



Comhairle Chontae Chill Chainnigh
Kilkenny County Council

CHIEF EXECUTIVE REPORT

JULY 2025 ISSUE

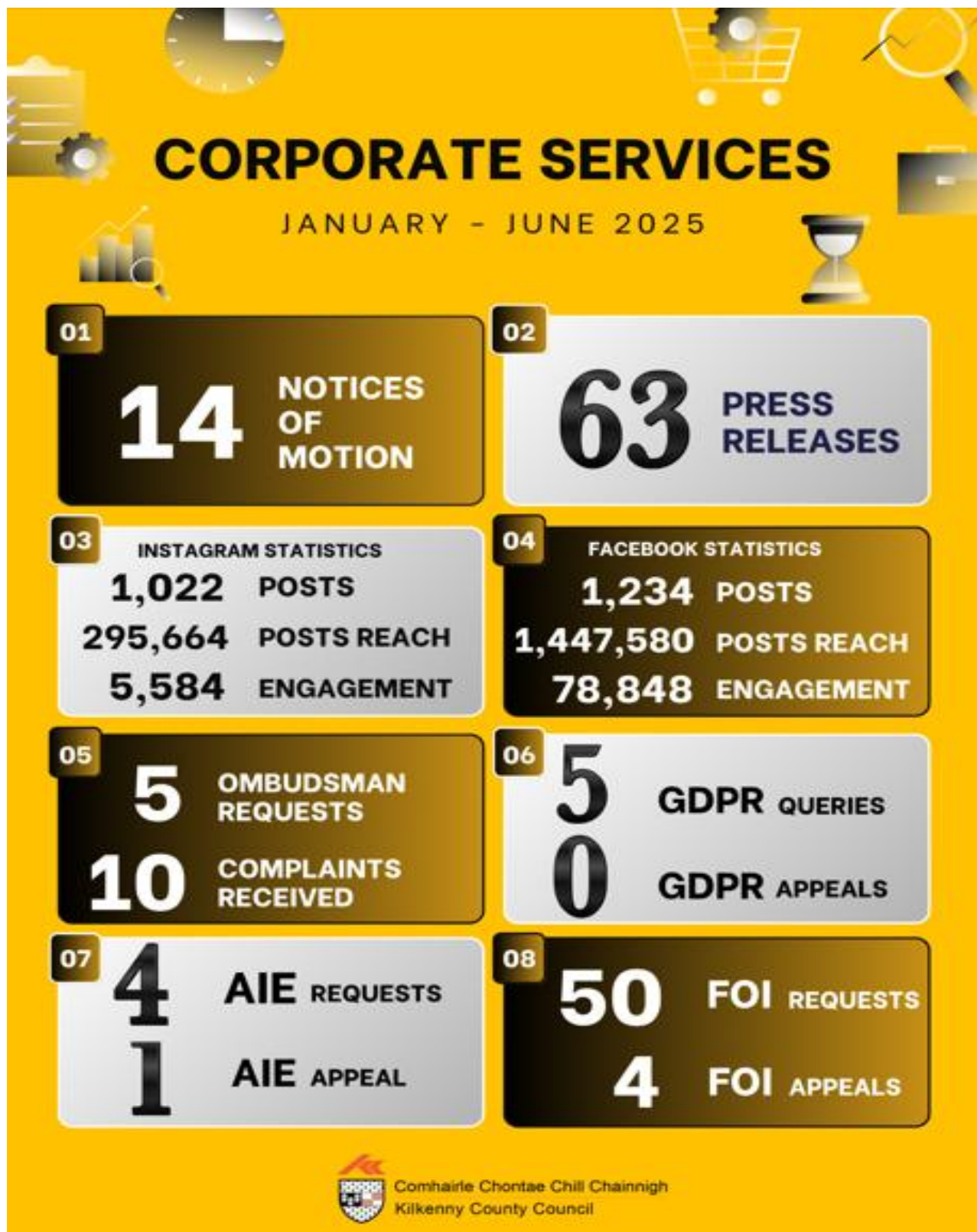


EXECUTIVE FUNCTIONS

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

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Modernisation of Electoral Register: Migration Readiness for the National System.

In Quarter 1 of 2025, the Franchise Section received a report outlining data cleansing requirements for the Kilkenny Register of Electors as part of national preparation for modernisation and migration to the new national electoral registration system.

An Excel-based dataset containing 5,648 transactions was issued, highlighting the following key areas for attention:

- **1,780 Elector Records:** Issues included duplicate entries, invalid PPSNs, dummy dwellings and formatting inconsistencies such as special characters.
- **1,048 Dummy Dwellings:** Electors without associated Eircodes. This remains an ongoing area of work.
- **116 Electoral Divisions, 82 Polling Districts, and 282 Polling Places:** Required translation into Irish.
- **2,340 Townland Records:** Required removal of special characters, removal of duplications and Irish translation.

Franchise staff within the Corporate Section have addressed all anomalies identified in Phase 1. The cleansed dataset has been returned to Dublin City Council for validation. While most actions have been completed, work on duplicate records and dummy dwellings will continue.

Phase 2 of the data cleansing process is now underway. This phase includes:

- Cross-checking for duplicate electors across Local Authorities.
- Incorporation of death event data from the national Deaths Register to facilitate the removal of deceased individuals from the Register.

Phase 2 will continue through to September, 2025, after which focus will shift to preparing the Register for the upcoming Presidential Election.

It is currently anticipated that Kilkenny's Register will be migrated to the national system in **July 2026**.

Civic events in June 2025

At the Annual General Meeting of the Kilkenny Municipal District, Cllr. John Coonan was elected as Mayor of Kilkenny Municipal District, and Cllr. Maria Dollard was elected Deputy Mayor.



At the Annual General Meeting of Kilkenny County Council, Cllr. Mary Hilda Cavanagh was elected Cathaoirleach of Kilkenny County Council and Cllr. Fidelis Doherty was elected to the role of Leas-Cathaoirleach.



**The official opening of the Woodstock Gardens & Arboretum
- Accessibility and Inclusivity Enhancement Scheme
by Minister Dara Calleary.**



**The Official Re-opening of the Jenkinstown Wood
Enhancement Scheme by Minister Dara Calleary.**



PLANNING

DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT

Planning Summary	Total January to June 2024	Total January to June 2025
Planning Applications Received	387	461
Planning Applications Granted	327	364
Planning Applications Refused	29	30
Complaints Received	88	73
Warning Letters Issued	42	58
Enforcements Notices Issued	19	28
Cases Closed	47	83
Cases sent for legal prosecution	0	6
Section 5's Received		3 (June)
Section 5's Decided Upon		8 (June)

FORWARD PLANNING

City and County Development Plan 2021-2027

Proposed Variation 5 commenced public display on the 30th May and submissions were accepted up until the 27th June. A total of 15 submissions were received.

This Variation is to:

- Incorporate a Settlement Plan for Castlecomer into the KCCDP, as part of a new Volume 3, Settlement Plans,
- Make associated changes to Volume 1 to reflect this, and
- Align the KCCDP with the Specific Planning Policy Requirements (SPPRs) of the Sustainable Residential Development and Compact Settlements Guidelines for Planning Authorities (2024) as relevant.

The Chief Executive's Report on submissions is currently being prepared and will be presented at the July 2025 Council meeting.

LOCAL AREA PLANS

Ferrybank / Belview Settlement Plan

The Draft Plan preparation continues. Significant matters relating to the role of Ferrybank as:

- the second largest Urban Area in the County its role as part of the wider Metropolitan Area
- it's contributing to the development of Waterford as envisaged under the National Planning Framework

are currently being considered as part of the final Draft Plan preparation. It is anticipated that a Draft Plan will be published for consultation by July 2025.

Taking in Charge

Works are progressing on the following estates:

- Fiodh Mor & Leaca Ard, Abbeylands
- Hillview, Bennettsbridge
- Westcourt, Callan
- Baun/Cnoc Baun, Ballyfoyle Road
- Rathullord Phase 3

Active Land Management

The Residential Zoned Land Tax (RZLT) has come into effect. The Council prepare the RZLT maps, and Revenue administer the tax. The settlements currently liable are Kilkenny City, Rosbercon, Callan and Thomastown. Relevant landowners must have filed a return with Revenue by 30th May, and any queries in relation to payment of the tax should be directed to Revenue. Two sets of maps were on public display until April; the Final Maps for 2025 and the Annual Draft Maps for 2026. Five rezoning requests were made by landowners for impacted sites on the Final Maps 2025. Ten submissions were made on the inclusion or exclusion of sites from scope for the tax, on the Annual Draft Maps. Decisions on the rezoning requests were communicated to the landowners by 30th June. Determinations on the ten submissions on scope were made and the landowners were notified by 1st July. The landowners now have an opportunity to appeal the determinations on scope to An Bord Pleanála.

There are 18 Vacant Sites on the Vacant Sites Register, and the number of cancelled entries due to site activation or improvement is 29. The Vacant Site levy (VSL) will be replaced by the RZLT later this year, but any outstanding VSL's will remain due to the Council.

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.

Built Heritage Investment Scheme 2025: Discussions concerning methodologies for successful projects with applicants is ongoing.

Thatching Grant 2025: Two projects have been awarded funding. Discussion has commenced with applicants with both projects due to start on site soon.

Inistioge Architectural Heritage: Tenders have been received for preparatory works for historic cobbles, the Tighe Memorial and the steps of Inistioge Castle.

For the month of May, the Conservation Officer has completed reports on the following:

▪ Planning Referrals.....	9
▪ Further Information requests	0
▪ Clarification of Further Information requests.....	0
▪ Section 57 Declarations.....	5
▪ Post planning	1
▪ Part VIII (<i>Upper Bridge Street, Callan</i>).....	1

Building Control

Valid Commencement Notices Received	Disability Access Applications Received
June 2025..... 170	June 2025..... 23
June 2024..... 186	June 2024..... 28
June 2023..... 152	June 2023..... 27
June 2022..... 199	June 2022..... 44

TOWN REGENERATION OFFICE

Vacant Property Refurbishment Grant

This scheme has lost none of its popularity with a steady stream of applications for funding being submitted. To-date the Council have paid out €3.2 million to successful applicants. The following are the full statistics up to end of June, 2025:

Number of Applications Submitted to-date:.....	317
Number of Approvals / Approvals in Principle to-date:	221
Grant Drawdown to-date:.....	59
Number of Queries during the month of June:	78

Derelict Sites

The derelict site known at Tower Road, Piltown was put on the market for sale. Notice under Section 183 for disposal of the property is for consideration at the July meeting. CPO's for properties at Kilmacow and Callan are ongoing. There were no additions to the Derelict Sites Register and two properties were removed. It's worth noting that the Council engage with property owners in advance of placing properties on the Register and sometimes this achieves the desired result. A good example of this is in relation to properties at John's Green, Kilkenny. Photographs below show the positive outcome that can be achieved, through engagement.

NOS. 1 & 2 JOHN'S GREEN



Before



After

NO. 3 JOHN'S GREEN



Before



After

Butts Area Regeneration Framework

A public consultation event was held on Wednesday, 25th June from 2.30 p.m. to 7.30 p.m. It was well attended with 55 attendees. The final proposals to be put forward in the Regeneration Framework Plan for The Butts were presented. The majority of attendees are in favour of the proposals put forward and very positive feedback was received on the day. These will now be collated into report format, together with costings and submitted to the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage, for approval. In the meantime, any issues identified during the property inspections have been categorised by Housing Maintenance who are including in their schedule of works.

CLIMATE ACTION

1.1 Expressions of Interest for Community Climate Action Grants Open!

The Climate Action Team are pleased to invite Expressions of Interest for Phase 2 of the Community Climate Action Fund. The fund is for not-for-profit communities and organisations (located in the operational area of Kilkenny County Council) who want to take climate action at a local level. Please visit <https://submit.link/3U5> to submit an Expression of Interest. The scheme will open for final applications at a later date. If you would like more information please contact Claire Prendergast, A/Community Climate Action Officer Claire.prendergast@kilkennycoco.ie or call 087 2435588.



Kilkenny Going Green **WE'RE TAKING CLIMATE ACTION**

Phase 2 of the Community Climate Action Programme is now open for Expressions of Interest.

Please visit <https://submit.link/3U5>

Themes

- ✓ Energy
- ✓ Travel
- ✓ Shopping & Recycling
- ✓ Food & Waste
- ✓ Biodiversity

CONTACT US NOW

✉ climate@kilkennycoco.ie
☎ 056-7794350

Follow us on Instagram @Kilkennycoco and Kilkenny County Council on Facebook

Communities Climate Change Champions Kilkenny County Council

1.2 South East Region Fleet Decarbonisation Meetup at the Machinery Yard

On June 17th, the Machinery Yard hosted the South East Region Fleet Decarbonisation Meetup. Facilitated by the East and Midlands Climate Action Regional Office, the event addressed the critical challenges of energy consumption and emissions from transport. It provided a platform for fleet management and climate action teams from the South East Local Authorities to:

- Share the latest policy updates
- Network with counterparts within the region
- Discuss recent activities from the Local Authorities
- Initiate knowledge sharing on key topics

The workshop saw the participation of 15 attendees and concluded with a tour of the Machinery Yard, showcasing key decarbonisation projects within the facility.

PARKS & SPECIAL PROJECTS

The Museum of Medieval Kilkenny

Works on the Tholsel building continue to progress throughout the building and a summary of same is provided hereunder:

Basement: Archaeological dig to the basement area is 90% complete. Archaeological dig of services trenches in basement 75% complete

Front Façade: Raking out of strap pointing to stonework to front facade 85% complete.

First Floor: Timber joists and floor 1st floor WC areas complete.

Crane: 4 Number reinforced concrete crane bases complete. Crane erection commenced on 3rd July.

Hoarding Signage: Contractor appointed and artwork agreed. Production of signage and erection in coming weeks.

Enhancement to the Tholsel building form part of the wider “Museum of Medieval Kilkenny” project which will see the unification of the Tholsel and the Medieval Mile Museum as one single visitor experience.

The overall objective of this project is to develop an offering that will become one of Ireland’s top visitor attractions, while also securing the future of the Tholsel to continue in its role to act as the seat of local Government in the City.



The Medieval Mile Museum, within St. Mary’s Church, remains open to visitors and the contractor will continue to work in manner that minimises disruption to the operation of same.

A new digital platform dedicated to the Tholsel Redevelopment Project has also been recently launched. This is a landmark initiative that blends heritage preservation with civic innovation.

This new webpage offers:

- A detailed project overview and timeline through to 2027
- Insights into the Tholsel’s architectural and historical significance
- Information on preservation strategies and funding sources
- Updates on how the building will continue to serve as the seat of local government

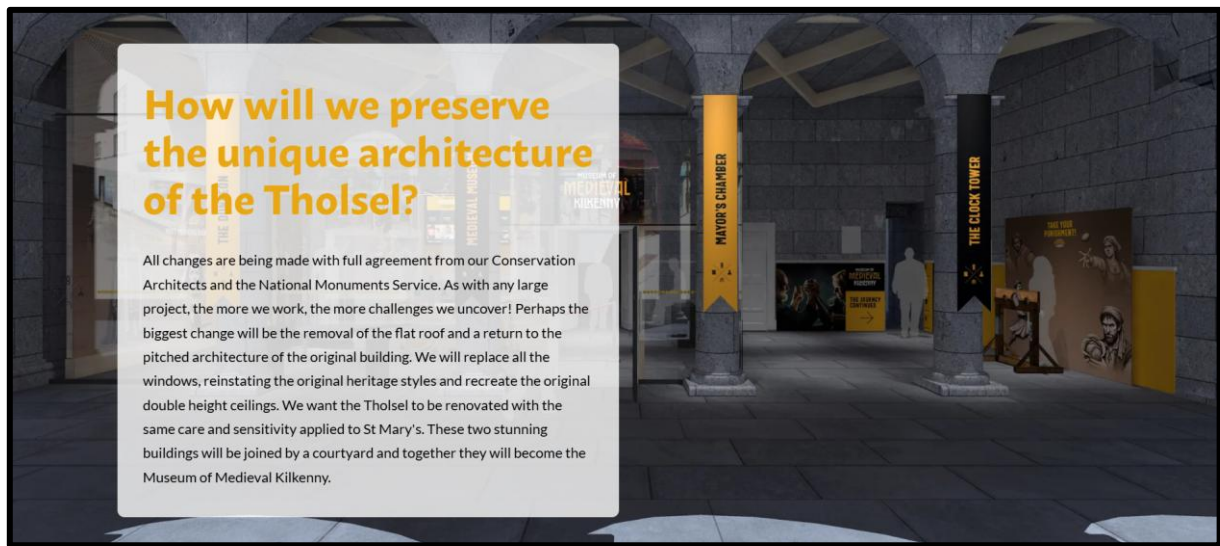


Figure 1 Sample page from Tholsel Redevelopment Project Webpage

For further details please see <https://content.kilkenny.ie/full-forward-kilkenny-2030/8-for-heritage/index.html>

South East Greenway and Related Projects

Works continue to progress of the delivery of the 24km greenway from New Ross to Waterford. Of the 24km some 14km's are now completed or substantially completed and the second section of greenway, from Curraghmore to Ferrybank, is due to open in the coming weeks. The landowner liaison officer is continuing to engage with adjacent landowners in relation to boundary fencing and any other issues that arise.



In tandem, with readying this next section for opening, works on the detail design of the remaining sections of the greenway continues.

Greenway to Glenmore Connectivity Link

Last year, The Dept. of Rural and Community Development announced that our funding application under the Rural Regeneration Development Fund (RRDF) to progress this project was successful. This funding will now allow us to proceed to the detail design, land acquisition and construction stage of the project.

Kilgallen have been appointed as the successful tender that will complete the detailed design and progress project through to completion of the construction phase.

Landowner engagement has commenced while the procurement of a topographical surveyor is being finalised.

Jeninstown Wood Enhancement Scheme Officially Reopened

On the 28th of June 2025, Minister for Rural and Community Development Dara Calleary TD officially reopened the Jeninstown Wood Enhancement Scheme. Delivered by Kilkenny County Council in partnership with Coillte, the project was supported by €230,000 in funding through the Outdoor Recreation Infrastructure Scheme and Council match funding.

The works included rehabilitation of looped trails, development of a new 1.2km fully accessible route, improved signage, a new access ramp from the car park, and inclusive, age-friendly picnic and seating areas. The new trail has been named *The Last Rose of Summer Walk*, which honours the historic connection between Jenkinstown and poet Thomas Moore.



The event was attended by members of the Council, representatives from Coillte, and local stakeholders. Cathaoirleach Cllr. Michael McCarthy and Castlecomer MD Vice-Chair Cllr. Pat Fitzpatrick (on behalf of Castlecomer MD chair Cllr. Mary Hilda Cavanagh) highlighted the positive impact of the enhancements for the local community and visitors. The event concluded with the unveiling of a commemorative plaque and ribbon cutting by Minister Calleary in the presence of elected members and Council staff.

Woodstock to South East Greenway Link (Nore Valley Greenway)

This Greenway project is currently in Phase 1 (Concept and Feasibility Stage) and the following recent up-dates are provided hereunder:

- A Constraints and Opportunity Report along with an Agronomy Report has been completed.
- A Feasibility Report (including the above reports) has been completed and has been issued to the TII along with a Phase 1 Gate Review Statement requesting approval to progress to Phase 2 (Options Selection)

The Clover Centre Ferrybank

Earlier this year the council appointed Digby Brady Landscaping Architects, to assist with the preparation of a masterplan for a 9.5 acre site in Christendom, Ferrybank. These lands, previously held by Clover Meats trustee's transferred into the ownership of the council in late 2023. Initial public consultation has been completed and submission evaluated. Topographical and ecological surveys have been completed. Preliminary designs are currently being worked on in advance of the next public consultation (date yet to be set). Asbestos survey on existing building is complete and awaiting report.

Paulstown Town Park

Digby Brady Landscape Architects were recently appointed to undertake the development of a masterplan for the future development of a high quality, community centred and multifunctional local park on a greenfield site in Paulstown, Co. Kilkenny.

A public consultation evening was held on June 24th and the feedback received will be incorporated into the masterplan. This project is being funded under the Town Centre First Scheme.

WOODSTOCK GARDENS AND ARBORETUM

Official Opening of New Enhancements at Woodstock Gardens

The official opening of the latest enhancement works at Woodstock Gardens and Arboretum took place in June, marking another important step in the site's continued development as a flagship public amenity in County Kilkenny. The event was officiated by Minister for Rural and Community Development, Dara Calleary TD, and attended by Cathaoirleach of Kilkenny County Council, Cllr. Michael McCarthy, and Chairperson of the Callan-Thomastown Municipal District, Cllr. Joe Lyons.

The occasion was celebrated in bright summer sunshine, with the unveiling of a commemorative plaque and ceremonial ribbon cutting. The improvements reflect the Council's focus on accessibility, community engagement, and high-quality outdoor infrastructure.



Cllr. Lyons, representing the Callan-Thomastown Municipal District, acknowledged the significance of the works for the local area and the positive outcomes achieved through collaboration. The Cathaoirleach welcomed visitors and reaffirmed the Council's commitment to maintaining Woodstock as a welcoming, inclusive, and accessible space for all.

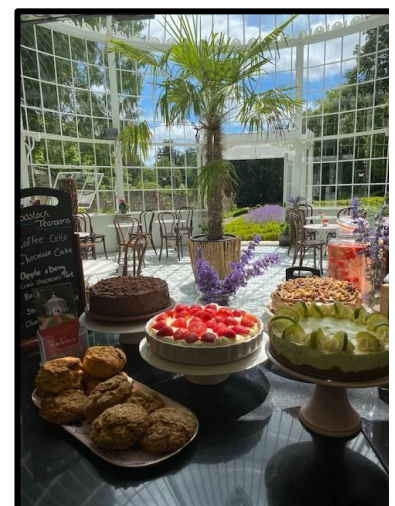
The event marked the successful completion of a key phase in the ongoing enhancement of Woodstock Gardens, reinforcing its importance as one of Kilkenny's premier heritage and recreational destinations.

WOODSTOCK TEAROOMS

"Woodstock Wednesdays" Return

Building on the success of last summer, "Woodstock Wednesdays" have returned for the 2025 season. As part of this initiative, visitors to Woodstock Gardens every Wednesday can enjoy a freshly brewed tea or coffee with a fruit scone for just €5 at the Tearooms. Entry to the Gardens is also free every Wednesday, offering a perfect opportunity for families and visitors to experience all that Woodstock has to offer.

This is a great chance to enjoy the magnificent improvements carried out over the past season, including enhancements to the playgrounds, gardens, and new offerings in the Tearoom. With the Gardens open daily from 9am to 7pm and the Tearooms from 11am to 5pm, "Woodstock Wednesdays" continue to be a highlight in the visitor calendar and a perfect day out for all ages.



LEO/ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Summary of 2025 Awards to Businesses

- €201,730 in direct financial assistance has been approved for 10 manufacture /export service businesses in located in throughout the County.
- €137,017 in Business Expansion Grant assistance
- €45,000 awarded in Business Priming Grant Assistance
- €19,713 awarded in Feasibility Study Grant Assistance
- 13 Businesses have commenced LEAN one to one consultancy programmes to investigate possible resource efficiencies and process improvements their businesses
- 21 businesses have availed of the Digital for Business programme to prepare and implement a plan for the adoption of digital tools and techniques across the enterprise.
- 16 businesses have availed of the Energy Efficiency Grant totalling €126,773 to support investment in technologies and equipment of enterprises.
- 27 business have availed of the green for business consultancy support scheme. This scheme supports businesses to become greener and environmentally friendly.
- 3 applicants have been supported to make loan applications to the Micro Finance Ireland loan fund.
- 612 people participated in focused small business training, including 69 people participating on the Starting Your Business programme
- 202 businesses have availed of specialised business specific mentoring on a variety of topics including finance, marketing, social media marketing and HR.

Local Enterprise Office Kilkenny Launches 'Spark Series' Vlog on Facebook

This is a new vlog series offering entrepreneurs and small business owners, valuable insights, practical tips, and inspiring stories from some of the region's most successful business leaders.

The Spark Series features in-depth conversations with entrepreneurs such as David Walsh, co-founder of Halocare and former executive at Netwatch, Rachel Doyle, founder of Arboretum, a pioneering enterprise blending nature and wellness, Mags Kirwan, managing director of Goatsbridge Trout Farm, along with Blaise Brosnan, Owner and Managing Director of Management Resource Institute, Business Advisor and Author.



The interviews are being hosted by John Purcell, KCLR presenter. The #Spark Series can be followed on the Local Enterprise Office Facebook pages for Carlow and Kilkenny.



Launch of New Kilkenny Gift Card In-Person Sales Point

A new in-person location to purchase the Kilkenny Gift Card has launched to enhance the convenience and accessibility of the initiative. Over €160,000 of the new Kilkenny Gift Cards have been sold since November, with the cards popular with organisations as employee rewards and for consumers as gifts. Kilkenny County Council's Local Enterprise Office is backing the Kilkenny Gift Card as part of its #ShopKilkenny campaign for 2025.

Winners of the 'START Exit 4' competition for innovative start-ups announced

The final of the "START Exit 4" competition, was held in Exit 4, Urlingford, Co Kilkenny on Friday 13th June.

This successful initiative was organised by **Kilkenny County Council, Local Enterprise Office Kilkenny, South East Technological University (SETU) and the Urlingford Town Team.**



The initiative was launched back in April and the competition attracted entrepreneurs from right across the county with an array of tech related business ideas. The competition involved a series of business workshops and one-to-one mentoring culminating to the finale, whereby finalists pitched their ideas towards an investment fund worth €10,000. In first place, Shane Doherty was announced the overall winner. Shane is currently developing a fully integrated AI-powered hotel operating system aimed at improving revenue and overall efficiency for the hospitality sector.

Broadband Digital Update

Basic IT training

The Broadband Officer is working in partnership with the KCETB to provide opportunities to rural communities to engage in basic IT training at their local Broadband Connection Point (BCP). Participants at Muckalee Community Centre have completed an eight-week training block and plan to continue this training in the autumn.

Cyber Safe Kids Parent Talks

There are three Cyber Safe Kids parent talks taking place in the Mayfair Library over the summer, one of which took place on 26th June with positive interaction and discussion.

- *The kids are (not) alright* - Empowering younger children online, 26th June
- *Teenage kicks (so) hard to beat* - Empowering teens online, 24th July 18:00 – 19:00
- *Turn and face the stranger - The worlds of AI & Gaming*, 22nd August 11am – 12noon

Night Time Economy

Six After 6

The Six after 6 series continues for the summer as six *Kilkenny* tourist attractions are keeping their doors open later as part of a *night-time economy pilot* initiative during June, July and August in collaboration with Failte Ireland and Visit Kilkenny. The first month was very popular with visitors and residents.

The six visitor attractions taking part are:

- Smithwick's Experience
- Castle Yard Craft Experience
- Rothe House
- St Canice's Cathedral
- Medieval Mile Museum
- Butler Gallery

The events will continue until 26th August. Event details and booking links can be found on www.visitkilkenny.ie/six-after-6/

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
		1	2	3	4	5
		8	9	10	11	12
6	7	15	16	17	18	19
13	14	22	23	24	25	26
20	21	29	30	31		
27	28					

Logos at the bottom: BUTLER GALLERY, THE CASTLE YARD, ROTHE HOUSE, SMITHWICK'S EXPERIENCE, MEDIEVAL MILE MUSEUM, ST CANICE'S CATHEDRAL.



NTE Diversification Fund Call 3

After two successful funding calls, Kilkenny County Council is seeking proposals from local businesses, community groups, event organisers, collaborators and individuals to develop projects that will support the growth and diversity of the night time economy in Kilkenny City. This fund will support applicants who wish to try new and exciting concepts after 6pm between Sunday and Thursday that can support the diversification of our night time economy. Call 3 will support a minimum of two events that take place between Sunday 7th September and Sunday 23rd November. A minimum grant of €500 and a maximum grant of €2,000 will be available to successful applicants. Call 3 opened on Monday 7th July and the

closing date for applications is 5pm on Friday 8th August.

Further details can be found on <https://www.localenterprise.ie/Kilkenny/Enterprise-Development/Night-Time-Economy/>

Grassroots Venue Music Funding Scheme

33 venues across the country have been offered funding of up to €15,000 from the Night-Time Economy Grassroots Music Venues Support Scheme to support the continued programming of early-career musicians. 3 venues in Kilkenny City (Billy Byrnes, John Cleere's Bar & Theatre and Langtons Set Theatre) were all successful in their funding applications.

TOURISM

Festival Supports

Funded by Kilkenny County Councils festivals grant scheme, June saw the return of Cat Laughs. This year the festival celebrated its 31st year in Kilkenny and provided a huge programme bursting with events around the city.

KILKENNY CAT LAUGHS 2025

Marketing & PR

All marketing and social media campaigns promoting Kilkenny to visitors near and far continues. "Love Kilkenny Longer" continues to showcase everything to see and do in Kilkenny City and County over the summer months, encouraging guests to stay longer and experience more throughout the county.

An Autumn food campaign is under development.



HOUSING

The Directorate of Housing incorporates a wide range of services for applicants and tenants to facilitate and support the provision of independent and supported accommodation. The following information gives the up to date progress for June, 2025 under the various support services.

HOUSING CAPITAL

<i>Project Name</i>	<i>Approved Housing Body</i>	<i>Total Social Housing Units Expected</i>	<i>Affordable Housing Units Expected</i>
<i>70-71 Patrick Street, Kilkenny</i>	Clanmil	4	
<i>HS 190 - Ogenty Gowran</i>		17	
<i>HS 220 - 4 St. Enda's Terrace, Paulstown, Co. Kilkenny</i>		1	
<i>12 Units at Station Avenue, MacDonagh Junction, Kilkenny.</i>	Kilkenny Voluntary Housing	12	
<i>HS 163 - Old Community Centre Loughboy, Kilkenny City</i>		2	
<i>8/9 Kilkenny Street, Castlecomer</i>	Kilkenny Voluntary Housing	3	
<i>HS 178 - Abbeymeadows, Abbeygate, Ferrybank</i>		18	
<i>HS 179 - Marnellsmeadows, Callan Road, Kilkenny</i>		22	
<i>Hs 187 - Main Street Gowran Co Kilkenny R95F4E1</i>		1	
<i>Hs 189 - 12 Wolfe Tone Street, Kilkenny City</i>		1	
<i>HS 198 - 6 Maudlin Street Thomastown Co Kilkenny</i>		1	
<i>HS 219 - 4 units Fiddown Co Kilkenny</i>		4	
<i>Chapel Lane, Kilkenny City</i>	Focus	5	
<i>"Red Barn" Patrick Street, Ballyragget</i>	Kilkenny Voluntary Housing	11	
<i>Mealloughmore, Windgap, Co. Kilkenny</i>		1	
<i>Bishopslough, Loughmacask, Kilkenny City</i>	Circle	22	
<i>2 Bed Group Home at 50 Greens Hill, Kilkenny</i>	SOS Kilkenny Housng Assoc.	2	
<i>HS 221 Abbeymount Abbey Road Ferrybank</i>		16	
<i>HS 150 - Abbey Hill, Newtown, Thomastown</i>		20	22
<i>HS 208 - 18 Units at Ardreagh Lumper Lane Urlingford Co Kilkenny</i>		18	
		181	22

HOMELESS SERVICES

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.

HOMELESS SERVICES SUMMARY JUNE 2025	
Homeless Presentations	53
Homeless Assessment Outcomes	
Prevention & Interventions	39
Emergency Service	11
Not eligible / Did not avail of service	3
HAP Place Finder Service	
No of Homeless HAP tenancies @ 1 st day of month	152
No of Homeless HAP tenancies created during month	2
Number of Homeless HAP tenancy breakdowns	3
No of Homeless HAP tenancies in place @ last day of month	151
Other Social Housing Tenancies supported /created during month	11
Provision of Emergency Accommodation	
Households in Temporary Emergency Supported Accommodation @ June	30
Households in Temporary Emergency B&B accommodation	8
Households in Temporary Emergency B&B Accommodation that are families	7
Households (singles/couples) in Transition Emergency Accommodation	44
Households (Families) in Transition Emergency Accommodation (Own Front	10

SOCIAL HOUSING PROVISION

SOCIAL HOUSING SUPPORT APPLICATION SUMMARY JUNE 2025	
Number awaiting Social Housing Support at June 30 th (Gross Need)	1,339
Number awaiting Social Housing Support at June 30 th (Net Need)	673
No. of Social Housing Applications received in June	101
No. of applications incomplete / awaiting further information/clarification	52
No. of applications validated and ready for assessment during the month	32
No. of applications assessed during June	26
No. of applications awaiting assessment as @ June 30 th	40

HOUSING ASSISTANCE PAYMENT (HAP) SUMMARY JUNE 2025	
Total active HAP tenancies	422

New HAP tenancies set up	29
HAP allocated Social Housing	43
Closed HAP tenancies	41
HAP Rent Reviews	110
HAP Other tenancy amendments	623

HOUSING ALLOCATIONS JUNE 2025	
LA/RAS/Leasing offers of allocations made in June	13
LA/RAS/Leasing offers of allocations made to date 2025	154

TENANCY MANAGEMENT

Complaints

The Tenancy Management Section of Kilkenny County Council deals with anti-social behaviour complaints in relation to our tenants as outlined in the Anti-Social Behaviour Strategy. The number of cases received in June was 67.

MAINTENANCE HOUSING STOCK

The Housing Operations team have commenced a pilot scheme for roll out of a new app for stock surveys to existing housing stock as agreed with the department. The completion of stock surveys will allow Kilkenny County Council to improve the delivery of our planned maintenance programme.

MAINTENANCE CALLS JUNE 2025	
Maintenance calls in June	540
Maintenance calls year to date	3,712

PRIVATE HOUSE GRANTS

The 2025 housing grants allocation has been received from the Department of Housing, Local Government & Heritage in the amount of €2,575,197 comprised of €2,188,917 (85%) grant and €386,280 (15%) KCC contribution.

GRANTS APPROVED & COMMITTED JUNE 2025		
Scheme	Number	Amount
HGD - Housing Adaptation Grant	102	€1,119,491
MAG - Mobility Aid Grant	10	€34,867
HOP - Housing Aid for Older Persons	180	€1,052,772
Total	292	€2,207,130

GRANTS PAID OUT JUNE 2025		
Scheme	Number	Amount
HGD - Housing Adaptation Grant	25	€269,106
MAG - Mobility Aid Grant	1	€2,863
HOP - Housing Aid for Older Persons	69	€386,575
Total	95	€658,544

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 2025					
Loan Type	Received	Approved	Amount Approved	No. Paid	Amount Paid
Local Authority Home Loan	20	2	€216,000	2	€218,278
Caravan Loan	0	0	€0.00	0	€0
Total	20	2	€216,000	2	€218,278

VOIDS

At the end of June 2025 there were **46 vacant units** of local authority accommodation awaiting refurbishment or remediation works. 5 vacant units have been upgraded in June 2025 ready for allocation.

COMMUNITY

The Table below outlines in summary ongoing projects and schemes in the Community Department.

Town & Village Scheme			
Community Group	Project Description	Grant	Status
Glenmore CLG Project Development Measure 2022	Develop plans for a building purchased under Building Acquisition Measure. The building will be used as a community shop/café and meeting facility	€49,950	Near completion
Callan 2023	Restoration and clean-up of the King's River to enable the community to use it for activities fishing, swimming & canoeing and kayaking	€247,500	Contractor due to be appointed.
Dunnamaggin Local Community Group 2023	The Transformation of a community green space into and events amenity for all the community knows as Madge's Garden	€247,500	In progress, preparing tender documents
Urlingford Town Team 2023	Refurbishment of Community Hall. Phase 2	€500,000	Works 20% complete
Callan Project Development Measure 2024	Develop plans to establish an outdoor classroom community space in Abbey Field and examine the re-development of a derelict cottage in Moate Field and complete biodiversity studies on both sites	€49,950	Tenders to be awarded
Paulstown Community Group Project Development Measure	Complete feasibility and design studies for the creation of a centre point in the village, consisting of an open public green space with seating and leisure facilities. This will redevelop the village centre and provide accessibility between the main street and residential areas	€49,950	Public consultation undertaken

Rural Regeneration Development Fund			
Community Group	Project Description	Grant	Status
Piltown	Phase 1 of the project comprises of main street urban renewal enhancement, parking bays, EV charging points, and bicycle bays x2	€2,180,931	Consultants appointed for detailed design. Surveys ongoing.
Glenmore	Develop the South East Greenway Connectivity Link and Pink Rock Cycle Loop & Amenity Trail	€2,356,423	Kilgallen and Partners Consulting Engineers were appointed for preparation of detail design and tender documentation
Thomastown	Thomastown Library and upgrade to Community Centre	€4,013,115	Works progressing as scheduled

Community & Cultural Facilities Capital Scheme			
Community Group/ Year Approved	Project Description	Grant	Status
Johnstown Sports Field 2022	Contribution to development of walk way around complex	€40,000	Awaiting start date.
1 st Kilkenny Scout Group 2022	Upgrade of lighting to LED lighting, improve installation in attic, upgrade boiler and installation of solar panels	€15,000	Work due to commence
Mooncoin Celtic AFC 2023	LED Floodlighting for extra training area	€20,000	Not yet commenced
Bigwood Playground 2023	New playground	€35,000	Works 90% complete
Cois Nore 2024	Develop and Refurbishment of Community Space	€40,000	Works commenced
Ballyhale Shamrocks 2024	Upgrade of toilets / disability access	€9,000	Works not yet commenced
Gowran Community Complex 2024	Contribution towards the refurbishment of a community hub	€27,000	Works commenced

CLÁR			
Community Group	Project Description	Grant	Status
Tullagher Rosbercon GAA Club	Provision of tarmacadam car park, passing bay and emergency access road to new playing field	€50,000	90% of works completed
Galmoy Community Hall	Provision of a MUGA	€30,015	Not yet commenced
Skeoughvosteen Community Centre & GAA	Provision of outdoor public and wheelchair accessible public toilets	€50,000	Procurement in progress
Ballyouskill Community Hall	Upgrades to carpark, roof repairs and replacement of door.	€36,641	Not yet commenced
Windgap Handball Alley	External insulation of two outside walls	€29,419	Not yet commenced
Windgap GAA	Works to include tarmacadam to driveway and parking area	€38,307	Procurement being finalised

CRF			
Community Group	Project Description	Grant	Status
Christian Youth Centre	Development of existing building to provide community space, meeting rooms	€100,475	Pre-tender stage
Fr. McGrath Centre	Installation of Solar Panels, Painting of building	€390,607	Pre-tender stage
Muckalee Community Cafe	Coffee Machine, Tarmac, Tables and Chairs, access fob	€50,000	Final works due to commence
Castlecomer Community Hall	Repairs to roof, wooden flooring and painting	€50,000	Contractor appointed

Age Friendly Ireland's Ambassadors' Day

Age Friendly Ireland's Ambassadors' Day took place on the 18th June 2025. The event held in Visual, Carlow brought together Age Friendly Ambassadors from across the country for a day of discussion, reflection and visibility around the theme: Wellbeing in Later Life – Physical, Mental and Emotional Health. The event shone a light on the lived realities of ageing in Ireland, where the over-65 population is expected to double by 2050, and underscores the need to place dignity, purpose and wellbeing at the heart of national policy, community initiatives and everyday conversations.

Kilkenny County Council Age Friendly Programme was represented on the day, along with other Age Friendly Programme staff from across the Country. Age Friendly Ireland's Ambassadors' Day had a clear message that emotional, mental and physical health must take centre stage in how Ireland supports and celebrates ageing.



*Kilkenny Age Friendly Ambassador
Nickey Brennan (left) at Age Friendly Ireland's Ambassadors' Day*

Healthy Age Friendly Homes

The Healthy Age Friendly Homes Programme in Kilkenny continues to support older people, over 65 years of age, to live in their home for as long as possible. The programme accepts referrals from a variety of sources including from the older person themselves, Local Authority Staff, Family and friends, Public Health Nurses, GP's and Occupational Therapists, Elected Representatives and Community Organisations. Consent from the older person (verbal) must be obtained before the referral is submitted.

Once the referral is received, the Local Coordinator gets in-touch with the older person to arrange a free home visit. Referrals to the programme can be through the Age Friendly website: www.agefriendlyireland.ie, by phone 046-9248899 or by email healthyagefriendlyhomes@meathcoco.ie

Kilkenny Local Community Safety Partnership

Minister Jim O'Callaghan signed off on the final regulations for the establishment of Local Community Safety Partnerships under the Policing, Security and Community Safety Act and these will come into operation on the 30th June 2025.

The National Office for Community Safety are preparing a guidance document regarding Local Community Safety Partnerships. This document, in tandem with the regulations, provides a framework for the establishment and operation of Local Community Safety Partnerships and will be issued in the coming weeks.

The partnership will work with a diverse range of members across all community group throughout County Kilkenny to identify safety concerns.

Healthy Ireland - Kilkenny County Council Initiative Presented at the EU Parliament

The Urban Action Against Cancer (UcanACT) pilot project, led locally by Kilkenny County Council, was presented at the EU Parliament and hosted by MEP Kathleen Funchion in Brussels on 11th June 2025. Over three years, this initiative involved 7 partners across 5 counties, including local authorities, physiotherapists, universities, and researchers.

Kilkenny County Council engaged 62 adults aged over 50 in physiotherapist-led exercise programmes across three parks, promoting outdoor activity among adults and older citizens. Similar pilots were conducted in Bologna, Italy, and Munich, Germany, offering community-based outdoor exercise programmes led by physiotherapists as both a preventive measure and a support tool for cancer patients over the age of 50. A total of 212 citizens participated across the three pilot locations.

The project demonstrated notable results, including enhanced physical activity levels, improved quality of life scores, and reduced fatigue among participants. Additionally, participants reported improved fitness, balance, strength, and sleep quality, along with strengthened social connections and reduced anxiety.

According to the WHO's World Cancer Report (2020), regular exercise significantly reduces cancer risks and enhances overall health outcomes. This project aligns with sustainable healthcare goals set by the WHO, contributing to sustainable development objectives and is a powerful example of community-driven, cross-sector collaboration for public health, innovation and prevention strategies.



Janette Boran, Kilkenny County Council Healthy Ireland coordinator and Katherine Peacock, Kilkenny County Council Community Section at the EU Parliament in Brussels

BikeWeek

Bike Week 2025 was organised by Kilkenny County Council's Community Section along with the Active Travel Section, with support from Cycling Ireland, Kilkenny Recreation & Sports Partnership and a wide range of local groups. Across county Kilkenny, 32 organisations hosted 36 cycling events that drew over 2,100 participants of all ages and abilities, creating awareness of cycling as an enjoyable form of transport and physical activity.

Events were held in parks and open spaces across the county, including Ferrybank Neighbourhood Park, Dunmore Biodiversity Park, the Moate Field, Callan, Pococke Park, Castlecomer Discovery Park, and County Hall, offering something for everyone – from thrilling mountain biking to fun-filled treasure hunts and relaxed community Slow Rolls. Many young children took part in 'Learn to Cycle' sessions, obstacle courses and grass track racing, while young families enjoyed a treasure hunt on the new cycle paths in Hebron and Pococke Park. In addition, there was scenic group rides through Kilkenny's villages and greenways and more experienced cyclists explored off-road trails in Castlecomer. A highlight of the week was the Drumming Bikes around City Sights Cycle in Kilkenny City on the Saturday night, a large group of cyclists of all ages visited sites around the city, accompanied by the sound of the drums!

A wide variety of activities were on offer to schools across Kilkenny with 1,545 students participating in 22 events. This included Cycle Right training, pop up mountain biking, escorted cycles, balance bike programmes and fun cycling days.



Bike Fest, The Moate field, Callan



Kilkenny Schools Bike Programme



Lunchtime cycle to Dunmore Biodiversity Park



Bike Week Treasure Hunt

INTEGRATION

The Local Authority Integration Team (LAIT) continues to provide on-going integration support to people categorised in the following groups living in County Kilkenny:

- Beneficiaries of Temporary Protection (BOTP) (Ukrainians)
- International Protection Applicants (IPAs)
- Programme Refugees
- Refugee, Subsidiary Protection or Permission to Remain status

Currently there are 476 Ukrainians in 12 properties under contracts with the Department of Justice, Migration & Home Affairs, 208 Ukrainians living in Offer A Home properties and Irish Red Cross pledged properties, of which they avail of the Accommodation Recognition Payment. There are 184 International Protection Applicants (IPA's) in 4 properties under contract with the Department of Justice.

69% of Ukrainians and 67% of IPAs are registered as employed.

In June, the LAIT continued their work providing information, advice and advocacy to:

- 86 Ukrainians with 139 interventions including queries relating to linking them in with partner organisations when they move to other parts of the country and assistance with changing their address
- 39 IPA's with 62 interventions including queries around the immigration process, work permits and accommodation

In total for 2025, the LAIT have supported 510 individuals with 1,811 interventions.

Events:

The LAIT regularly collaborates with partner agencies and is planning more events for the year ahead:

- The LAIT completed their facilitation of weekly photography workshops for migrants which culminated in a photography exhibition at Butler Gallery, entitled 'I am Me, not just a Refugee'. The exhibition opened on Tuesday 17th June to mark the start of Refugee Week and ran until Sunday 22nd June
- On Friday 20th June the LAIT held another great event for Refugee Week entitled "Home is Here" – an afternoon of food, music and discussion with Afghan refugee Manizha Khan at Butler Gallery
- To close out Refugee Week the LAIT also organised a free screening of the movie 'Io Capitano' at the Watergate Theatre on Saturday 21st June
- Upcoming events – In July, The LAIT are planning an information session for migrants in Kilkenny on the topic of 'Independent Living' in collaboration with the Irish Refugee Council
- The LAIT also continues to facilitate weekly drop-in clinics in collaboration with Kilkenny Leader Partnership, held at the Fr. McGrath Centre Neighbourhood Hall every Tuesday morning





Offer of a Home and IRC Pledged Properties at 30th June 2025:

June 2025	Number of Pledged Properties	Number of Residents
Offer a Home Scheme	56	187
Pledged Properties (<i>shared and not shared</i>)	4	19
Total	60	206

The 'Offer a Home' Scheme is managed by Local Authorities on behalf of the Government. A Government tax-free Accommodation Recognition Payment (ARP) of €800 per month is available to property owners offering accommodation to Ukrainians with Temporary Protection status up to end of March 2025 currently. Minister Foley recently announced her intention to seek Oireachtas approval to extend the ARP scheme for a further year to the end of March next year. Subsequent to this, a draft order will be advanced proposing a reduction in the monthly ARP payment from €800 to €600, from June 2025. This reduction seeks to mitigate any unintended impact on the private rental sector. It also reflects recent policy changes which aim to ensure that such temporary and timebound supports for people who are Beneficiaries of Temporary Protection are proportionate and equitable. As the payment is payable monthly in arrears, the first payment at the reduced rate will be received by hosts on 8 July 2025. Further details are available on www.offerahome.ie or you can contact the Kilkenny County Council Ukrainian Response Team.

A separate programme is in place run by the Irish Red Cross which is seeking pledges of spare rooms or accommodation that would be shared with the owner or others. If an owner wishes to pledge a spare room in their house, they can contact the Irish Red Cross at (01) 6424600 or email info@redcross.ie.

Community Recognition Fund:

The Community Recognition Fund was first introduced in 2023 to recognise the huge efforts made by communities in welcoming and supporting Ukrainians coming to Ireland. This funding is specifically targeted at projects that are located in areas within Kilkenny hosting Ukrainian Beneficiaries of Temporary Protection. The Dept of Rural and Community Development has recently announced the successful projects under Window 3 of the Community Recognition Fund 2024. For Kilkenny, the following group have been awarded funding from the Department of Rural and Community Development.

Community Recognition Fund (CRF) 2024 Window 3

Local Authority	City/Town/Village Area	Project Name	Group	Project Title	Total Grant Sought
Kilkenny	Ballyragget	Beech CYSM Hall Committee		Roof replacement in Ballyragget CYSM Hall	€173,843

FIRE SERVICES

Fire Brigade Operations

The existence of a professional fire and rescue service is fundamental to public and personal safety. The Fire Service plays a crucial role in making our communities safer, whether it be preventing and protecting people from fire and other risks or responding swiftly and effectively to the incidents and emergencies that occur 24 hrs per day/7 days per week/365 days per year. 473no callouts were received to date. These incidents included a number of road traffic collisions, hay barn fires, ambulance assists, outdoor rubbish, chimney fires and automatic fire alarm activations.

Fire Safety Certificate Applications

Kilkenny Fire and Rescue Service Fire Senior Fire Officers advise on current Building Regulations in relation to the fire safety standards required for proposed developments. In addition, Kilkenny Fire and Rescue Service fire prevention officers hold Fire Safety Certificate/Fire Prevention Clinics under Section 18(5) of the Fire Services Acts 1981 and 2003. These are predominantly held on a weekly basis and/or upon request in Fire Station HQ.

- 60 applications for Fire Safety Certificates were received to date.
 - A Fire Safety Certificate is a certificate issued by the Building Control Authority which states that the works or building to which the application relates will, if constructed in accordance with the plans and specifications submitted, comply with the requirements of Part B of the Second Schedule to the Building Regulations 1997.
- A 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 and 2003

- Fire Prevention staff made targeted inspections of premises both to provide advice and to enforce legislation during the first few months of 2025.
- 7 Licence Applications were processed under Section 24 of the Fire Services Acts 1981 and 2003.
- 2 licence applications under the Dangerous Substances legislation was assessed to date
- 50 Fire Safety Inspections of premises have taken place to date.

Recruitment of Retained Firefighters

Our current complement of Fire fighting staff in our 7 Fire Brigades are as follows:

- | | |
|-----------------------|-------------------------|
| ▪ Kilkenny City (14), | ▪ Thomastown (10), |
| ▪ Castlecomer (11), | ▪ Callan (12), |
| ▪ Freshford (11), | ▪ Graiguenamanagh (10). |
| ▪ Urlingford (8), | |

The WRC recommendation is to have a minimum of 12 firefighters in all Fire Stations. Four more recruits will be starting their initial 3 week firefighting skills course in July. These recruit fire fighters are for the brigades in Freshford, Urlingford, Thomastown and Graiguenamanagh. As well as responding to emergency calls and undertaking community fire safety initiatives, Retained Firefighters attend weekly training nights to maintain competency levels and undertake routine checks on their equipment.

Retained Firefighters are men and women who are on call to respond to a range of emergencies. Many retained firefighters have other full or part-time jobs but when the call comes they are ready to drop whatever they are doing and become part of a team, ready to face any emergency.

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 in turn can instruct and direct delivery of 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.

5 Recruit Firefighters from Kilkenny successful passed two week QQI Breathing apparatus training in Newbridge and Hackettstown Fire Stations. The aim of this 10 day course is to provide the learners (*trainee firefighters*), with the skills, knowledge and competency necessary to wear Breathing Apparatus. This course provides practical training on the knowledge and skills that are required to enable recruit firefighters to safely work as BA wearers at operational incidents, within the incident command structure and BA procedural norms. This course is intended to develop the learners in the discharge of their roles as firefighters and to assist their Fire Authority in its function as a fire and rescue service.



Students and Instructors on the recent BA course

A Fire Officer undertook training in Hazardous Materials. The aim of the course is to enhance fire authorities' ability to respond efficiently and effectively to incidents involving hazardous materials. Attendance at the course is intended to assist officers in discharging their functions in relation to training for and effective command and control at such incidents.

A Fire Officer undertook training in the Fire Service Trainer (Assessment). This training aims to further develop participant's skills/knowledge in the management and delivery of training at fire authority level. The training primarily focuses on the principles and practical application of the assessment process. Participants who successfully demonstrate a high level of skill, knowledge and ability are considered to be at a competency level appropriate for the delivery and assessment of training activities on national programmes such as QQI Firefighting Modules, NDFEM Officer Development or other instructor courses

Health and Safety

Kilkenny Fire and Rescue Service is committed to safeguarding, as far as is reasonably practicable the Safety, Health and Welfare of all employees, contractors and visitors. Kilkenny Fire and Rescue Service are committed to attaining full compliance with the Local Authority Safety Management System (LA SMS).

Community Fire Safety

The fire service completed its 19th year of the primary schools fire safety programme for third class pupils. We attended 51no schools. We delivered the 'fire safety message' to over 1,351no children throughout Kilkenny City and County, the programme is delivered through a package called "Rua the Firehound" and consists of a one-hour fire safety talk given by local firefighters. The programme is designed to enhance the level of awareness of fire safety in the home and to raise the level of awareness of fire safety in the community. The school children are expected as part of their homework, to interact with their families on the elements of the programme.



As part of our Community Fire Safety Programme, Thomastown Fire Brigade visited the kids participating in the Paulstown summer programme at Scoil Bhride, Paulstown.



Urlingford Fire Brigade attended the Johnstown Annual Field day Festival. They had a very positive day at Johnstown Sports Field. They had great interaction with the public about Fire Safety, giving them some valuable advice on fire prevention and smoke alarms. They also promoted Firefighter recruitment and had some interesting conversations with potential candidates.



Summer Stars 2025

Summer Stars 2025 launched on June 9th with launch events including face painting, Dog Man workshops, a disco and a show from Jellybean Julie. The Summer Stars reading challenge is a national reading programme for children that runs until the end of August. The challenge aims to promote a habit of reading for enjoyment and prevent the decline in literacy levels that can occur during the summer holidays.

Children are encouraged to read 8 books in any format and record them in their special Summer Stars activity booklet. Prizes including bags and bookmarks can be collected as they visit their local library and children are awarded a certificate and medal upon completion of the programme.

For the first time, we are also running a “Win the Window” competition to celebrate Summer Stars where the lucky winner will receive the contents of our promotional window display including books, beach supplies and a Toniebox.

To date, almost 1,700 children have registered for the Summer Stars reading challenge.



Cruinniú na nÓg 2025

Cruinniú na nÓg, the free day of creativity for young people, took place this June with 17 free events across our network of library branches and 330 young people in attendance. This year's programme was a varied celebration of creativity in all forms including samba drumming, pottery, STEM workshops, a model role play village, illustration workshops and a visit from a Book Doctor.



Lithuanian Librarian Visit

Kilkenny County Council Library Service were thrilled to welcome 6 librarians from Šiauliai County Povilas Višinskis in Lithuania for a professional visit and cultural exchange. During their visit, we gave them a tour of the Mayfair Library, an overview of our sensory collection and services, a talk on Irish folklore and a guided tour of Kilkenny Castle.

It was a wonderful opportunity to share experiences and some of the excellent work being carried out in both library services and we look forward to collaborating again in the future.



Tonies Launched in Loughboy Library

On June 3rd we launched a pilot collection of Tonies in Loughboy Library – the first fully lendable collection available in an Irish public library. Tonieboxes are screen-free, storytelling devices designed for children aged 3 and up. With simple-to-use controls, they play stories, songs, and educational content when a Tonie – a collectible, hand-painted figurine – is placed on top.

Tonies have become an increasingly popular educational resource in recent years and research indicates that they can help to reduce daily screen time and improve early literacy scores in young children.

User feedback has been very positive with a waitlist of over 20 borrowers already in place for the Tonieboxes. Work has already begun to expand the collection and roll it out to 3 other library branches.



Thomastown Library Update

- External groundworks are progressing. The ramp walls are poured, and backfilling has commenced.
- External railings and QEF louvres are measured and in manufacture.
- Rooflights are on order.
- M&E 1st & 2nd fixing on the ground and first floor is nearing completion. Boiler house works have commenced.
- External render finishes have commenced i.e. insulation installation at the rear of site. The base coat is completed, and the finishing coat has commenced.
- The fitted furniture contractor is due on site this week to commence alcove and double tiered seating units.
- The passenger lift installation commenced on 12th May and is completed and ready for commissioning once mains power is available.
- Internal joinery installation is well advanced on the ground floor and window liners have recommenced on the first floor.
- Stud partitions on the first floor are now progressing and currently been closed.



Library Activities

This month we held lots of activities and events across our libraries.

These events included:

- A stained glass craft workshop in the Mayfair Library
- A display for Refugee Week in Loughboy Library
- A Dog Man Day for kids in Ferrybank Library
- A Farm Safety talk for kids in Graig Library
- A “Fostering is for You” talk from Túsla staff in Castlecomer Library
- A Summer Stars launch with Firefly Parties in Thomastown Library
- A visit from bestselling author Orla Mackey in Urlingford Library





Online Services Usage June 2025



3,503
eAudiobooks borrowed



414
online learning sessions



1,610
eBooks borrowed



181
language learning sessions



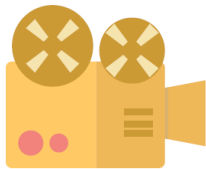
13,864
eNewsletters and magazines borrowed



37
eComics borrowed



96
films and shows streamed



Digital Engagement

Library staff prepared, recorded, edited and published **295** posts and videos on our social media platforms in June. Our engagements for the month were **7,714** and our virtual newsletter was sent to **7,884** email accounts.

Alignment with the Sustainable Development Goals



Here are 2 ways in which Kilkenny County Council Library Service helped to further the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals in June:



SDG 10: Reduced inequalities

Loughboy Library celebrated Refugee Week with a display of books chosen to facilitate conversation and explore the experience of being a refugee with children, families & communities.



SDG 11: Sustainable cities and communities

We continued to preserve, promote and provide access to our local heritage by continuing to digitise and add local materials to our Digital Archive and by investing in a digital microfilm reader for our Local Studies Department

Waste Not Want Not - InFlow Community Art Project

As part of Kilkenny Arts Office community and climate action 2025 programme the community project *InFlow* began on the 7th June, 2025 in St. Canice's Neighbourhood Hall. The textile-based project explores the impact of the textile industry on the world's waterways. Led by three circular textile creatives, Lynn Haughton, Jeni Roddy and Arran Murphy, and using the River Nore as a source of inspiration and connection, participants will create several upcycled pieces developed using textile waste streams locally identified. Over the course of the project the group will explore a variety of creative textile techniques and will learn about ways to counteract the impacts of the textile industry's misuse of water resources through conscious change in the re-use and re-imagining of textiles. Echoing the flow of the river the group will meander towards a final collective creative outcome to share with the wider community in Kilkenny.



InFlow Community Art Project

The River Is Me - Short Documentary Screening & Discussion

A free screening of "The River is Me" took place as part of the *InFlow* programme on 6th June 2025 at St. Canice's Neighbourhood Hall. This event was well attended with 38 people coming on the night and taking part in a lively post screening discussion. This thought-provoking film delved into a landmark court decision granting legal personhood to a river, sparking debates on our relationship with nature. After the screening, *InFlow* artists Jeni Roddy, Lynn Haughton, and Arran Murphy shared their inspirations and insights into sustainable textile art, exploring how art can foster a deeper connection with our environment.



Documentary screening of The River is Me

Community Embroidery Sampler

During the months of May and June the Waste Not Want Not Embroidery Sampler was in residence at Rothe House with sessions for the public to add their stitches on Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Saturdays. The sampler also formed part of the opening event for the Exhibition: *I Am Me, Not Just a Refugee* in Butler Gallery organised by Kilkenny County Council's Integration Team. It was well received at the event with many of those attending spending time adding their thread to this communal piece of work. In total there were 116 people engaged with the Embroidery Sampler.



Waste Not Want Not Community Embroidery Sampler



June saw the announcement of the Public Arts Programme, funded through the Percent for Art scheme and devised and managed by Kilkenny County Council Arts Office these commissions represent a total investment of over €450,000. Each project is designed to deeply engage with local communities and to ensure that people who live in

and visit Kilkenny can experience captivating, thought-provoking and innovative public art.

The five projects are as follows:

<i>Brown Mountain Diamond</i>	€45,000	Brown Mountain Diamond proposes to commission a residency programme and exhibition of five artists who are known for their work in community engagement and social investigation. The project will be based in North Kilkenny.
<i>Pauline O'Connell - From Hide to Heel</i>	€111,000	Socially engaged public art project that seeks to explore and celebrate the intertwined histories of Kilkenny's industrial and agricultural sectors.
<i>Fearghus Ó Conchúir - Extra Time</i>	€113,000	The aim is to engage with hurling and Camogie communities across county Kilkenny to create a diverse team of performers for a new dance film.
<i>Asylum Productions - The Alice Project</i>	€75,000	A multi-part, inter-disciplinary theatrical work examining the place of art in our community, and how we access it. Offers an outstanding level of community engagement based around the story, myth and legend of Alice Kytler & Petronella with a focus on the importance of that story.
<i>Straymaker</i>	€113,000	A county wide multi-disciplinary work, combining choral music, documentary, poetry, design and animation to create an immersive and evocative film.

The five projects span multiple disciplines; film, dance, theatre, visual arts, and literature – ensuring a stimulating and diverse programme of public art experiences. To capture the essence of this pioneering Public Arts programme, five of Ireland's leading contemporary authors will each produce original essays documenting the creative journeys behind the commissions.

These essays, complemented by images, will be compiled into a beautifully designed, full-colour publication offering behind-the-scenes access to the artistic process and journey of each commission. The publication will be freely available throughout Kilkenny and online, ensuring that this wonderful Public Arts Programme leaves a lasting impression.

CREATIVE IRELAND

Cruinniú na nÓg 2025

Cruinniú na nÓg 2025 festival commenced on the 18th May 2025 with a range of activities and culminated with a full day of activities across the county on the 7th June 2025. It was a resounding success with 4,881 people participating in 52 free activities across the county and engaging 71 artists.

The festival celebrated youthful creativity with diverse events such as camera-less filmmaking, dancing bubblicious fun, miniature painting, table-top game design, creative printing, collaborative murals through Wonder Walls, heritage project at St. Canice's Cathedral and multiple creative workshops within each library in Kilkenny. The workshops held in the outpatient's clinics of St. Luke Hospital were highly successful, providing a comforting and engaging distraction for children during their appointments, easing anxiety and pain, and creating a more relaxed environment for both children and staff. Older teens enjoyed DJ parties, animation workshops, creative dancing as Gaeilge, and digital music sessions as part of the night time events.

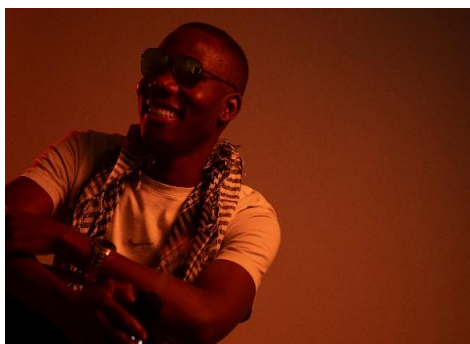
The festival expanded access to cultural and creative activities for people, including those in rural and minority communities, enriching their lives and promoting inclusivity. It also strengthened social cohesion and boosted economic development within the community. The collaborative efforts and dedication of those involved were key to the festival's success.



Creative Workshop at the Library



Windows of Imagination Project - St. Canice's Cathedral



I Am Me, Not Just a Refugee exhibition at the Butler Gallery

Creative Ireland Funded Projects

Creative Ireland supported a number of events throughout Kilkenny during the month of June. The launch of the 'I Am Me, Not Just a Refugee' exhibition was held at the Butler Gallery from 17th June to 21st June 2025 organised by Kilkenny County Council Local Authority Integration Team with hundreds of people attending the exhibition. A solo exhibition 'With Inclined Ear' by artist Saidhbhín Gibson exploring the value of sheep's wool and the disconnect between humans and natural materials.

The project engaged the local community through various activities, including drawing sessions, weaving demonstrations, and discussions, highlighting wool's sustainability and the impacts of fast fashion and global food markets on animals. Over 200 people engaged with project.

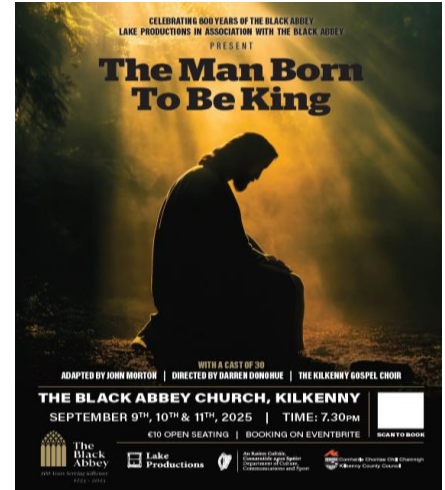
HERITAGE

Public Commemoration Programme 2025

Kilkenny County Council received an allocation of €15,000 from the Department of Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport and Media under the Public Commemoration Programme. This Programme follows on from the highly successful Decade of Centenaries Programme and funds locally significant anniversaries.

The Public Commemorations committee have allocated this funding towards three projects as follows:

- A lecture series hosted by Kilkenny Library service including talks about James Stephens, Fenian and Kilkenny native on the 200th anniversary of his birth.
- A Man Born to be King – the revival of a medieval mystery play produced by Lake productions in commemoration of 800 years of the Black Abbey. The play will take place on 9th, 10th and 11th September at 7.30 p.m. at The Black Abbey Church, Kilkenny.
- A research project analysing samples taken from a medieval ritual burial during excavations at the Black Abbey.



Kilkenny City Walls Consultation Walks

Kilkenny County Council has been awarded €14,000 from the Heritage Council through the Irish Walled Towns Network Interpretation and Events grant programme. This will co-fund the development of an interpretation plan for Kilkenny's City Walls. Research + Dig have been appointed to help in the preparation of the plan, led by Liam Mannix. During the month of June consultation walks around the full circuit of the city walls have taken place with a variety of stakeholders including the heritage/cultural organisations; tourism sector; Kilkenny County Council staff and the general public. Kilkenny City Municipal District elected members were also consulted in a workshop.



Kilkenny City Walls Consultation Walks led by Liam Mannix

2027 The Year of the Normans – People of Europe

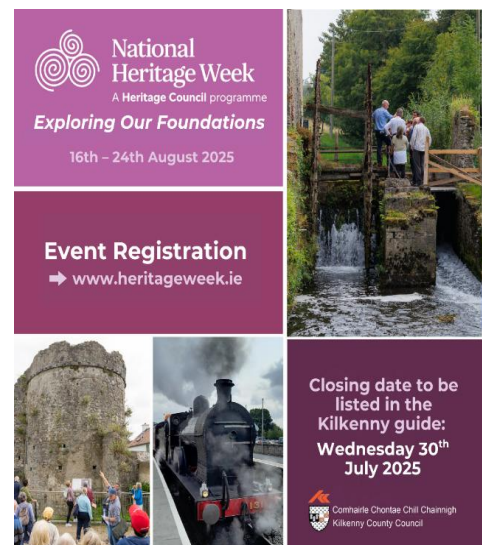
The Irish Government has approved cross-government engagement with the trans-European cultural initiative 2027 The Year of the Normans – People of Europe. The year-long commemoration in 2027 aims to celebrate a shared history that has shaped the island of Ireland and Europe.

Throughout modern Ireland the legacy of our Norman heritage can be found in our lands, laws, monuments and built environment. Participation in this initiative aims to commemorate and recognise our Norman history whilst also benefiting tourism and its associated economy.

Ireland's participation is being coordinated by the National Monuments Service with involvement from relevant departments, agencies and institutions to maximise the impact of this trans-European initiative. The Regional Council of Normandy is inviting stakeholders from Normandy, France, the United Kingdom, the Channel Islands, Ireland, Southern Italy, Norway and Denmark to respond to this call for projects to create the programme for a major event-year. As a county with a strong Norman heritage this presents a range of opportunities for Kilkenny.

Register for National Heritage Week

National Heritage Week is just around the corner, and the Heritage Office is inviting groups around the county to celebrate and share Kilkenny's rich heritage. Running from the 16th to the 24th August 2025, this year's theme—Exploring Our Foundations is a great opportunity to showcase Kilkenny's natural, built and cultural heritage. The event registration portal is open and groups are encouraged to submit their event early and make use of the helpful planning resources available on the Heritage Week website - <https://www.heritageweek.ie>. To be included in the Kilkenny guide and promoted locally, please register your event by Wednesday, 30th July, 2025.



BIODIVERSITY

Wild Kilkenny: Discover, Learn, Protect and Record

Kilkenny County Council is delighted to announce the successful completion of the Wild Kilkenny: Discover, Learn, Protect, Record, a biodiversity training course in collaboration with the Kilkenny Carlow Education and Training Board (KCETB). Over the past five weeks, participants have engaged in a comprehensive program designed to enhance their understanding of biodiversity and empower them as citizen scientists.



Participants of the biodiversity training course 'Wild Kilkenny: Discover, Learn, Protect and Record'

The course started during National Biodiversity Week on 21st May, 2025 and ran for five weeks. The course finished with a final field trip which studied water quality of the River Dinin at the Castlecomer Discovery Park with LAWPRO. The course included a series of evening lectures matched with practical field trips. Participants expressed their appreciation for the course, highlighting the engaging lectures, hands-on fieldwork and the opportunity to connect with like-minded individuals.

CIVIL DEFENCE

The month of June was a busy month for Kilkenny Civil Defence. The first recruit class of 2025 completed training. Several training exercises were conducted with the Fire Service both in Kilkenny City and Thomastown including boat familiarisation and a road traffic collision simulation.

Medical cover was provided at a number of events including the Ballyfoyle Agricultural show and The Mile Marker. Kilkenny Civil Defence were activated to missing person searches assisting An Garda Síochaná. Supported by Kilkenny County Council Environment section, the Civil Defence teamed up with Kilkenny Sub Aqua to remove shopping trollies out of the river in Kilkenny city.



Medical cover at Kilkenny events



Kilkenny Civil Defence and Kilkenny Sub Aqua removing shopping trollies out of the river



Training exercises with Kilkenny Fire Service

Kilkenny County Council

Finance Report – July 2025.

The expenditure by service division to the end of June is set out in table 1. Total Expenditure for the period was €59m compared with the annual budget of €120m.

<u>Table 1</u>	Actual YTD June 2025	Budget Full Year 2025
	€'000's	€'000's
Housing & Building	16,375	30,784
Road Transport & Safety	13,044	31,383
Water Services	2,991	7,180
Development Management	6,313	15,417
Environmental Services	8,515	18,991
Recreation & Amenity	3,888	9,425
Agriculture, Education, Health, Welfare	191	354
Miscellaneous Services	4,535	6,938
Central Management Charges for allocation	2,803	
Overall Total	58,655	120,472

Rates Invoices 2025

The annual rate invoices for 2025 totalling €24.4 million were issued to 2850 rate customers in February. Commercial rates are payable in full from 1st January 2025. A prompt payment discount of 8.3% (capped at €300 per rate account) is available for customers who pay the balance owing in full before end of May 2025 or enter into a monthly payment plan before April 2025. The total rates collected to the end of June is at 63% which is approximately 5% up on the same time last year.

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 191 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	2 cases

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

Finance update

The bank overdraft facility was not utilised during the six-month period to the end of June 2025. The audit by the Local Government Auditor for year end 2024 is ongoing.

Capital Programme 2025 – 2030

The six year capital programme will be presented to Council at the July plenary meeting. The total estimated expenditure over the six year period is €1.0 billion, €624m of which is in social housing. The match funding required from Kilkenny County Council own resources is €91.7m excluding housing. The estimated funding available is €50.5m coming from a combination of existing reserves, new term loans and future development contributions.

This leaves a net shortfall of €40m which will have to be sourced to deliver the full programme. Council is obliged to have identified funding sources for each project before a final commitment is made to proceed with a project.

The capital programme will be reviewed each year to ensure sufficient funding is identifiable.