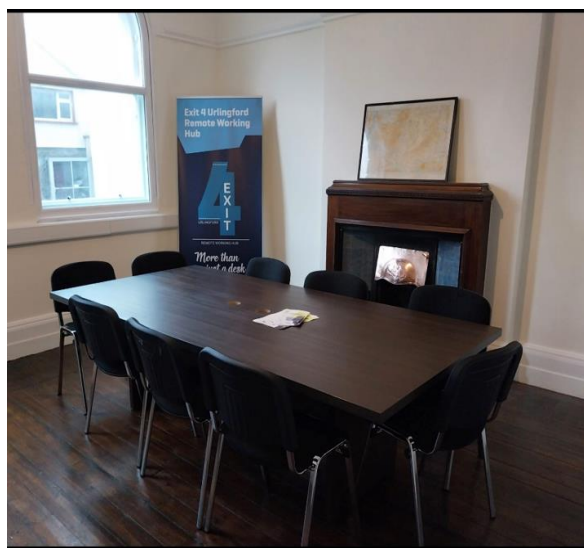
Urlingford Remote Working Hub

Under Town and Village Renewal Funding 2021 and the Kilkenny County Council Community and Culture Facilities Grant the former Bank of Ireland building at Main Street Urlingford was

purchased and repurposed as a remote Working Hub.

The space known as Exit 4 has been remodelled to provide collaborative working spaces, private office space, meeting facilities and kitchen facilities and provides excellent broadband service and ground floor disability access provision.

The project has been finished to the highest standards under the management of the Urlingford Town Team. The Town Team is actively engaging with potential office tenants and workers who require hot desk facilities. Contact can be made through LinkedIn by connecting with exit4 Urlingford. Further information and booking facilities will be available shortly at www.connectedhubs.ie/Urlingford





Bike Week 2024 Kilkenny

Kilkenny County Council have received an allocation of €24,774 in funding from the National Transport Authority for the organisation of Bike Week 2024. Bike Week 2024 will be running from Saturday 11th May to Sunday 19th May, 2024.

Kilkenny County Council Community Department and Active Travel Department along with Kilkenny Recreation & Sports Partnership and Cycling Ireland will be running a number of events and activities during National Bike Week, details of all events will be available closer to the time.



Participants of Bike Week 2023

Biodiversity Office

The Minister of State for Nature, Heritage and Electoral Reform Malcolm Noonan launched the National Biodiversity Action Plan on the 25th of January. The Biodiversity Officer represented Kilkenny County Council at the formal launch held in the National Botanic Gardens. In January, the Biodiversity Officer concentrated on completing funding applications to fund the annual biodiversity programme. Kilkenny County Council has applied to the National, Parks and Wildlife Service under the Local Biodiversity Action Fund to finance 13 projects. If successful, it will fund a range of projects which will all benefit biodiversity and communities across Kilkenny. The applications include a citizen science programme, two project collaborations with BirdWatch Ireland, biodiversity training, invasive species elimination projects and habitat mapping projects.

Kilkenny County Council has also applied to the Heritage Council for funding to assist in the development of the County Biodiversity Action Plan. The plan will be in development throughout 2024, starting with a Biodiversity Discussion Paper and the formation of a Biodiversity Working Group.

A vigorous community engagement and consultation programme is planned to ensure the public and stakeholders make their views known. In addition to direct applications, in January the Biodiversity Officer also provided advice to communities who are in the process of preparing funding applications under the Climate Action Community Fund and Waterways Ireland Community Heritage and Biodiversity Fund.



Biodiversity Officers with Minister Malcolm Noonan

ARTS

Arts Office Grants 2024

Kilkenny Arts Office Arts Act Grants & Tyrone Guthrie Bursaries were advertised in December 2023 with a closing date of 22nd January 2024. A total of thirty-one applications were received for the Arts Act Grant across a wide range of artforms from individuals and groups. Twenty-two applications were received for the Tyrone Guthrie Residency Bursary 2024 which is highest number of applications to date.

Professional and Emerging ArtLinks Bursary Award 2024

Applications for the Professional and Emerging artists ArtLinks Bursary Award 2024 were advertised in December 2023. These Awards are designed to support artists to develop their practice by providing them with the time and resources to think, research, reflect and critically engage with their art. The bursary supports established and emerging artists who are resident in the four partner local authority areas of Carlow, Kilkenny, Waterford and Wexford. Kilkenny Arts Office have received forty-five applications.

Call out for Emerging Curator Development Programme 2024

Kilkenny Arts Office has invited applications for their 2024 Emerging Curator Development Programme (ECDP). This year we are specifically looking for Emerging Curators / Project Managers with an interest in and commitment to developing their careers in the area of Public Arts. The successful applicant will undertake an internship with Kilkenny County Council Public Arts Project Manager. This will enable them to gain experience in the project management, curation and administration of Public Arts project(s) for Kilkenny. Deadline for applications is 12th February 2024, 4pm.



Brideóg and Brat Bríde Goddess Fabric Exhibition

Brideóg and Brat Bríde Goddess Fabric exhibition is currently on display at our window gallery space at John's Green House, curated by local artists Michelle McMahon & Monica Fleming. Michelle McMahon developed the Brat Bríde Project in 2022 which aims to raise and empower women by exploring and elevating the many Goddess cultures that existed pre the rise of patriarchal religions. Monica Fleming facilitated a Brideóg workshop with the Brat Bríde participants at Butler Gallery.

In the past, the eve of February 1st was known as Brideóg night. People gathered rushes, or picked them from their floors, and made crosses and little dolls, the Brideóg. These were left outside that night to be imbued with the Spirit of Spring, along with fabric Brat Bríde.

They were then hung in the home and the cow house to bring blessings for the year ahead.



*Brideóg and Brat Bríde Goddess Fabric Exhibition
at John's Green House*

Professional Development Opportunities for Artists.

Plans are in place for a programme of tailored CPD events which will cater to artists of different artforms which respond to their needs. A suite of workshops, talks, information sessions and networking opportunities will be offered to practitioners. These will launch in March 2024 and run until early December.

Breaking the Patterns

ArtLinks are partnering with Capacity Ireland as part of a Creative Europe Project and bringing this exciting new programme 'Breaking the Patterns'.

Applications are now being accepted from emerging visual artists based in Kilkenny, Carlow, Waterford and Wexford. Breaking the Patterns is a two-year programme with residencies, exhibitions, mentoring and professional development opportunities. This is the first open call within the series of opportunities that will be advertised over the coming two years.

Funding Opportunities Webinar

A Funding Opportunities Information Webinar was hosted on Tuesday 16th January, 2024. This online information session gave useful advice for Kilkenny based artists of all artforms on funding opportunities such as the Arts Act Grant, ArtLinks and Tyrone Guthrie Residency and advice on making funding applications

Rhyme Rag- Youth Arts

Rhyme Rag is back and running in schools this February. Focusing on smaller numbers but deeper engagement, two professional poets, Jessica Traynor and Anna Jordan, will work with two groups over three different sessions giving young people more time and support with accomplished writers.

Students will submit their poems to the Rhyme Rag Editor Colm Keegan, with 10 poems selected in total to be published on the Rhyme Rag Instagram page and website. All those who submit a poem will receive personalised feedback from the editor encouraging them in the writing endeavours. The two schools taking part are 4th year groups from Colaiste Abhainn Rí and CBS Kilkenny.

The Art of Change- Youth Arts

Working with young people aged 13-18 years from Ossory Youth and The Drum, the Art of Change project aims to empower young people in exploring environmental and climate action topics through different artforms.

By igniting and fuelling their interest in environmental and climate issues the project hopes to provide them with a new way of approaching these topics and an understanding of how art can effect change. The project is due to start in April and will run until December, taking a break for the summer holidays.

Young people will take part in a series of workshops each delivered by a different artist focusing on a different artform.

Waste Not Want Not

Our Climate Action Community programme planning is well underway and will commence in February. This year is a natural progression and development of previous programmes and specifically our 2023 programme.

Programming will continue to support individuals and local communities to understand and appreciate the personal power they have to undertake actions that will help to alleviate and the support the Climate crisis.

Creative Ireland

The Kilkenny Creative Ireland launched the Creative Ireland and Cruinniú na nÓg round of grants for 2024 on 8th January. During the month, a social media campaign to promote the grant was supported and distributed by the Kilkenny Arts Office, Heritage, Libraries and Kilkenny County Council Corporate schemes. The closing date for the applications is the 12th February, 2024.

We are receiving a large number of phone and email queries. The Creative Ireland Team will work in collaboration with our internal and external local partners and key stakeholders to promote social inclusion, health and wellbeing.

We are looking forward to another successful year and exciting projects made available in Kilkenny through the funding streams made possible by the Creative Ireland funding support.

HOUSING

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

HOMELESS SERVICES SUMMARY JANUARY 2024	
Homeless Presentations	46
Homeless Assessment Outcomes	
Prevention & Interventions	36
Emergency Service	9
Not Eligible/Did not avail of service	1
HAP Place Finder Service	
Number of Homeless HAP tenancies @ 1 st day of month	123
Number of Homeless HAP tenancies created during month	3
Number of Homeless HAP tenancies in place @ last day of month	126
Number of Homeless HAP tenancy breakdowns	0
Other Social Housing Tenancies supported /created during month	0
Households in Temporary Emergency Supported Accommodation @ January 31st	38
Households in Temporary Emergency B&B accommodation	5
Households in Temporary Emergency B&B Accommodation that are families	4
Households (singles/couples) in Transition Emergency Accommodation (Own Front Door)	35
Households (Families) in Transition Emergency Accommodation (OFD)	14

Homeless Prevention Measures

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

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

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

SOCIAL HOUSING ASSESSMENT

SOCIAL HOUSING SUPPORT APPLICATION SUMMARY JANUARY 2024	
Number awaiting Social Housing Support at 31 st January (<i>Gross Need</i>)	1,470
Number awaiting Social Housing Support at 31 st January (<i>Net Need</i>)	661
Number of Social Housing Applications received in January	86
Number of applications incomplete / awaiting further information/clarification	48
Number of applications validated and ready for assessment during the month	24
Number of applications assessed during January	53
Number of applications awaiting assessment as @ 31 st January	46

HAP Summary Year to date 2024	
Total active HAP Tenancies	566
New HAP Tenancies Set Up	6
HAP allocated Social Housing	27
Closed HAP Tenancies	27
HAP Rent Review Amendments	20
HAP Other Tenancy Amendments	81
HAP Calls Received	200

TENANCY MANAGEMENT

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

LA/RAS/Leasing allocations in January (<i>offers made</i>):.....	15
LA/RAS/Leasing allocations to January (<i>offers made</i>):.....	15
Tenant Liaison Officer cases in January:.....	13
Maintenance Calls for January	810
Maintenance Calls year to date	810

Where anti-social behaviour is ongoing, tenancy notifications and warning notices continue to be served and monitored. Where tenants engage in anti-social behaviour relating to offences under the Misuse of Drugs Act or violence and intimidation resulting in criminal charges the local authority will take enforcement action to terminate the tenancy and alternative social housing supports will not be provided.

PRIVATE HOUSE GRANTS

Funding for all Housing Grants schemes will be allocated in March 2024. Pending this allocation, Local Authorities may commit up to 65% of their 2023 allocation to allow works to advance under each scheme. The amount of **€1,991,076**, comprising of €1,592,861 (80%) grant and €398,215 (20%) KCC contribution was allocated for 2023. This amount was paid out in full to 285 applicants across Kilkenny City and County.

Grants Approved & Committed up to 31st January, 2024		
Scheme	Number	Amount
HGD - Housing Adaptation Grant	108	€1.124,852
MAG - Mobility Aid Grant	5	€14,970
HOP - Housing Aid for Older Persons	95	€459,274
Total	208	€1,599,096

Grants Paid out up to 31st January 2024		
Scheme	No.	Amount
HGD - Housing Adaptation Grant	8	€71,309
MAG - Mobility Aid Grant	0	€0
HOP - Housing Aid for Older Persons	9	€45,576
Total	17	€116,885

HOUSING LOANS

The Tenant (Incremental) Purchase Scheme 2016, which allows local authority tenants to buy their homes is being revised as of from 29th January, 2024. Changes to the scheme are as follows:

- **Minimum Income Requirements:** The minimum income required for an applicant to be eligible to apply under the scheme has been revised from €12,500 to €11,000 per annum. (*At least 50% of which must come from a reckonable primary source of income*).

- **Primary Sources of Income:** In addition to employment and the State Pension (*Contributory and Non-Contributory*) being considered as primary sources of income, the Widow's, Widower's, Surviving Civil Partner's (*Contributory and Non-Contributory Pension*), Blind Pension, Invalidity Pension and Disability Allowance are now also considered primary sources of income.
- **Time Receiving Social Housing Supports:** The period of time tenants will be required to be in receipt of social housing support to be considered eligible under the scheme remains at 10 consecutive years. However, in the case of joint tenancies only one tenant is now required to have been in receipt of social housing supports for 10 years.
- **Income Included/Not Included as a Secondary Income for Assessment:** Changes have been made to income that can be considered and not considered as secondary income when assessing for discount.

Housing Loan Activity 1st January - 31st January 2024					
Loan Type	Received	Approved	Amount Approved	Number Paid	Amount Paid
Local Authority Home Loan	5	1	€112,000	2	€427,000
Caravan Loan	0	0	€0.00	0	€0
Total	5	1	€112,000	2	€427,000

Housing Capital – Social Housing Delivery 2024

Scheme	Project Name	MD	Approved Housing Body	Total Units
SHIP SINGLE STAGE	Old Fire Station, Thomastown	Callan Thomastown		1
SHIP SINGLE STAGE RENEWAL	Cloghscregg, Thomastown	Callan Thomastown		1
		Callan Thomastown Total		2
AHB CALF Turnkey	Barrack St, Goresbridge	Castlecomer	Circle	4
SHIP TURNKEY & Part V	Potential Turnkey	Castlecomer		17
CAS CONSTRUCTION	8/9 Kilkenny Street, Castlecomer	Castlecomer	Good Shepherd Services Ltd	3
		Castlecomer Total		24
CAS TURNKEY	70-71 Patrick Street, Kilkenny	Kilkenny	Clanmil	4
LA Part V	Fox Meadow, Loughmacask, Kilkenny [Clancy Homes]	Kilkenny		8
LA Part V	Nyne Park, Callan Road, Kilkenny City	Kilkenny		10
SHIP CONSTRUCTION	Crokers Hill, Kennyswell Road, Kilkenny	Kilkenny		88
SHIP TURNKEY & Part V	Castleoaks Kilkenny City	Kilkenny		30
AHB CALF Turnkey & PART V	Cluian Glasson, Granges Road, Kilkenny City	Kilkenny	Clúid	10
		Kilkenny Total		150
SHIP SINGLE STAGE RENEWAL	Old Health Centre, Kilmacow	Piltown		1
		Piltown Total		1
				177

Affordable Homes:

Kilkenny County Council, in collaboration with CAIRN will be advertising an Affordable Purchase Scheme of 3-bedroom homes at Nyne Park, Kilkenny City in Q1 2024.

The marketing campaign for this first Affordable Purchase Scheme has commenced. The Council has placed a general advert in the Kilkenny People in the lead up to Christmas advising that Affordable Housing in Kilkenny City is coming soon. The Council has also initiated a social media campaign over the Christmas period. This will increase over the month of January.

In tandem, CAIRN has developed an information webpage on the scheme <https://www.cairnhomes.com/nyne-park/>. In addition, they have placed billboards in key locations around the City along with digiboard advertising in MacDonagh Junction. During the month of January, they will be building on their marketing.

It is expected that the scheme will be advertised later in January. Application will be via an online portal only, with the portal for applications opening in February. The Scheme will be advertised publicly via the Council's website, Social Media channels and via print media.

The Affordable Housing Team are continuing to prepare for the roll out of this scheme. Under the Local Authority Affordable Purchase Scheme, Kilkenny County Council will make homes available at a reduced price for eligible applicants who are seeking to purchase a newly built home but need additional funds to bridge the gap between their mortgage and deposit to cover the full price of the home. In return, Kilkenny County Council will take a percentage Equity Share in the Affordable Home. Purchasers will enter into an Affordable Dwelling Purchase Agreement with Kilkenny County Council. The purchaser can redeem or 'buy out' this Equity Share at a time of their choosing but there is no obligation to do so. If the purchaser chooses not to redeem the Equity Share while living in the home, the Council can do so when the property is sold, transferred or after the death of the owner.

For more details on the Local Authority Affordable Purchase Scheme please check out the Kilkenny County Council Information Webpage at <https://www.kilkennycoco.ie/eng/services/housing/local-authority-affordable-purchase-scheme/>

It is advisable that those interested in the scheme review the information carefully where they will find general information on the scheme along with eligibility criteria, how to apply, the documentation required to accompany an application etc. Inquiries to affordablehousing@kilkennycoco.ie

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. The Government has recently announced that as of 1st May 2023, there will be a number of changes to this scheme including that the scheme will be expanded to property owners who wish to refurbish their vacant property for rental purposes. The detail and guidance regarding the modified scheme have not yet been issued by the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage. There has been a substantial increase in the number of calls to the Housing Department regarding this scheme and a Register of all inquiries to the Council will be kept for follow up when further details of the revised scheme are available.

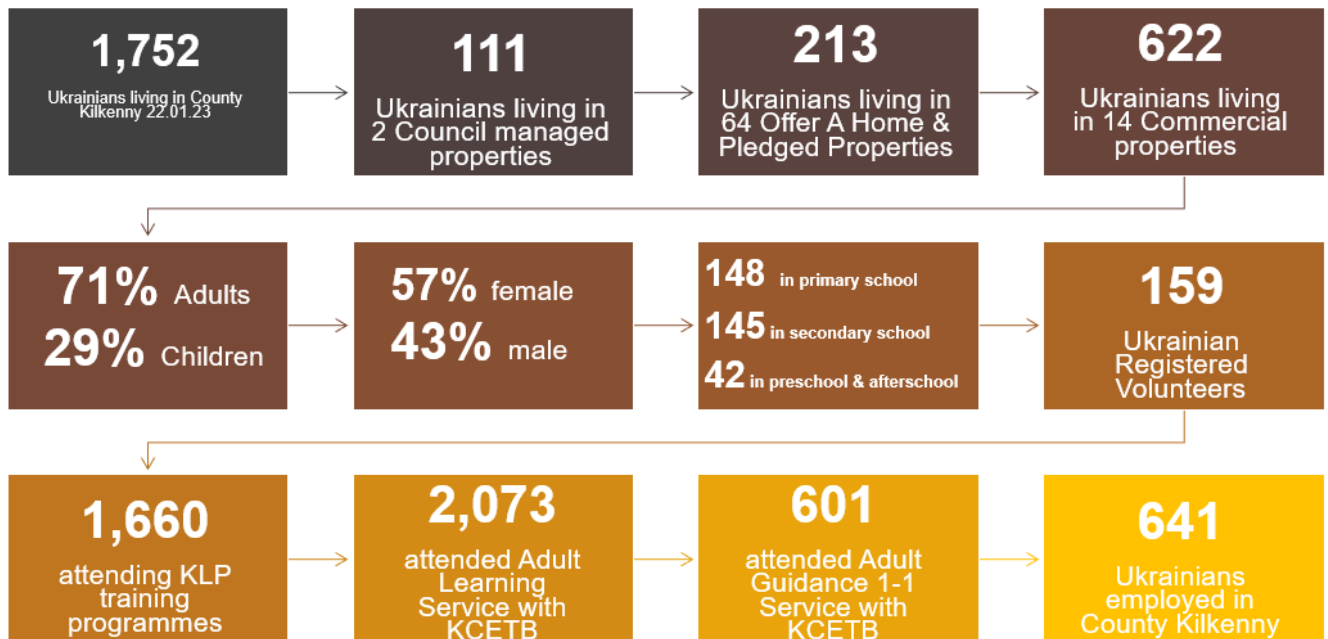
All queries in relation to this grant should be submitted by email to vacanthomes@Kilkennycoco.ie and will be responded to.

Vacant Homes Refurbishment Grant as at 31st January 2024

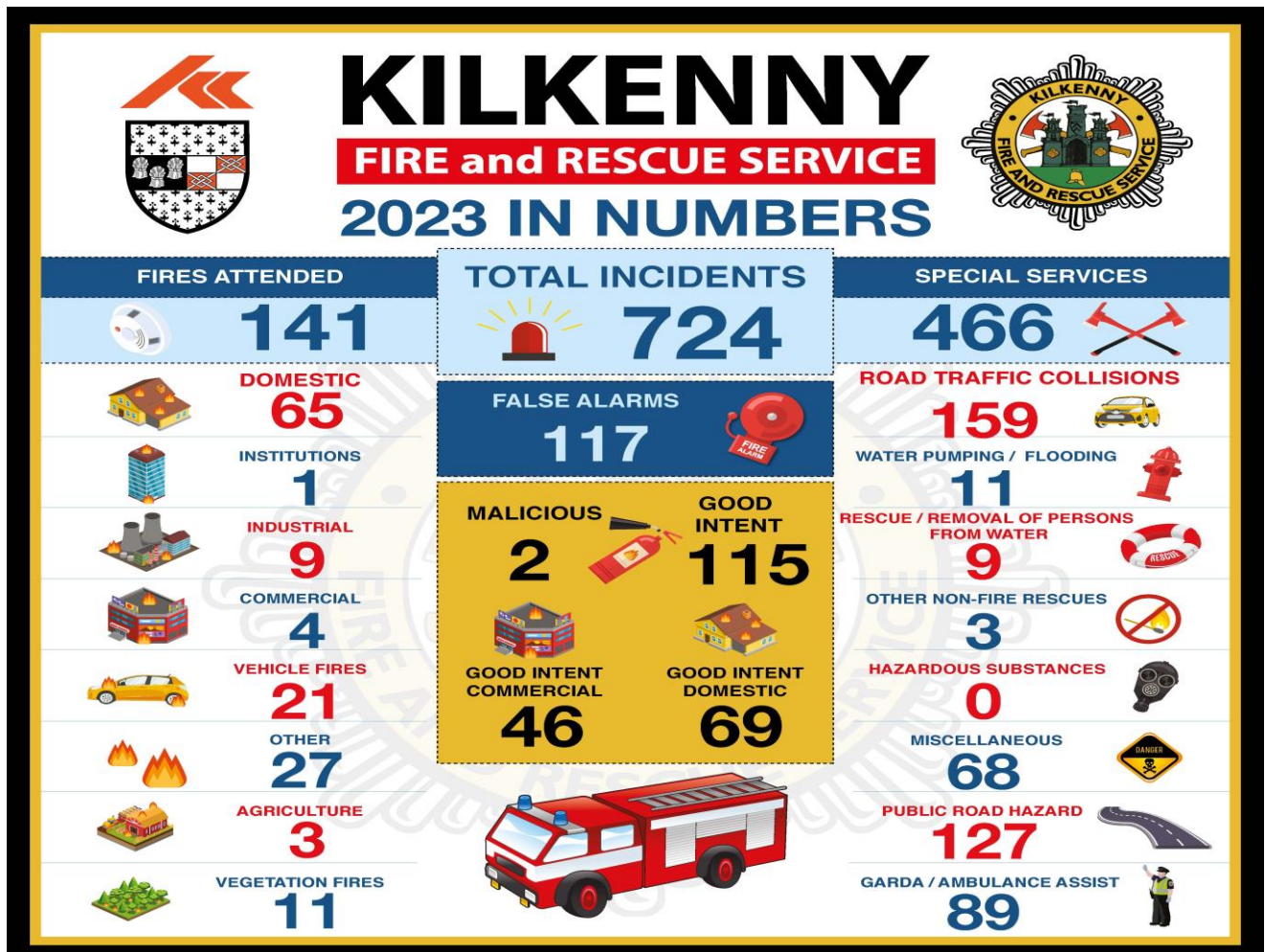
No of Applications Submitted to-date	40
No of Approvals / Approvals in Principle to-date	4
Grant Drawdown to-date	1
Number of Queries during the month of November	111

UKRAINIAN RESPONSE UNIT

Ukrainian Monitor to 29.01.24



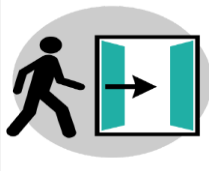
FIRE SERVICES



LIBRARY



30,589 Items borrowed



17,892 Visitors



1,425 Members

Callout for Facilitators

In order to develop a diverse range of library programmes and events for the coming year, the Library Service announced a callout for facilitators seeking to deliver workshops, specialist talks, storytelling, and other tailored events to children, teens, adults, and specialist groups. From these submissions, a panel of facilitators for one-off events, series of themed talks/events, or more long-term projects will be developed. This unique opportunity will enable us to deliver engaging programmes aimed at enhancing the lives of the people of Kilkenny through our network of library branches.

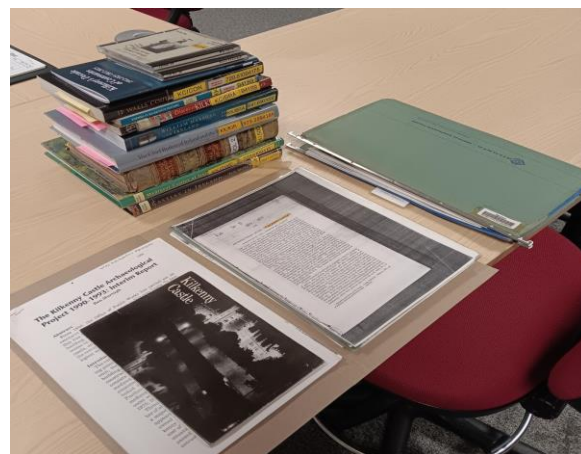


Kilkenny Libraries Local Studies Department

The Local Studies Department in the Library is a reference and research service dedicated to preserving and enhancing local history and the collective memory of Kilkenny. Our collection

consists of books, journals, newspapers, photographs, oral recordings, manuscripts, maps, microfilm & digitised material.

In January, Local Studies staff assisted with 12 in-person queries, 9 email queries and 6 phone queries including support with genealogy research and dissertation research on Kilkenny Castle.



The Local Studies team also visited colleagues in Castlecomer Library to receive digitisation training following the success of the “Castlecomer Pantomime Down Through the Years” collection which is available on Kilkenny Digital Archive. We look forward to using what was learned to make more of our Local Studies materials available to all in a digital format.

Library Activities

Events	In Branch	Online
166	162	0
Offsite	Live	Numbers
5	157	2022

This month we held lots of activities and events across our libraries. These events included a St. Brigid's Cross workshop in City Library, a children's Lego workshop in Loughboy Library, a creative writer's group in Castlecomer Library, a Dungeons and Dragons taster session in Thomastown Library, an adult art group in Urlingford Library, conversational Irish classes in Graiguenamanagh Library, a life coaching workshop in Ferrybank Library and a number of community book clubs which were supported by library staff.

FINANCE

The expenditure by service division to the end of January is set out in table 1. Total Expenditure for the period was €6.7m compared with the annual budget of €111m.

Table 1	Actual YTD January 2024	Budget Full Year 2024
	€'000's	€'000's
Housing & Building	1,471	26,257
Road Transport & Safety	1,118	29,958
Water Services	641	7,699
Development Management	761	14,720
Environmental Services	744	16,899
Recreation & Amenity	366	8,579
Agriculture, Education, Health, Welfare	60	689
Miscellaneous Services	273	6,050
CMC for distribution	1,249	
OVERALL TOTAL	6,691	111,134

Finance Update

The bank overdraft facility was not utilised during the month of January 2024. The draft financial statements for 2023 will be finalised in the coming weeks and will be presented to Council at the March meeting. The annual rate demands for 2024 will be sent out to all rate customers in the forthcoming weeks.

Rates Revaluation

Further to Revaluation 2017, 197 customers with a total rate demand value of €4.5m appealed their new valuation to the Valuation Tribunal. To date 192 appeals have been completed. The following is a breakdown of the appeal outcomes to date:-

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

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

Local Government Rates & Other Matters Act 2019

Following the enactment of the Local Government Rates and other Matters Act the following important changes have come into effect.

Payment of Commercial Rates

In previous years, Commercial Rates were payable in two moieties, with the first 50% (plus any arrears due) being due on issue of the demand, and the second 50% falling due on the 1st of July. Commercial Rates are now payable in full from 1st January 2024.

Change of Occupant/Owner

It is the duty of a ratepayer to inform a local authority where they:

- (i) cease to be a liable person,
- (ii) become a liable person,
- (iii) change their status as a liable person.

The penalty for contravening this requirement, without reasonable excuse, is being guilty of an offence and being liable, on summary conviction, to a Class A fine.

A liable person is:

- (i) the occupier of the relevant property on the first day of the local financial year;
- (ii) if the relevant property is unoccupied on that day, the person who is for the time being entitled to occupy the property on that day.

Payment of Rates on Sale of Relevant Property

A liable person who proposes to sell a relevant property is required to pay to the local authority any rates and accrued interest which is due and payable in respect of that property in their capacity as a liable person on or before the completion of the sale.

Unpaid rates and interest will be a charge on relevant property.

Valuation List

Amendments to a valuation list will be effective immediately i.e. revisions, additions and removals and appeals (*Valuation Tribunal and Courts*). There will now be a provision for pro-rata liability and billing where occupation ends or begins mid-year.

Incorrect Information

There is a requirement to give notice within 10 days to the local authority if you become aware that incorrect information is being held by the local authority in respect of commercial rates. The penalty for contravening this requirement, without reasonable excuse, is being guilty of an offence and being liable, on summary conviction, to a Class A fine.