



Comhairle Chontae Chill Chainnigh
Kilkenny County Council

CHIEF EXECUTIVE REPORT

OCTOBER 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.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

TABLE OF CONTENTS 2

CORPORATE 3

PLANNING 6

ENVIRONMENT..... 10

PARKS & SPECIAL PROJECTS..... 15

LEO/ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT 18

HOUSING..... 21

COMMUNITY..... 25

INTEGRATION..... 28

FIRE SERVICES..... 30

LIBRARY..... 32

ARTS..... 35

HERITAGE 38

CIVIL DEFENCE 39

FINANCE 40

Exit4 rural innovation hub officially opens in Urlingford, Co. Kilkenny



National Services Day in the Castle Park

**Members of Macra na Feirme make a
presentation at the
September Council meeting**



**The Mayor Welcomes Delegation from
Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council
to Kilkenny**





Kilkenny County Council's Strategic Policy Committee for Economic Development, Enterprise Support, Tourism and Planning & Development acknowledging Michael O'Keeffe who won 1st prize in Intermediate Category at this year's Student Enterprise Programme National Finals



Launch of Savour Kilkenny 2025

PLANNING

DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT

Planning Summary	Total January to September	
	2024	2025
Planning Applications Received	582	741
Planning Applications Granted	495	566
Planning Applications Refused	41	50
Complaints Received	103	104
Warning Letters Issued	49	76
Enforcements Notices Issued	30	444
Cases Closed	48	113
Cases sent for legal prosecution	0	13
Section 5's Received	52	55
Section 5's Decided Upon	50	63

There has been a significant increase in the number of planning applications in the year to date compared with the same period in 2024. A 24% increase in application numbers being recorded. The figures also indicate increased activity in enforcement with significant increases in the issue of warning letters and enforcement notices with increases of 55% and 46% respectively.

FORWARD PLANNING

Development Plan 2021 – 2027 - Update on Review

The Minister recently published new Guidelines on the implementation of the National Planning Framework (NPF) First Revision. (*NPF Implementation: Housing Growth Requirements Guidelines for Planning Authorities*). These Guidelines set out the housing demand projections to 2040 for each local authority.

Each Local Authority is required to assess the current City and County Development Plan core strategy and settlement strategy against the objective of the Guidelines. This comprises a review of the adequacy of existing zoned lands to cater for the NPF housing growth requirement figures for the full duration of the existing Development Plan. Upon completion of that step, a report will be issued to the Members, with a recommendation from the Chief Executive detailing how the objectives of the Guidelines will be secured.

Kilkenny County Council are currently in the process of two variations dealing with Castlecomer and Ferrybank/Belview which will be assessed against the Guidelines. An assessment for remainder of the County and impacted settlements is currently underway.

Pending the outcome of that process, the commencement of the review of the 2021 City and County Development Plan, and preparation of the new Development Plan, will be determined at a future date in consultation with the Department of Housing Planning and Local Government.

Castlecomer Settlement Plan

A Proposed Variation 5 to incorporate a Settlement Plan for Castlecomer into the Kilkenny City & County Development Plan (KCCDP) 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 commenced public display on the 30th May and submissions were accepted up until the 27th June. A total of 15 submissions were received.

The Chief Executive's Report on submissions was considered by members at the July 2025 Council meeting, and it was resolved to materially alter the Proposed Variation. The preparation of the material alteration documents, and associated environmental assessments, will also consider the NPF Implementation: Housing Growth Requirements Guidelines for Planning Authorities issued in July under Section 28 of the Planning Acts.

Ferrybank / Belview Settlement Plan

Proposed Variation 6 to the Kilkenny City and County Development Plan 2021 – 2027 commenced public display on July 18th, with the closing date for submissions being September 19th, 2025. Variation no. 6 proposes to incorporate a Settlement Plan for Ferrybank / Belview into the current City and County Development Plan.

A total of 77 submissions were received.

A Chief Executive Report is being prepared, and this will consider the proposed variation, the submissions made and the requirements of the NPF Implementation: Housing Growth Requirements Guidelines for Planning Authorities issued in July under Section 28 of the Planning Acts.

Taking in Charge

Works are progressing on the following estates:

- Westcourt, Callan
- Fiodh Mor, Leaca Ard, Ferrybank

Active Land Management

The Residential Zoned Land Tax (RZLT)

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.

As set out in Budget 2026, landowners subject to RZLT will have another opportunity to request a change in the zoning of their land. As a result of making such a request, landowners may qualify for an exemption from the 2026 RZLT liability.

Vacant Sites Register

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: Thatching projects are now complete. Final inspection is required prior to paying the grant.

Thatching Grant 2025: Thatching projects are now complete. Final inspection is required prior to paying the grant.

Inistioge Architectural Heritage: The first draft of the necessary conservation works on the historic cobbles, the Tighe Memorial and the steps of Inistioge Castle has been submitted for review.

Built Heritage Investment Scheme 2026: The closing date for the scheme has now passed. The Conservation office will now collate all applications, inspect buildings and assess applications.

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

▪ Planning Referrals.....	4
▪ Further Information Requests	2
▪ Clarification of Further Information Requests.....	0
▪ Section 57 Declarations.....	0
▪ Post planning	1
▪ Part VIII	0

Building Control

Valid Commencement Notices Received	Disability Access Applications Received
September 2025..... 267	September 2025..... 43
September 2024..... 268	September 2024..... 38
September 2023..... 246	September 2023..... 39
September 2022..... 267	September 2022..... 32

TOWN REGENERATION OFFICE

Engagement took place over the summer months in Graiguenamanagh to gather content for a Town Centre First Plan for the town. The findings of the engagement were presented to the Town Team on the 10th September and this was followed up with public engagement events on 24th September. All were well attended and there were lively discussions around possible actions to be identified in the Plan. A further meeting with the Town Team is being held on 8th October with a view to refining the actions to be included.

Vacant Property Refurbishment Grant

To-date the Council have paid out €4.5 million to successful applicants. The following are the full statistics up to end of September, 2025:

Vacant Property Refurbishment Grant as at 30 th September, 2025	
Number of Applications Submitted to-date	349
Number of Approvals / Approvals in Principle to- date	262
Grant Drawdown to-date	93
Number of Queries during the month of September	87

THRIVE

The Council's application for funding under the THRIVE scheme was successful. We were awarded €3.9 million to fund the refurbishment of Carnegie Library as a Cultural Hub, incorporating Library staff and the Local Studies element of the library service. It also provides funding for the refurbishment of the public realm area around the Library.



Derelict Sites

The derelict site at Chapel Street, Mooncoin acquired by Compulsory Purchase Order was put on the market for sale. Notice under Section 183 for disposal of the property is for consideration at the October meeting. A Compulsory Purchase Order was commenced for a house in Ballyragget. There were no additions to the Derelict Sites Register and one property was removed.

Butts Area Regeneration Framework

A community event was held on Sunday, 21st September at the Kilkenny County Council Site Office, 19, Pearse Street. There was great participation by members of the Town Team and sub-groups. The day went extremely well with lots of activities organised, such as face-painting, games for children and adults and lots of refreshments provided. The weather held up well and the community turned out in force. Mayor, Cllr. John Coonan attended as well as St. Canice's Parish Priest Fr. Willie Purcell and the Bishop of Ossory, Bishop Niall Coll. It was a thoroughly enjoyable day and helped to enhance community spirit.



ENVIRONMENT

Community Climate Action Programme – Phase 2

Applications for Phase 2 of the Community Climate Action Programme will be accepted from Wednesday 22nd October until Wednesday 17th December, 2025. The overall objective of the Community Climate Action Programme is to support and empower communities to take climate action and to shape and build low carbon, sustainable communities in a coherent way to contribute to national climate and energy targets.

Phase 2 of this Programme is very similar to Phase 1 and successful applicants under this scheme will deliver a variety of projects that have a direct climate action impact. Projects will have to address at least one of the following five themes:

- Community Energy,
- Travel, Food and Waste,
- Shopping and Recycling
- Local Climate
- Environmental Action.

For further information about the Community Climate Action Programme and how to apply, contact Kilkenny County Council's Community Climate Action Officer, Breda Maher by email breda.maher@kilkennycoco.ie or visit Kilkenny County Council's [website](#), for full details including the Briefing Note, Terms and Conditions and Guidelines document for communities and how to apply for this Programme.

CO2 Emissions

CO₂ emissions and energy performance results for 2024 are now final. The SEAI updated the calculations using final conversion and emissions factor for 2024. SEAI Annual Report will be published in Q1 2026. Kilkenny County Councils' CO₂ emissions reduced by 7% in 2024 compared to 2023 and reduced by 36.8% compared to the 2016-2018 baseline period. The M&R system is a web-based software system through which public bodies such as Kilkenny County Council report energy, emissions and related data (*Energy Projects, Building Stock Register, Vehicle Register & Procurement and Business Travel*) to SEAI each year to enable SEAI to track progress towards energy and climate policy targets.

Retrofitting Council Buildings

Work is continuing on the SEAI Pathfinder Programme which with the support of the Regional Energy Unit will allow Kilkenny County Council to access 50% for capital costs of retrofitting Council buildings. The external insulation upgrade on the Watergate Theatre is the first project in Kilkenny to receive approval for funding from the SEAI. Works are scheduled to start in November 2025 and finish in May 2026. A Designer Team for Phase 2 of works will be appointed in Q2 2026.

Fleet Decarbonisation Strategy

The Climate Action Regional Officer and Energy Officer are working with the Roads Section (*Machinery Yard*) to develop the Council's first Fleet Decarbonisation Strategy for the Council's Fleet. The emissions from fossil fuels used in the fleet are one of the most significant challenges for the local authority sector. The strategy which is driven by new EU legislation and is an action of the Council's Climate Action Plan is a very detailed look at how we can tackle this in Kilkenny County Council. It will address the following:

- Audit of the vehicle stock.
- Eco-driver training for fleet staff.
- Replacing fossil fuels with renewables/biofuels.
- Replacing diesel vehicles with EV's.
- Fuel procurement and payment systems.
- Route Selection.

The strategy document has been completed and currently under review.

Climate Action Training

Since March of this year training has been provided to staff and members of the Climate Action Steering Committee by the CARO under the [Local Authority Climate Action Training](#) Programme across the themes of Climate Risk Assessment, Nature-based Solutions, Biodiversity, Weather Forecasting; Green Public Procurement; Biomethane, Energy Performance and Financing of Climate adaptation and Mitigation.

After a break for the summer more training has been completed from September which focused on the Forestry Programme 2023-2027 and Climate Goals in Transport and will continue throughout 2026-2027. Since the end of June all webinar recordings and presentations from the *Local Authority Climate Action Webinar Series* (under the **Building Capacity** training pillar) are accessible via the Climate Action Training Programme LMS available on the **Local Authority Services National Training Group (LASNTG)** [LMS Moodle platform](#).

Kilkenny Chamber – Chamber Chat

Our Regional Climate Action Officer, Sarah Kent, was guest speaker at the recent Chamber Chat hosted at the O'Neill Foley Offices at Abbey Quarter. The event took place on 25th September. Sarah provided an overview of Kilkenny County Council 2030 decarbonisation and energy efficiency targets, the Local Authority Climate Plan, the progress on the implementation of actions along with an overview of exemplar projects completed by the Council that can be implemented both within private and public sector organisations. Sarah also provided information on available supports to guide climate action and help organisations become greener. Her contribution was well received and helped raise awareness of the practical steps and resources available to support climate action and sustainability.



International Day of Climate Action

Coordinated by the Climate Action Team in collaboration with the Library Service, the Mayfair Library will host a collaborative, information-sharing event on Friday, 24th October, from 10.00 a.m. to 12:00 noon to mark the International Day of Climate Action.

This event will bring together key insights from across Kilkenny County Council and local enterprise, aiming to inspire and guide local climate action. Attendees will have the opportunity to engage with representatives from several key areas, including:

- Climate Action & Funding
- Energy Management
- Environment
- Waste Management
- Biodiversity
- Active Travel

Designed as an informal and inclusive session, the event will foster dialogue, share practical insights, and highlight the interconnected efforts being made to address climate challenges across the County.

ENVIRONMENTAL AWARENESS

Team Up To Clean Up-Together For Kilkenny 19th to 21st September, 2025

Over the three days, 89 registered organizations came together with schools, businesses, and volunteers to make a real difference across the County. Bags of litter were collected from roadsides, estates and green spaces, leaving Kilkenny cleaner, safer and more welcoming. This year also saw the initiative align with the Green Schools Program for a second year, introducing a composting and recycling awareness program in local schools. On Friday, 19th September, students rolled up their sleeves to lead the way, combining classroom-based learning with hands-on clean-ups. It was a big success, not just for the environment but for the strong sense of community it fostered.

Hundreds Take Part in "Let's Team Up to Clean Up" Weekend 2025 - Kilkenny Observer



Savour Your Wellness Event-Mountain View, Ballyhale

The Environmental Awareness Officer and members from the Community Department of Kilkenny County Council have teamed up to collaborate with the staff at Mountain View to organise a Vintage Clothing Expo and Clothes Swap event on the October Bank Holiday Monday. Mountain View, Ballyhale will become a feel-good hub for all things sustainable, stylish and soul-nourishing. From 10.00 a.m. to 6.00 p.m. it will bring together a clothes swap, vintage fashion finds, wholesome food and plenty of fresh-air vibes.

There will be inspiring talks on sustainable style, food waste, and healthy living, plus energising physical activities to encourage increased mobility and movement. This event is rooted in the national drive for a circular economy. Donations from car parking (*included in race entry*), race entries, and stallholder fees go directly to Cois Nore's €2 million fundraising effort.

Green Teams Update-Waste Audit and Characterisation of Council Buildings

The Environment Department as part of the Council's Green Teams, tendered for a "Waste Audit and Characterisation" of the three main buildings which are County Hall, John's Green House and Patrick's Court. The Clean Technology Unit from Munster Technological University won the tender.

A Waste Audit of the 3 main buildings has been completed. A draft Report will issue to the Green Team for their input and staff members will be notified of the outcome within the coming weeks.

WASTE

RMCEI Inspection

The Waste Team are working their way through the almost 2,000 inspections planned for 2025 under the RMCEI Programme (*Recommended Minimum Criteria for Environmental Inspections*). By the end of Quarter 3 the team have completed over 1,350 inspections. Inspections are carried out in the areas of commercial and household waste, construction and demolition waste and illegal waste activities amongst other areas. The team complete this program of works whilst also investigating complaints received by members of the public. To-date the team have received 514 complaints.

Bring Banks Usage



The Council provides and manages 47 Bring Centres across the City and County. A total of **1,504 tonnes** of recyclables were collected from our Bring Centres to date in 2025. Loughboy Shopping Centre (15 tonnes collected) Aldi - Kilkenny City (16 tonnes collected) and Lidl - Johnswell Road (11 tonnes collected) were the busiest locations in the City in September. Lidl in Thomastown (8 tonnes collected) and Graigue-managh (8

tonnes collected) were the busiest outside of the City in September. 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 period.

Dunmore Civic Amenity Site (CAS)

It was a busy summer in Dunmore. Our site at Dunmore continues to be one of the busiest amenity sites in the state. For the first 9 months of 2025 we have seen an increase in the volumes of material delivered to site when compared to the same time in 2024.



The annual Bulky Waste week at Dunmore ran for the last week of September. This is an Anti-Dumping Initiative (ADI) which sets out to encourage the public to clean up their unwanted bulk waste and furniture in the correct manner at an authorised facility. Domestic loads of any size could be disposed of at Dunmore for a set fee of €5 for the duration of the Bulky Waste week.

It proved to be a huge success with 48 tonnes of furniture and timber being disposed of.

AIR NOISE WATER

Water Quality – Farm Inspections

Council staff continue to carry out farm inspections with 252 initial inspections completed to date. Farm inspectors are carrying out the onsite inspections and identifying sub basins that have high Nitrates and Phosphates present and focusing the inspection program in areas that are at risk from this pollution. The target for 2025 is 308 inspections.

Septic Tank Inspections

Septic tank inspections are ongoing with 45 completed to date. The target for 2025 is 59 inspections to complete.

Environmental Complaints

All Environmental complaints received are logged on the CRM (*Customer Relations Management*) System. The number of complaints that have been received and logged to date is 514. The nature of these complaints included littering, illegal dumping, burning of waste and abandoned cars. The majority continue to be related to 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.

Noise

Several staff in the Environment Office have completed Noise Monitoring Course in the previous month. This Training will enable staff to deal with noise complaints going forward and will allow Environment Section to be able to act more efficiently on noise complaints from the public.

Air

Two new air monitors have been installed – Butts area and City Centre. Staff will be monitoring the information received from these air monitors. The majority of Air inspections will take place in Q4. Environment staff have completed 30 inspections to date with 50 additional inspections to complete before year end.

RURAL WATER

Rural Water Committee

Kilkenny County Council are progressing the re-establishment of the Rural Water Committee with the intention of reconvening the Committee before year end, 2025.

Multi Annual Rural Water Programme 2024-2026

Group Water Schemes who have funding approval from the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage are progressing planned works through the procurement phase. Kilkenny West GWS and Highrath GWS are currently proceeding with planned works.

Subsidies for GWS Operations

50 valid GWS subsidy applications were received in respect of operational costs for year 2024. Payments to the value of €162,648 in respect of 29 subsidy claims released to date. Remaining applications under review.

Well Grants - Improvement Works to Private Water Supply

- 190 applications received to date, year 2025. Funding to the value of €335,734 paid out.
- 162 applications received in the same period 2024. Funding to the value of €363,202 released.

Tender for Water Testing

Tender for Water Testing is currently being prepared and is expected to be published shortly. Tender will cover water testing for Public Group Water Schemes, Private Group Water Schemes and Small Private Suppliers for a 2-year period, with the option of extending for a third year.

Rural Water Services Conference 2025

Council Staff attended the Rural Water Services Conference 2025: Quality and Quantity – Building Resilience in a Changing Environment on 11th September 2025 in Galway. Conference was informative and gave an opportunity for Group Water Schemes, Local Authorities, Department representatives and other stakeholders to meet, share initiatives and discuss issues with the provision of water in our rural communities.

Congratulations to Kilkenny West GWS who received an award under newly introduced category of GWS Ethos and Volunteerism Award.

PARKS & SPECIAL PROJECTS

PROJECT GENERAL

The Museum of Medieval Kilkenny

As part of the above, restoration and enhancement work on the Tholsel building continue to progress throughout the building. Some of the key elements progressed include:

Basement – archaeological excavation completed, installation of insulation and first fix M&E and limecrete subfloor poured and underfloor heating pipes installed. Limecrete floor poured over heating system and the re-laying of existing limestone slabs is ongoing, new floor slabs will be laid in areas where no existing slabs were present.

Rear Annex – archaeological dig and structural stabilisation work in annex completed, installation of R.C. lift shaft and stairs are ongoing. A new door opening has been formed between the annex and the basement which will provide access to the new stairs and lift-shaft from the basement. Excavation works for a service trench between St. Mary's and the Tholsel is ongoing, archaeology was encountered, including skeletal remains.

Ground Floor – Railing installed in the 1950's have now been removed and the installation of the steel frame for the glass reception area commenced, – see image.



First Floor – Rear curved annex - new floor installed to accommodate toilets over public reception area and the construction of new flat roof at a lower level has commenced.

Second Floor – Removal of r.c. concrete flat roof at rear extension, fireproof cladding of existing steel beams completed, treatment of defective floor joints ongoing, windows removed for restoration/replacement. Window opening into Mayor's Parlour reformed to original form to receive two traditional sash windows, see image below.

Third Floor – Introduced mezzanine floor removed.



Fourth Floor – Soft strip completed, west and north roof elevation re-felted and conservation roof light installation installed, re-slating of roof also ongoing. Removal of spoil from rear annex commenced.

External – Repairs to stonework and joint repointing 90% complete on south, west and north elevations, removal of cementitious plaster ongoing at east elevation (rear), finish to be agreed with the National Monuments Service.

South East Greenway

Works continue to progress to deliver 24km of greenway from New Ross to Waterford. Of the 24km some 14km are now completed or substantially completed and the second section of greenway, from Curraghmore to Ferrybank, is scheduled to open in November, subject to the handover of the Abbey Road access point to Waterford City and County Council by the contractor engaged to deliver the North Quays project.

Works on the detail design of the remaining sections of the greenway continues and the landowner liaison officer is also continuing to engage with adjacent landowners in relation to agricultural crossings and boundary fencing treatment.

Woodstock to South East Greenway Link

Following discussions with the IFA and to better explain the project to landowners within the Study Area an additional open evening was held on the 8th of Sept in Inistioge. The event was very well attended and the feedback received on the day was generally positive towards the proposed project.

On foot of the Council's application to progress the project to Phase 2, the Option Selection Stage, we were delighted to receive TII approval on the 22nd of Sept for same and the Design Team have now commenced works on this key stage.

Dunnamaggin Town & Village Renewal Scheme

This project provides for the enhancement of site known locally as Madges Garden and includes the restoration/repurposing of a derelict old barn building and. public realm works.

The works appointed contractor, JFK Groundworks, commenced site works on 15th Sept 2025 with an estimated 12-week programme of works. Initial site clearance is complete and remedial works have commenced on the main barn and lean-to roof and building.

The Clover Centre Ferrybank

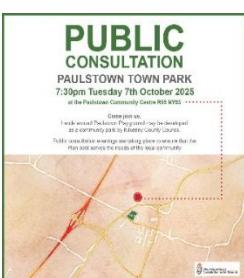


Earlier this year the council appointed Digby Brady Landscaping Architects, to assist with the preparation of a masterplan for a 9.5-acre site in Christendom, Ferrybank. An initial public consultation evening was held earlier in the year to determine the community needs and desires. On foot of this feedback a preliminary design process commenced and arising concepts were developed and assessed by the wider project team.

The concept plan to emerge from the above process was presented at a second public consultation event which took place on Thursday the 25th of September, in Abbey Community College. This event was well attended with strong views being presented from the local community.

Once the feedback from this event is considered a preliminary proposal will be presentation to the Piltown Municipal District members with the intention of advancing to planning stage, under Part 8, thereafter.

Paulstown Town Park



Digby Brady Landscape Architects have been working on the development of a masterplan for the future development of a high quality, community centred and multifunctional local park on a greenfield site, adjacent to the playground, in Paulstown, Co. Kilkenny. A draft masterplan is currently being finalised, and a public consultation event was held on Tuesday 7th of October. This project is being funded under the Town Centre First Scheme.

Woodstock Gardens & Arboretum

Autumn work is now well underway in Woodstock Gardens. Restoration has begun on the grotto and rockery area, where the team has been carefully cutting back heavy overgrowth to reveal the original network of paths winding through the rockery and leading towards the grotto. This work has already uncovered some wonderful features of the historic landscape, and Garden Team aim to have the grotto paths reopened by spring next year. Once complete, this will further enhance the visitor experience in Woodstock.

Across the wider gardens, seasonal maintenance is also progressing. Autumn tasks such as selective cutting back, leaving long growth areas for wildlife habitat, bulb planting, and general upkeep are ongoing. This is also the time of year when Woodstock's woodland walks are at their most striking, with vibrant autumn colours providing a spectacular backdrop for visitors to enjoy.



Kilkenny Countryside Park



A new story telling trail has been rolled out in the Kilkenny Countryside Park, by the Library Service. The story unfolds across 16 storyboards placed along the 1.3km Accessibility Trail. Families are invited to walk the trail, enjoy the fresh air, and read the story together, and in doing so, combining literacy, outdoor activity, and local culture in one engaging experience.

Kilkenny Countryside Park "Junior Park Run" had its 72nd event the last Sunday in September. The Junior Park Run every Sunday draws great numbers who jog, run and walk the course supported by numerous volunteers. Kilkenny Countryside Park has also been officially shortlisted for the prestigious International Green Flag Award, the leading international standard of excellence for parks and green spaces.



The Green Flag Award sets the benchmark for quality outdoor spaces across the globe, with sites judged against eight key standards, creating a welcoming place, ensuring health and safety, maintaining high levels of cleanliness, strong environmental management, conservation of biodiversity and heritage, active community involvement, effective communication, and excellence in overall park management.

The decision will be made in mid-November, and excitement is building. The shortlisting is already a huge recognition of the fantastic work carried out by the Parks Department and the local community, who have worked tirelessly to develop and care for this outstanding amenity.

Winning the award would be a major accolade, not only for Kilkenny County Council but also for the community of Dunmore, highlighting the Countryside Park as a place of pride and a shining example of how well-managed green spaces can benefit both people and nature.



LEO/ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Summary of 2025 Awards to Businesses

- €348,220 in direct financial assistance has been approved for 15 manufacture /export service businesses in located in throughout the County.
- €238,507 in Business Expansion Grant assistance.
- €60,000 awarded in Business Priming Grant Assistance.
- €19,713 awarded in Feasibility Study Grant Assistance.
- 14 Businesses have commenced LEAN one to one consultancy programmes to investigate possible resource efficiencies and process improvements their businesses.
- 27 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.
- 23 businesses have availed of the Energy Efficiency Grant totalling €169,840 to support investment in technologies and equipment of enterprises.
- 37 business have availed of the green for business consultancy support scheme. This scheme supports businesses to become greener and environmentally friendly.
- 6 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
- 286 businesses have availed of specialised business specific mentoring on a variety of topics including finance, marketing, social media marketing and HR.

Experience Lean in Action

The Local Enterprise Office Kilkenny as part of its LEAN support arranged a visit to Adman Steel Sheds based in Co Wexford to participate on the LEAN tour. The tour walks attendees through their offices & factory showcasing Lean processes & principles at every step of the way. This was followed a session hosted by SETU's National Centre of Excellence in Lean Industry 4.0. Business from across the County participated in the event including CDS Metal Work, Ballyfoyle; Premech Engineering, Mooncoin; JR Autosolutions, Ballyhale and Kilkenny Prestige Linen, based in Loughboy, Kilkenny.



Going Green 2025 Conference

Kilkenny County Council, through its Local Enterprise Office, in partnership with Kilkenny County Council Climate Action Team and Kilkenny Chamber of Commerce staged a seminar showcasing the green supports and funding opportunities for businesses in Kilkenny at Hotel Kilkenny on Tuesday, 30th September.

Eanna Ni Lamhna was the keynote speaker for the event and focused on sustainability practices. A discussion panel with local entrepreneurs took place to discuss their real-life experiences in the market including Amanda Greer of Tabu Tapas and Tina Dowling of The Watershed.





KILKENNY COUNTY COUNCIL ACKNOWLEDGES NATIONAL AWARD FOR KILKENNY STUDENT

Kilkenny County Council's Strategic Policy Committee for Economic Development, Enterprise Support, Tourism and Planning & Development acknowledged a student from Kilkenny that was awarded 1st prize in Intermediate Category at this year's Student Enterprise Programme National Finals.

Supported by Local Enterprise Office Kilkenny, Michael O'Keeffe from St. Kieran's College won Overall Winner in the Intermediate Category. Michael worked under the guidance of his teacher, Jennie Brennan. The business was called: "Suet & Song" which markets nutrient-rich suet cakes that provide sustenance for a variety of birds during the colder months.



Greater Galway Forum

Kilkenny County Council was delighted to welcome the Great Galway forum to Kilkenny on the 11th & 12th September. The group visited a number of sites around the City and heard presentations on the Abbey Quarter, Medieval Museum of Kilkenny and from the IDA and Enterprise Ireland.

NTE Diversification Fund Call 3

After two previously successful funding calls, Kilkenny County Council sought 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 from between Sundays and Thursdays after 6pm from September to November. Call 3 opened on Monday 7th July and the closing date for applications was 5pm on Friday 8th August. Following an evaluation process, the following applicants were successful.

Applicant	NTE Initiative
Low Lane Café	Linocut Printing Workshop
Ryans Bar	Trad on Thursdays
The Nerd Quiz	Monthly Nerd Quiz
Gillian Grattan	8-week Filmmaking Workshop
Cult Collective	Storytelling Circle Events
National Reptile Zoo	Zoo Zen
SEA School	The Wild Mile – Urban Wildlife Walks
The Set theatre	Midweek Gigs
The Dance Club	Dances Fitness
Medieval Mile Museum	Latin Dance Nights
The Happy Pottery	Pottery Decorating & Clay Making Workshops

Culture Night Late

The NTE co-funded a number of events across the City on Friday 19th September. As part of Culture Night, *The Night Creates* was a specially curated series of night time events in Rothe House including Creative conversations, a young and upcoming band called Seafall, traditional music with Anthony McCauley and Friends and comedy acts from The Kilkenny Comedy Club. Supported by the Night Time Economy pilot and Creative Ireland, it showcases and highlights the year-round commitment from Kilkenny County Council to support artists, creatives and businesses in contributing to a thriving social, cultural and economic City and County. Over 230 people attended the events across the evening.

Kilkenny Tourism and visitkilkenny.ie

Kilkenny Tourism hosted its 2025 AGM on 24th September at the Parade Tower in Kilkenny. The event saw our partners in the Tourism and Hospitality Sector come together to both review the previous years activity and to also look towards the end of this year, the off season and further into next season for planning and activation measures. Gareth Alcorn agreed to remain in the role of Chairperson of Kilkenny Tourism with a number of new directors, welcomed on board for the next three years. The board thanked resigning Directors for the time and commitment given to Kilkenny Tourism over their tenure and welcomed new directors on board;

DIRECTOR RESIGNING	SECTOR	DIRECTOR ELECTED
Fiona Delahunty	Hotels	Mark Flynn from Newpark Hotel
Colin Ahearn	Hotels	Elina Bontasos from Mount Juliet Estate
Mairead O'Dwyer	B& B/Guesthouses	No nominations – sector to be covered by Francis Nesbitt until a new appointment
Valerie O'Sullivan	Heritage & Culture	Re-Elected

Irish Tourism Industry Confederation



ITIC's annual conference which took place on October 1st at the 5-star Lyrath Estate in Kilkenny. Themed 'Resilience in an Uncertain World' this year's event had a stellar line up including Tourism Minister Peter Burke TD, hospitality

expert Francis Brennan, Dalata CEO Dermot Crowley, economist Jim Power, Irish Heritage Trust CEO Anne O'Donoghue, Fáilte Ireland Chair Ruth Andrews and former Ambassador to the US Dan Mulhall as well as other speakers. Kilkenny County Council are delighted to have sponsored the event and to have welcomed so many delegates from the tourism sector to Kilkenny for the conference.



Fam Trips

Mayor Coonan welcomed guests to Kilkenny from the Wisconsin Assembly, members from the Wisconsin Arts Department and Representatives of the Milwaukee Arts and Craft Community. The trip aimed to enhance the ties between Kilkenny and Wisconsin, between our artists, our institutions, and our civic leaders.



On September 25th Mayor Coonan welcomed a group from Causeway Coast and Glen Borough Council on an excellence in tourism learning visit.

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 September 2025 under the various support services.



Construction of 42 Social & Affordable units at Abbey Hill, Thomastown due for completion in February 2026



Construction of 20 social units including a group home at An Tobar, Freshford due for completion in July 2026



Construction of 6 social apartments at Teach Aimsire, Dunningstown Road, Kilkenny due for completion in March 2026

AFFORDABLE HOMES

September was an important month in advancing our delivery of affordable housing under the Local Authority Affordable Purchase Scheme. With two active developments – **Church View, Kilmacow** and **Abbey Hill, Thomastown**, our team made substantial progress in launching and promoting these schemes. Emphasis was placed on strategic outreach, digital and print marketing, and direct community engagement to ensure strong visibility and accessibility for eligible buyers.

Church View Kilmacow

Kilkenny County Council working in collaboration with Michael Murphy building services and supported by the Department of Housing, Local Government.

Application portal opened on **10th October, 2025**. Applications are currently being reviewed for eligibility and completeness. There are 13 x 3-Bedroom units available, with a starting price from **€248,475**. Target Audience Includes First-Time Buyers & Fresh Starters.

Engagement efforts and direct marketing activities have been undertaken, which includes outreach to **An Garda Síochána (Waterford Regional Station)** and engagement with staff at **University Hospital Waterford**, as well as local print and digital campaigns, with over 1,600 emails distributed to potential buyers and key organisations.

Abbey Hill, Thomastown

Built by Ormonde Construction and supported by Department of Housing, Local Government & Heritage Abbey hill is a stunning new development of 22 units of 2 and 3 bed homes. A total of 22 homes are available for purchase under the Affordable Purchase Scheme - 16 No 3 bed and 6 No 2 bed homes. 2-Bed from €225,000 and 3-Bed from €253,000. Portal opens on 15th October 2025 at 12:00 noon. Engagement efforts and direct marketing activities undertaken include outreach to **James Stephens Military Barracks** as well as **engagements** with staff at **St. Luke's Hospital** and **State Street Ltd**, as well as local print and digital campaigns, with over 1600 emails distributed to potential buyers and key organisations.



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 SEPTEMBER 2025	
Homeless Presentations	64
Homeless Assessment Outcomes	
Prevention & Interventions	46
Emergency Service	14
Not Eligible/Did not avail of service	4
HAP Place Finder Service	
Number of Homeless HAP tenancies at 1 st day of month	148
Number of Homeless HAP tenancies created during month	0
Number of Homeless HAP tenancy breakdowns	1
Number of Homeless HAP tenancies in place at last day of month	147
Other Social Housing Tenancies supported/created during month	13

Provision of Emergency Accommodation	
Households in Temporary Emergency Supported Accommodation at September 30 th	41
Households in Temporary Emergency B&B accommodation	7
Households in Temporary Emergency B&B Accommodation that are families	4
Households (<i>singles/couples</i>) in Transition Emergency Accommodation (<i>Own Front Door</i>)	44
Households (<i>Families</i>) in Transition Emergency Accommodation (<i>Own Front Door</i>)	17

SOCIAL HOUSING PROVISION

SOCIAL HOUSING SUPPORT APPLICATION SUMMARY SEPTEMBER 2025	
Number awaiting Social Housing Support on September 30 th (<i>Gross Need</i>)	1,295
Number awaiting Social Housing Support on September 30 th (<i>Net Need</i>)	651
Number of Social Housing Applications received in September	107
Number of applications incomplete / awaiting further information/clarification	61
Number of applications validated and ready for assessment during the month	35
Number of applications assessed during September	24
Number of applications awaiting assessment as at September 30 th	45

HOUSING ASSISTANCE PAYMENT (HAP) SUMMARY SEPTEMBER 2025	
Total active HAP tenancies	398
New HAP tenancies set up	32
HAP allocated Social Housing	57
Closed HAP tenancies	65
HAP Rent Reviews	179
HAP Other tenancy amendments	799

HOUSING ALLOCATIONS SEPTEMBER 2025	
LA/RAS/Leasing offers of allocations made in September	20
LA/RAS/Leasing offers of allocations made to date 2025	221

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. Total number of issues as of the 30th of September 2025 were 213 issues.

Complaint Type	Number of Complaints	Number Investigated	Number Ongoing	Number Closed
Drugs related; Violence; Racism; Threats & Intimidation	12	12	7	5
Damage to property, animal related (<i>dog/horse/fowl</i>); Refuse/dumping/hoarding	5	5	5	0
Noise, Parking/boundary issues, Other	21	21	16	5

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 SEPTEMBER 2025	
Maintenance calls in September	671
Maintenance calls year to date	5,475

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 SEPTEMBER 2025

Scheme	Number	Amount
HGD - Housing Adaptation Grant	129	€1,458,224
MAG - Mobility Aid Grant	16	€59,487
HOP - Housing Aid for Older Persons	226	€1,342,759
Total	371	€2,860,470

GRANTS PAID OUT SEPTEMBER 2025

Scheme	Number	Amount
HGD - Housing Adaptation Grant	50	€550,333
MAG - Mobility Aid Grant	7	€24,808
HOP - Housing Aid for Older Persons	113	€601,957
Total	170	€1,177,098

HOUSING LOANS

HOUSING LOAN ACTIVITY 2025					
Loan Type	Received	Approved	Amount Approved	Number Paid	Amount Paid
Local Authority Home Loan	24	2	€216,000	4	€434,278
Caravan Loan	0	0	€0.00	0	€0
Total	24	2	€216,000	4	€434,278

VOIDS

VOIDS ACTIVITY SEPTEMBER 2025	
Number of Voids Upgraded Ready for Allocation in September 2025	7
Number of Voids in progress on the 30 th of September 2025	30
Total Number of Voids Upgraded for Allocation to Date 2025	59

COMMUNITY

Community Projects

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

TOWN & VILLAGE SCHEME			
Community Group	Project Description	Grant	September 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	Completed
Callan 2023	King's River Town & Village Project – River bank and amenity area	€247,500	Revision to proposal required, design to be prepared
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	Works in progress
Urlingford Town Team 2023	Refurbishment of Community Hall. Phase 2	€500,000	50% of works 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	Some surveys in progress, public stakeholder engagements to commence
Paulstown Community Group Project Development Measure 2024	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	Draft Plan prepared Public Consultation 7 th October.

RURAL REGENERATION DEVELOPMENT FUND			
Community Group	Project Description	Grant	September 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	Detail Design Stage
Glenmore	Develop the South East Greenway Connectivity Link and Pink Rock Cycle Loop & Amenity Trail	€2,356,423	Design team appointed
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	September Status	
Johnstown Sports Field 2022	Contribution to development of walk way around complex	€40,000	Scheduled start date	end September
Mooncoin Celtic AFC 2023	LED Floodlighting for extra training area	€20,000	Planning stage	
Cois Nore 2024	Develop and Refurbishment of Community Space	€40,000	Works complete	
Ballyhale Shamrocks 2024	Upgrade of toilets / disability access	€9,000	Works in progress	
Gowran Community Complex 2024	Contribution towards the refurbishment of a community hub	€27,000	Tender evaluation process underway	
Glenmore Camogie Club 2025	Contribution towards the re-instatement of walkway	€29,000	Works not yet commenced	
Mullinavat Drama Group 2025	Lighting, Sound, Projector, Screen, Curtains	€11,000	Works not yet commenced	
Marian Hall Kilmacow 2025	Installation of heating, bathrooms, kitchen	€11,000	Works not yet commenced	
Kilkenny Girl Guides 2025	Emergency Lighting & Fire Alarm	€15,000	Works not yet commenced	
Kilkenny SOS Lawn Bowls 2025	Fencing, Lighting, Bicycle Bays, shed	€30,000	Preparation of Tender	
K. Ambers Women's Refuge 2025	New Playground	€35,000	Works not yet commenced	
Freshford Town AFC 2025	Floodlighting for all weather pitch	€32,000	Procurement complete.	
Deen Celtic Castlecomer 2025	Refurbishment of shower facility into girls dressing room	€26,000	Procurement complete.	
St. Joseph's Athletic Club 2025	Shelter and walking track	€11,000	Works commenced	
Graiguenamanagh Rowing Club 2025	Storage racking for rowing boats	€15,000	Works not yet commenced	
Evergreen Football Club 2025	Spectator Stand	€20,000	Works in progress	

CLÁR			
Community Group	Project Description	Grant	September Status
Galmoy Community Hall 2023	Provision of a MUGA	€30,015	Not yet commenced
Skeoughvosteen Community Centre & GAA 2022	Provision of outdoor public and wheelchair accessible public toilets	€50,000	Works in progress and on schedule
Ballyouskill Community Hall 2024	Upgrades to carpark, roof repairs and replacement of door.	€36,641	Not yet commenced
Windgap Handball Alley 2024	External insulation of two outside walls	€29,419	Not yet commenced, seeking a revision of works
Windgap GAA 2024	Works to include tarmacadam to driveway and parking area	€38,307	Not yet commenced on site
Naomh Aodhan Community Centre CLG 2024	Upgrade works on rebuilding and refurbishing of handball alley and ground works	€44,312	Works in progress

COMMUNITY RECOGNITION FUND				
Community Group	Project Description	Grant	September Status	
Christian Youth Centre	Development of existing building to provide community space, meeting rooms	€390,607	Tender process complete, Contractor appointed	
Fr. McGrath Centre	Installation of Solar Panels, Painting of building	€100,474	In progress, windows & painting complete	
Muckalee Community Cafe	Coffee Machine, Tarmac, Tables and Chairs, access fob	€50,000	In progress, 80% complete	
Castlecomer Community Hall	Repairs to roof, wooden flooring and painting	€50,000	Works commenced	
Ballyragget Community Hall	Renovation of CYMS Hall	€173,000	Procurement	process ongoing

KILKENNY AGE FRIENDLY PROGRAMME

Over 55's Climate Course

The Age Friendly Programme six-week Climate Action Course started on Wednesday, 17th September, 2025 in St. Patrick's Parish Centre, Loughboy, Kilkenny facilitated by Jacinta Barrins who is guiding participants through six engaging sessions focused on understanding climate change and exploring practical steps that can be taken to reduce individual impact on climate. The course offers a relaxed and friendly environment where participants can learn, share ideas, and enjoy a cup of tea while discussing the impact of climate action. At the most recent workshop the RDS 300 series recorded a piece for an online series, arranged by the RDS Enterprise Committee under the Vision 2030 series. They identified key voices who are recognised drivers for change within their own areas of expertise and experience in relation to climate change.

Kilkenny Local Community Safety Partnership – Progress Update

Minister for Justice, Home Affairs & Migration, Jim O'Callaghan TD, has formally appointed the new members to the Kilkenny Local Community Safety Partnership. The new partnership now comprises 27 members representing a broad cross section of the community and key stakeholders and public service members. An induction meeting for new members is scheduled to take place before the end of October followed by the first official meeting in early November. At the first meeting, members will elect a Chairperson and Vice Chairperson to lead the partnership. In parallel, the Kilkenny Local Community Safety Office has launched a Community Safety Survey aimed at gathering input from the general public, business owners, and young people. The feedback collected will directly inform the development of the Community Safety Plan. The survey remains open until 24th October 2025 and can be accessed at: www.kilkennycoco.ie/LCSPSurvey.

Healthy Ireland

As part of the Healthy Ireland Fund, Twilight Community Group has been delivering a Nature Walking Programme and a series of Health and Wellbeing Talks for communities in the Eastern Environs of Kilkenny City. The programme commenced in September with the support of a Walking in Nature Tutor, encouraging participants to connect with nature while promoting physical activity and mental wellbeing. Walking locations included: Newpark Fen, Canal Walk & Peace Park. In addition to the walks, a Health and Wellbeing Talk Series was organised, covering a range of informative and practical topics such as: Healthy Eating, The Importance of Exercise and Ageing, Housing Grants for Older People Community Safety and General Health and Wellbeing. These initiatives have provided valuable opportunities for local residents to engage in outdoor activity, learn about health-related topics, and build stronger community connections.

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 617 Ukrainians in 12 properties under contracts with the Department of Justice, Migration & Home Affairs, 206 Ukrainians living in Offer A Home properties and Irish Red Cross pledged properties, of which they avail of the Accommodation Recognition Payment.

There are 194 International Protection Applicants (IPA's) in 4 properties under contract with the Department of Justice.

69% of Ukrainians and 61% of IPAs are registered as employed.

The LAIT continued their work providing information, advice and advocacy to:

- 86 Ukrainians with 98 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
- 43 IPA's with 61 interventions including queries around the immigration process, work permits and accommodation

In total for 2025 so far*, the LAIT have supported 873 individuals with 2,655 interventions.

**Figures for September currently being calculated.*

EVENTS:

The LAIT regularly collaborates with partner agencies and is planning more events for the year ahead. Below are a few of the events that took place over the summer:

- On the 17th September, The LAIT facilitated an information session for BOTPs in Kilkenny on the topic of Social Welfare, covering My Welfare, Payments and Training.
- Two information sessions from KCETB on further and higher education in Ireland for International Protection Applicants and Ukrainian BoTP's. These sessions aided people to learn about higher education entitlements, grants and finance supports and how to have your previous education recognised in Ireland.
- The LAIT also continues to facilitate twice weekly drop-in clinics, the first taking place in collaboration with Kilkenny Leader Partnership, held at the Fr. McGrath Centre on Tuesday mornings and the second at the Neighbourhood Hall on Thursday afternoons.



- Quarterly centre visits to allow individuals who cannot attend drop-in clinics to meet with the LAITs. This also facilitates positive relationship building between the LAIT and centres managers to further promote overall positive integration for residents.
- In early October, the LAIT will be holding another information session, with the HSE on health awareness and access. The LAIT, also, is working with members of the migrant community to facilitate a keynote speaker event for Black History Month, exploring the strong historical ties that exist in Ireland.



Offer of a Home and IRC Pledged Properties

September, 2025	Number of Pledged Properties	Number of Residents
Offer a Home Scheme	55	186
Pledged Properties (<i>shared and not shared</i>)	4	19
TOTAL	59	205

The 'Offer a Home' Scheme is managed by Local Authorities on behalf of the Government. A Government tax-free Accommodation Recognition Payment (ARP) of €600 per month is available to property owners offering accommodation to Ukrainians with Temporary Protection status.

There was a reduction in the monthly ARP payment from €800 to €600, from June 2025. This reduction sought 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 was received by hosts on 8th 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.

FIRE SERVICES

Fire Brigade Operations

The existence of a professional Fire & 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 hours per day/7 days per week/365 days per year. 764 callouts were received to-date. These incidents included a large number of road traffic collisions, storm Amy- Trees down, ambulance assists, outdoor rubbish, chimney fires and automatic fire alarm activations.

Fire Safety Certificate Applications

Kilkenny Fire & 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 & 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.

- 87 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.
- 51 Licence Applications were processed under Section 24 of the Fire Services Acts 1981 and 2003.
- 5 licence applications under the Dangerous Substances legislation was assessed to-date
- 79 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 (13), Castlecomer (11), Freshford (12), Urlingford (9), Thomastown (11), Callan (12), Graigenamanagh (12).

The WRC recommendation is to have a minimum of 12 firefighters in all Fire Stations. Recruitment for Castlecomer, Urlingford and Thomastown is underway. 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 Fire-fighters 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. 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. New recruits have also attended Compartment Fire Behaviour training in recent weeks.

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

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). The Fire Service has started its journey in achieving accreditation to ISO 45001 in relation to Health and Safety Management.

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 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. A number of our Brigades had open days in their fire stations. Graiguenamanagh Fire Brigade had an open chip pan fire demonstration.

Kilkenny County Council's Fire Service took part in the National Services Day. This is an annual family-friendly event held at Kilkenny Castle to showcase frontline, emergency, and security services, featuring displays of vehicles and equipment, and live demonstrations by organisations like Kilkenny Fire and Rescue Service. The 2025 event took place on Saturday, September 6th, offering the public a chance to meet service personnel and learn about their vital work. In addition, Kilkenny City fire brigade carried out a road traffic collision exercise on the day.



LIBRARY



Summer Stars 2025

Summer Stars 2025 was a highly successful initiative for Kilkenny County Library Service this year with **2,379** children signing up to the challenge and pledging to read 8 books over the summer holidays – exceeding our sign-up targets by 4%. The initiative was great for increasing membership with over **290** children joining the library and signing up for the challenge. There was lots of summer programming and events to coincide with the reading challenge - branches held **231** events with **3354** participants across the summer months.



New Story Trail at Kilkenny Countryside Park



Kilkenny County Council Library Service were delighted to add a brand new story to its much-loved outdoor reading initiative, Slí na Scéalta, which is now installed at Kilkenny Countryside Park in Dumore. The new story, *The Little Lost Cat's Big Adventure* in Kilkenny was written and illustrated by local Carol Ann Treacy and follows the journey of a curious black cat as she explores the streets, landmarks, and hidden corners of Kilkenny in search of her way home.

The story unfolds across 16 storyboards placed along the 1.3km Accessibility Trail at Kilkenny Countryside Park. Families are invited to walk the trail, enjoy the fresh air, and read the story together combining literacy, outdoor activity, and local culture in one engaging experience.

National Public Library Day 2025

Kilkenny County Council Library Service were delighted to join libraries across Ireland on Saturday, 27 September to celebrate National Public Libraries Open Day 2025. The nationwide campaign invited the public to “Take a Closer Look” at the modern, inclusive, and vibrant services libraries offer today and highlighted the evolving role of libraries in Irish society as places of entertainment, learning, connection, creativity, and community support.



To celebrate, we hosted a number of events including a cornflower mandala workshop, a straw craft workshop, a silent book club, a seed saving workshop, a “Celebrating Ferrybank” morning and storytime and craft sessions for children.

1,026 people visited our branches on September 27th with **46** new members signing up on the day.

Fadó Fadó Local Studies Competition 2025

History is alive and well in Kilkenny classrooms! Last year, local students wowed judges with their incredible projects for the *Fadó, Fadó: Sparking Memories* competition. Kilkenny Local Studies, Kilkenny Archaeological Society and Rothe House Trust have once again teamed up to bring the competition back for 2026 and extended it to include secondary school students as well.

To support this exciting expansion, the team have been joined by Martin O'Neill, history teacher at St Kieran's College and a familiar voice from the *Ceol agus Comhrá* programme on Community Radio Kilkenny City.

There are some amazing prizes up for grabs including cash prizes, trophies, medals, certificates and family passes to Rothe House.



Project guidelines, entry forms and a dedicated podcast episode with competition organisers and last year's winners are all available at www.kilkennylibrary.ie. The closing date for submissions is 4:00 pm, Friday, 13th February, 2026.

Library Activities

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

- Culture Night-drop-in workshops inspired by Rewilding Riverbank exhibition in the Mayfair Library.
- A cancer awareness and symptom prevention in Loughboy Library
- A digital media talk in Ferrybank Library
- A Hedgerows Ireland talk in Graig Library
- A Roald Dahl Day in Castlecomer Library
- A storytime and craft for National Public Library Open Day in Thomastown Library
- A colour and style in Urlingford Library
- A soap-making workshop in Callan Library for SDG week





Online Services Usage Sep 2025



3,713

eAudiobooks borrowed



402

online learning sessions



1,511

eBooks borrowed



108

language learning sessions



18,975

eNewspapers and magazines borrowed



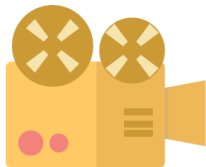
71

eComics borrowed



193

films and shows streamed



Digital Engagement

Library staff prepared, recorded, edited and published **276** posts and videos on our social media platforms in September. Our engagements for the month were **3,936** and our virtual newsletter was sent to **7,792** 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 September:



A number of our library branches hosted events for Sustainable Development Goals Week including eco-friendly soap-making workshops for kids and adults.



Our library branches provided access to the register of electors, helping borrowers to make sure that they're registered to vote in the upcoming presidential election.



Rhyme Rag is back this term with poets Alice Bennett and Enda Coyle Greene delivering workshops at St. Kieran's College and Grennan College Thomastown. Each student has been brought through a number of writing exercise and will be encouraged to submit their work to the Rhyme Rag Editor Jessica Traynor. Twelve poems will be selected to be published, while everyone who submitted receives personal feedback on their poem from the editor.

ArtEd

The callout for artists and schools to take part in this year's ArtEd – artist residencies in primary schools began in September. The aim of the programme is to Inspire and encourage the next generation of children to develop their creative potential by participating in hands-on projects across different art forms, whilst also providing opportunities for educators to explore innovative teaching strategies and skills with the support of artists. Artist applications will be assessed and schools and artists paired in early October.

INFLOW- Project Overview

Focused on the River Nore, InFlow was a hands-on project which explored the intersection of environmental awareness, textile waste, and the circular economy. Led by three experienced artists and makers. InFlow invited participants to reconnect with the river as a living system and a source of inspiration. Through engagement with the river and creative workshops, the project highlighted the environmental impact of the textile industry on waterways, while offering practical, artistic ways to respond rooted in sustainability. Over the course of the project, participants were introduced to a wide range of sustainable textile practices, textile printing, sashiko, natural dyeing, embroidery, textile manipulation, t-shirt yarn making, appliqué, patchwork, needle felting & weaving. They also completed an upcycled picnic blanket from larger upholstery samples, backed with unwanted pull up banners. These sessions were designed not only to teach technical skills but to embed the principles of the circular economy in a tangible, community-based way. Using a textile waste stream of upholstery fabric provided by Kilkenny County Council Arts Office, participants learned to repurpose textile waste, transforming it into meaningful artistic outputs such as personal textile journals and picnic blankets. These creations served as both personal reflections and collective expressions of environmental consciousness.

The project culminated in a community picnic and a ritualistic return of water to the River Nore symbolically completing the cycle that began with the project's launch event, a showing of the documentary *The River is Me*. This final gathering provided a space for participants to share their stories, showcase their work, and celebrate their journey together. The act of returning the water collected at the beginning of the project to the river underscored the themes of renewal and interconnectedness that ran throughout the programme.

InFlow successfully met its objectives by fostering environmental awareness through creative engagement, equipping participants with sustainable textile skills, and strengthening community bonds through shared artistic experiences. It inspired behavioural change by making the abstract principles of the circular economy tangible and emotionally resonant. Participants left the project not only with new skills and knowledge but with a renewed sense of place, purpose, and potential to contribute to a more sustainable future. The project's legacy lives on in the artworks created, the stories shared, and the ripples of awareness it continues to generate within the Kilkenny community.

Outputs: The group made a personal upcycled textile journal. They also completed an upcycled picnic blanket using skills learned over the course of the workshops. The group participated in a picnic where they shared their work and took part in a ritualistic returning of the water collected at the beginning of the project to the River Nore, completing the project's full cycle.

Outcomes: Raised awareness of the interconnection of all living things with water and the need to protect our waterways for planetary wellbeing into the future. Connection to the local waterways to grow from a micro to a macro perspective. Education on the impacts of the textile industries' impact on the World's water systems. Learning of practical skills that will allow for identification and re-use of textiles. A lighting of the fire to spread the word of change on over-consumption and the impact of plastics on eco-systems. A sense of potential to grow and change with others in the community to support a better future.



Community picnic and a ritualistic return of water to the River Nore



Attendee's of the Inflow project

Culture Night

Culture night 2025 was huge success with a total audience of 2881. The event took place on September 19th and saw a huge diversity of events and activities take place in the City and County. Our strategic approach focused on inclusivity, encouraging youth engagement, community connection, while showcasing diverse artistic expressions. We also encouraged events to support local artists of all genres to take part in their events. Through the Night Time Economy Plan, cafes were encouraged to host events in the evening to help develop the potential Late-night space for community and cultural events.

The popularity of family and children's activities drew strong attendances and positive feedback. This highlights the importance of maintaining and expanding programming that caters to younger audiences and families. We also witnessed a clear appetite for more varied and diverse cultural programming. In particular, performance art and theatre-based elements. The success of immersive and interactive experiences—especially those that encouraged hands-on participation—demonstrates that audiences are increasingly seeking active involvement rather than passive viewing. Music events were also a cornerstone of Culture Night, generating significant enthusiasm and engagement. Collaborating with Kilkenny-based bands not only enriched the local cultural offering but also attracted a predominantly local audience, fostering a strong sense of community.

Finally, a major takeaway was the evident interest in immersive performance work. Audiences showed a strong desire for deeper, more experiential forms of cultural engagement, indicating a direction for future programming that prioritizes interaction, immersion, and emotional connection.

To top it all off Culture Night Kilkenny featured on RTE throughout the day, namely on the 1pm, 6pm and 9pm news. This was a huge success and benefit to Kilkenny and local artists



Puppet Show



Culture Night Kilkenny featuring on RTE

Creative Kilkenny

During September many events took place which were funded under the Creative Ireland Scheme.

Highlights Include:

AKA Festival 2025

The AKA Festival showcased a dynamic, inclusive programme, with this year's Creative Ireland funded focus on sustainability and volunteer skill-building helping to strengthen the team's long-term capacity. A volunteer-led aspect of this year's programme enabled an initiative that boosted leadership, wellbeing, and cultural participation across Kilkenny, with a focus on rural and underrepresented communities.



AKA, reimagining outdoor cinema – where innovation meets accessibility under the stars

Volunteering

20 volunteers trained and engaged in key festival roles, gaining valuable skills and experience.

Social Cohesion

Strengthened urban-rural connections, activated inclusive community spaces, and fostered local pride.

Economic Development

Attracted over 1,000 attendees, increased visibility for Kilkenny, and supported local businesses through cultural tourism.

The Colour Field

The Colour Field workshops culminated with a final workshop at Workhouse Union Callan on 27 September which introduced participants to traditional dyeing techniques using Woad, a plant-based source of blue pigment, promoting sustainable art practices and environmental awareness. By encouraging the use of locally grown dye plants, the project supports biodiversity, reduces reliance on synthetic materials, and fosters climate-conscious creativity within the community.

Living Artfully Project

The living Artfully project recommenced with weekly workshops across the County with each participating group. A new men's group has commenced in collaboration with Cois Nore Cancer Support Service, facilitated by a writer and poet. Additional funding secured through the Creative Health and Wellbeing strand has enabled the extension of the project until December 2025. Programme planning is currently underway for a creative gathering scheduled for 14 November 2025.

The Man Born to be King



As part of their 800th anniversary commemorations, the Black Abbey and Lake Productions supported by Kilkenny County Council present *The Man Born to be King* at The Black Abbey. The play is an adaptation of a Mystery Play, a genre of theatre which was popular in Medieval Kilkenny depicting scenes from the Bible. The three-night run of the play in September was completely sold out with excellent reviews for the production and performance. This production was funded under the Kilkenny County Council Public Commemoration Programme.

Leadership Training

As part of the Heritage Council's Heritage Officer professional development programme, Heritage Officers from every local authority began Leadership Training in Limerick on 11th September. This training designed and delivered by the Irish Management Institute will be delivered over five-day long sessions from September -January. The purpose of the training is to support Heritage Officers in delivering a strategic approach to heritage planning in their counties.

Kilkenny County Heritage Forum Meeting

The Heritage Forum convened on 12th September to review the findings of the consultation for the County Heritage Strategy. A draft of the strategic goals and actions was also workshopped in preparation for a complete draft of the plan which will be presented to the Management Team in October.

BIODIVERSITY

National Hedgerow Week 2025

Teagasc and The Heritage Council annually run National Hedgerow Week during the 1st week in September. It is a week to highlight the value of hedgerows in our landscapes, an opportunity to bring together farmers, ecologists and the public to discuss hedgerows from a variety of perspectives. A dedicated event for hedge cutting contractors was held by Teagasc at Kildalton College where industry experts spoke on hedge cutting machinery and safety considerations. Kilkenny County Council organised a foraging walk and talk with Monica Fleming along the mass path of Dunmore on the outskirts of Kilkenny City, an event funded by The Heritage Council to celebrate hedgerows. Two groups explored the mass path to see the variety of plant species in the hedgerow and to identify the masses of autumn fruits on display.

Hedgerows are essential habitats for many bird species in Ireland; 35 of the 110 regularly recorded countryside birds nest in hedgerows, they also offer shelter, food, nesting sites and song perches for many other bird species. Hedgerows provide cover and protection not only for birds but for mammals and insects on the move as hedgerows act like movement corridors. All 9 species of bats use the hedgerow as corridors for foraging and recent studies relating to barn owls have proven that barn owl's movement and foraging patterns are linked with the presence of hedgerows. The promotion of National Hedgerow Week aligns with Action 2.3, Protection of Hedgerows under the Kilkenny Biodiversity Action Plan 2025-2030.

CIVIL DEFENCE

National Service's Day

September started with the return of National Service's Day to Kilkenny Castle on the 6th of September, with Civil Defence being one of the main organisers here in Kilkenny. The hugely successful day saw the Air corps land a helicopter in the Castle Park as well as a fantastic display from the Fire service



Members of Kilkenny Civil Defence at the National Service's Day

Medieval Marathon

Kilkenny Civil Defence provided first aid cover for the medieval marathon. We also debuted our new operational support vehicle.



Kilkenny Civil Defence - new Operational Support Vehicle

Civil Defence 75th Anniversary Celebrations

Civil Defence 75th anniversary celebrations continued this month with a reception held in Maynooth, where the volunteers were addressed by Minister James Lawless and presented with 75th year medals in recognition of their continued efforts.



Attendee's at the Civil Defence 75th Anniversary Celebrations

Training

The month ended with some training with a multi-county training day joining Laois and Wicklow civil defence in Laragh. Our swiftwater responders were certified, recertified and upskilled. Lots of fun and learning was had.



Training day in Laragh

FINANCE

The expenditure by Service Division to the end of September is set out in Table 1. Total Expenditure for the period was €96m compared with the Annual Budget of €120m.

Table 1	Actual YTD September 2025	Budget Full Year 2025
	€'000's	€'000's
Housing & Building	26,431	30,784
Road Transport & Safety	24,427	31,383
Water Services	4,621	7,180
Development Management	10,379	15,417
Environmental Services	13,394	18,991
Recreation & Amenity	6,400	9,425
Agriculture, Education, Health, Welfare	326	354
Miscellaneous Services	7,134	6,938
Central Management Charges for Allocation	3,086	
OVERALL TOTAL	96,198	120,472

Rates Invoices 2025

The annual rate invoices for 2025 totalling €24.4 million were issued to 2,850 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 bill in full before end of May 2025 or enter into a monthly payment plan before April 2025.

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.

ICOB and Power Up Grant Reclassification Appeal Scheme

The Government launched the Reclassification Scheme in July 2025. The Reclassification Scheme specifically targeted businesses that received support under the ICOB 1 scheme but did not receive funding through ICOB 2 or Power Up due to their classification but believed that they should have been classified under the Hospitality, Retail, or Beauty sectors. This was not a re-opening of those grant schemes - this was solely to allow those who originally misclassified their business sector an opportunity to reclassify their business and register for the grants. Potentially eligible businesses were contacted and advised on the necessary steps to apply for this grant. Grants of €400,000 were paid out to 70 businesses. The scheme has now closed.

Finance Update

The bank overdraft facility was not utilized in the nine month period to the end of September. We will be seeking approval from the Elected Members at the October meeting for the approval of the existing overdraft facility of €20m in 2026. The audit by the Local Government Audit for FY 2024 has now been completed and the audit report has been issued.

Budget 2026

Work has commenced on the preparation of the Council budget for 2026. Workshops have commenced with Elected Members to discuss the issues arising. The proposed date for the Statutory budget meeting is Monday, 3rd November.